



Peter J. Parker

January 11, 1935 - January 24, 2023

North Hampton - Son of Wilhelmina Asser and C. Carlton Parker, Peter was born January 11, 1935. Childhood and early schooling was in Buffalo NY except for one year in Aptos, California, recuperating from polio. His father's family were from Hyde Park and Carlton had crewed on FDR's ice boat on the Hudson. Hence, Peter was brought over to meet the President, and sit on FDR's lap.

Peter's love of NH began at age 12 when he was sent to Camp Pemigewasset. After two years, he was ready for the Presidentials. Hired by the renowned Joe Dodge, from the ages of 15 to 17 he worked for the Appalachian Mountain Club, first at Pinkham and then as a hut boy, as they were called back then, at Carter and Madison Spring. He learned to cook for forty and was fearless in the kitchen. His love affair with the Presidentials led to an almost annual summer hiking vacation to Randolph and vicinity for the next 65 years.

Peter already had been accepted at Harvard with a scholarship when he helped to get the President of Harvard's car out of a ditch up there. Majoring in medieval history, but admitting his real education was the extracurricular activities, including Harvard Drama Club, Hasty Pudding and The Spee, Peter graduated cum laude, joined the Navy and in the next three years, served on a destroyer escort in the North Atlantic monitoring Soviet subs; then to

Dunkirk, NY where he was the officer on the ground for the preparation for the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1959. He had married a classmate, Eleanor Webster, in March 1957. Daughter Elizabeth (Liza) Parker Migliorelli was born in August of 1958.

From the Navy to Penn for graduate school and the Powelton Village neighborhood activities of the era. Then Peter taught at Skidmore College in Saratoga, part of which time was spent campaigning for Eugene McCarthy.

Returning to Philadelphia and doing research at both The Library Company and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Peter was hired on the spot by Nick Wainwright, director of HSP, as the chief of manuscripts. Its manuscripts for the colonial and early national periods as well as such gems as the “shoulder of giants” letter put HSP in the league of Library of Congress.

The next twenty years, in manuscripts which actually included everything but books -- paintings, prints, photographs, furniture, artifacts – and as director, were a whirlwind. Too many activities, boards to name. His recent bride Cynthia Swank, was extremely proud to see Peter presented with the Richard Allen Award by the Mother Bethel AME Church for his work with them.

Peter and Cynthia were pleased to welcome son in law Frank Migliorelli arrive on the scene. Grandchildren, Elizabeth and Matthew came along; they moved from “the city” meaning NYC to the burbs, the kids grew up quickly.

Leaving Philadelphia the only place to head seemed to be the seacoast of NH, much closer to the Presidentials and near a major metropolitan area and transportation. Peter found the right house – even the china cupboard fit perfectly in the dining room.

Peter served as Library trustee for three terms in North Hampton, VP of the NH Library Trustees Association, on the board of the American Independence

Museum, President of the NH Archives Group, and on the Collections Committee of the New Hampshire Historical Society. He and his wife Cynthia assisted numerous state and local governments from Nevada to Maine, non-profit cultural institutions, foundations, federal agencies and colleges and universities as well as working for about a hundred of NH's 234 towns, and several NH state agencies, including a strategic plan for the state's historical records.

At home, he started out with fix-up and improvement projects galore; and then relaxed as his health declined. Peter still walked and hiked as best he could until old age and other maladies did him in. Peter & Cynthia's last trip to the White Mountains was in the Fall 2019. With the onset of his various health ailments, Cynthia did learn how to cook, provided him copious amounts of cookies and perfected loading the dishwasher.

A private service will be held at later date. In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Peter Parker can be made to Randolph Mountain Club for the Mt. Madison Fund by clicking here (https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=TJWT2QX4K8SXC&source=url) or by mail to P.O. Box 279, Gorham NH 03581.