

Peter Grenville Smith, O.L.S., C.L.S.
1948 - 2006

By Ronald A. Denis, O.L.S. C.L.S.



Peter Grenville Smith, O.L.S., C.L.S. was born on January 5, 1948 in Ottawa, Ontario. He grew up in the Westboro area of the city. His mother passed away when Peter was only eleven years old, and his father, Grenville Smith raised Peter and his brothers when a single parent was a rarity. Grenville was an outdoorsman and passed on his love of hiking, canoeing, fishing and hunting to Peter. They remained close until Grenville's death in 1993.

Peter graduated from Nepean High School in 1966. Like many of his contemporaries what started as a "summer job" of course led to a successful career in our profession.

His first summer was in 1967 when Peter started with the "County of Carleton" working with Hugh J. (Jack) Martin. It was with Jack that Peter started his career. In January 1970 they both moved "over to"

S.E. & H.R. Farley Ltd. an established survey firm in Ottawa. Peter finished his articles with Jack and was commissioned on November 15, 1971. In "those days" the company ran fifteen (15) field crews between Henry Farley, Jack Martin and Peter. Peter began to oversee the day-to-day activities especially those of the construction industry working with "the Campeaus" Minto and Costain to name a few. Every now and then Peter would race out in his Rambler to stake out a building pulling along an instrument person who was reluctant to be with him as he knew he was in for a long day.

Peter was a quick study with the ability to solve complex problems. His pragmatic ways were the characteristic I recall the most. He had a deep love for retracement surveys and always turned to the "Carleton Historical Map" to explain his logic. I must say to this day I cherish the book as well. The history of the Hudson Bay Company was among his favourite readings which as he would say "serves us well to understand early land development of Ontario/Canada".

I was fortunate to begin my professional career with Peter and in turn articulated with him.

On the surface Peter was a hard driving and talented land surveyor. We remember him sometimes with a gruff exterior combined with a truly caring personality.

According to Ian Hembery, Peter's friend of twenty-five (25) years, and the 'best man' at Peter's wedding, the last years were the happiest time for Peter because of his wife Shirley O'Bryan and his marriage to her on October 20, 2006.

Peter and Shirley first met many years ago while they were each on camping trips in Algonquin Park (Peter was living in Ottawa and Shirley was from Belleville). Thus began a "long distance romance" which lasted for almost twenty-five (25) years. Then after being "out of touch" they made contact with each other again. The wedding was a very happy time for the couple despite the fact that Peter was recovering from recent cancer surgery.

Peter died of complications from cancer in an Ottawa hospital just seven (7) weeks after his wedding. He is survived by his wife Shirley, and his brothers Douglas and Phillip, all of Ottawa.