



Peter Beck, MD

December 22, 1923 - May 11, 2016

Dr. Peter Beck of Portsmouth, NH, 92, loving husband and brilliant physician, passed away on May 11, 2016.

Peter was born on December 22, 1923 in Lucerne, Switzerland, the second son of Fritz & Julia Maria Walker Beck. The family immigrated to the U.S. and settled on a 100-acre farm on the shore of Lake Champlain, VT. Peter started in a one-room schoolhouse and then went to Hanover High School, where his academic achievements were celebrated and he gave the student address at commencement.

Dr. Beck was a graduate of Dartmouth College, class of '45, Dartmouth Medical School, Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the University of Bern in Switzerland. He served in the Army for three years and took specialized training at Duke Hospital in Durham, North Carolina, Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. He was a Diplomate of the American Board of Ophthalmology.

A renaissance man, Peter pursued a wide range of intellectual interests and was often quoted as a walking encyclopedia. An adventurous traveler, he visited all corners of the world and was well known to be caring and curious about people and distant cultures. An exceptional student of history, Dr. Beck constantly referred to it as a lens to understand current events.

Dr. Beck was a captivating storyteller, regaling everyone with tales of seafaring adventures, turning patients and strangers into friends, and of a lifetime in medicine. Like his grandfather, Peter enjoyed it when people disagreed with him, since it made the opportunity for real discussion. This inclination- part of the Beck family genes - stayed with him throughout his life.

Peter kept the memory of his brother Adrian (Dartmouth College '41), killed in Guam during WWII, in his heart throughout his life. He has donated the family farm in Vermont to a group of Buddhists who will build a permanent memorial on the site.

Dr. Beck was a man of deep compassion, bringing medical aid to remote areas and developing countries, and taking people from all walks of life into his home. In the great New England tradition, he was highly skilled in both eye surgery and fixing large construction equipment.

He married Nancy Reynolds Beck in 1959 and settled in Portsmouth, NH, where they lived together for 57 years.

SERVICES: Funeral services are private. Dr. Beck's ashes will be placed in the family plot at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH.

Tribute Wall

AB

“ *Arian Blasik lit a candle in memory of Peter Beck, MD*



Arian Blasik - May 28, 2019 at 03:36 PM

GB

“ *Gregory Beck lit a candle in memory of Peter Beck, MD*



Gregory Beck - July 16, 2016 at 08:50 PM

LC

“ *Leona Cheung lit a candle in memory of Peter Beck, MD*



Leona Cheung - July 16, 2016 at 08:49 PM

LC

“ *Jekyll Island Adventure*

Peter & Nancy were staying in Savannah for the winter of 2014 and we all took a weekend drive to beautiful Jekyll Island, off the Golden Isle of the coast of Georgia. The famous resort there - the Jekyll Island Club - was our destination for lunch, but we arrived late in the afternoon, just as they were ending service.

Hungry and a bit forlorn, the headwaiter took one look at the Beck's edging towards her restaurant and quickly interceded, offering us the perfect table in an elegant sun-lit rotunda. We had a delightful meal of crab cakes and lobster salad, in a dining room left only to the ever-vigilant staff and ourselves. This was Nancy & Peter at their best, in a setting that blended old-world charm with the energy and wisdom of a couple that had traveled the globe and was not about to slow down.

The conversation flowed about their trips and strangers they had met along the way who were now lifelong friends. We wish it never ended. An unforgettable day.

*All our love,
Leona and Greg*

leona Cheung - July 16, 2016 at 08:23 PM

DE

Today I found Adrian's family. I am named for my father's brother Donald Wayne Etler, PFC a member of Lt Adrian Beck's shore beach party killed by the same mortar round that took Adrian and one other on Beach Red 1, Guam in July 1944. Adrian was Peter's older brother. Donald.Etler@yahoo.com

Don Etler - June 20, 2018 at 09:06 PM

“ This is a true love story, and where should I start?

I was recruited by Timberland in 1995. I was looking for a place to settle in Portsmouth October that year. Dr. Beck was volunteer to help a friend without telephone to show her house. It was one of those fatefull meetings, chance of a lifetime? I'm the lucky one. After seeing his friend's house, I decided it was not the house for me. In the meantime, Peter was so charming, able to draw out my youth life story and giving advices. He said well do you want to meet my wife and my dog? I gladly said yes. When the door opened, I saw his extroridnary elegant wife Nancy and Nina, their regal Standard Poodle. It become a life-long affair, they invitited me to their Thanksgiving diners ever since, whether I'm as close as Peterborough, NH, Minnesota or Georgia. This incredible couple always had an open heart and an open home.

Dr. Beck is very fond of distant cultures and welcoming foreigners into their home, and we fondly call their place the "International House of Portsmouth".

They have forever changed my life. Not only are they my heros, mentors, they also play matchmaker, I'm married to Nancy's cousin, my wonderful husband, Gregory Beck.

They opened their home and themselves to allow me to be a part of their family. I've so privileged to include to their family homestead and trips in their farm in Vermont, Portsmouth and Europe and introduced me to their friends and relatives. I also took him to visit my hometown and relatives in Asia. I was so proud showing him off as he was always the life of a party. for his commanding intelligence and great wit.

Dr. Beck and I'd stayed up countless nights to discuss the world. His unshaken devotion to his brother killed in WWII, current affairs and human nature. We did not always agree but it made thought provoking discussions.

As I'm placing this announcement with the Portsmouth Herald, Sheri on the phone says, "I also remember Dr. Beck! I only met him once at a New Year's Eve party. He is the kind of person you do not forget." That pretty much sums it up.

It is hard to image life without him, and our days are a bit dimmer with his absence. I imagine he's making quite a stir in heaven, debating politics, but smiling down upon us, always to say, "keep going!".

*Forever Love,
Leona*