

Gabriel Léger

Gabriel Léger - It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Gabriel Léger on October 10, 2015 at the age of 72 years. He was born in Hearst on September 20, 1943. He is survived by his loving wife Margaret, his children Scott and Tracy, three granddaughters Nicole, Natasha and Mackenzie, three brothers Robert, André and Louis, and one sister Liliane, and a number of nieces and nephews. He was cremated in Thunder Bay and per his request no funeral or memorial will be held. C'est avec grande tristesse que nous vous annonçons le décès de Gabriel Léger survenu le 10 octobre 2015 à l'âge de 72 ans. Il était né à Hearst le 20 septembre 1943. Il laisse pour pleurer sa perte son épouse Margaret, ses enfants Scott et Tracy, trois petites-filles: Nicole, Natasha et Mackenzie, trois frères: Robert, André et Louis, une sœur, Liliane, ainsi que plusieurs neveux et nièces. Sa dépouille mortelle a été incinérée à Thunder Bay. Selon ses dernières volontés, il n'y aura pas de funérailles ni de service commémoratif.

Gabe was predeceased by his parents Magistrate Marcel Léger and Madeleine Hallé, as well as his brother Jean and sister Anita.

The obituary above was posted in the Kapuskasing Northern Times in Oct, 2015 but there is so much more to say about our old friend from the Hearst High School days.

His wife Margaret provided the following personal details of Gabe's life since leaving high school. She was born and raised in Geraldton ON, her maiden name was Carlson, her dad worked in the mine and her mother was a telephone operator.

In her words:

“Gabe was working in the office at Trans Canada Pipelines when we met on July 4th 1965 and married three months later on Oct. 2 1965 in Geraldton. We celebrated our 50th anniversary in 2015 (he was gone 8 days later). Steve Siska & Nicole Poliquin were our best man & maid of honour so there was no question that Gabe would attend Steve's Celebration of Life on August 29th. We had no indication that he was so sick.

Gabe attended Cornwall College and also Kings Business College in Thunder Bay.

Through the years he has been employed at Trans Canada Pipelines, Newaygo, GL Sales (his personal business), John Deere, Strongco, Gauthier GM in Winnipeg MB. At retirement he drove vehicles for a Manitoba dealership to the natives up north. He loved this. We retired in Thunder Bay two years ago but he still drove for the dealership in MB. In fact he flew to Winnipeg and drove a vehicle to the Montreal Port then flew back to Winnipeg. He did this trip a total of three times in ten days, got home at midnight on Monday then Wednesday morning flew to Ottawa for Steve's Celebration of Life. He was diagnosed the next day in Ottawa with lung cancer.

He loved the North and travelled to Fort Severn On, Peawanuck ON (Hudson Bay), Attawapiskat ON (James Bay), Gillam MB, Cross Lake MB, Whitehorse Yukon and Norman Wells and Yellowknife NWT. He travelled the Dempster Highway and on the ice roads to Inuvik & Aklavik, the same roads that you see

on the TV show "The Ice Road Truckers", and he has personally met Alex from that show.

Gabe loved doing home renovations and working with wood, he was a true Mr. Fix-It. He also enjoyed playing golf, coaching and supporting hockey, in fact all three grand-daughters inherited his love for hockey, but his passion was cars. Gabe had a very exciting and full life and had no regrets, it goes without saying that his family and grand-daughters are his legacy."

The following personal thoughts come from a few of his old friends from Hearst:

"..... Gabriel's passing came as sad and shocking news....

As close neighbours across the river Gabriel and I were good friends and schoolmates; we played hockey, served mass as altar boys, and generally hung out together

I will carry with me always memories of the joyful and carefree time spent with Gabriel in my early years in Hearst "

André Payeur

The picture on the right, courtesy of Sue Wade Volkmann, shows Andre Payeur, Bob Wilson and Gabe Léger at a party in Hearst in the early 60s.

The cool guys are on one side pretending to ignore the girls on the other side. Nice hair though.



"Very sad news. I worked with Gabe at Newaygo. He was always an "eager beaver" and sure knew his stuff! The office fellas had to take turns driving the rest of the office workers in the Newaygo Mini Van daily. Gabe was by far the "fastest" driver but also by far the best driver! We always felt safe with him. I won't mention some of the other drivers....but will say the smell of "booze" was often in the air..."

Rose Marie Cowie Mondour

“Thanks for the info. Gabe and I worked at Newaygo Timber for a few years and I was involved in minor hockey in Hearst. with him. Gabe was four months older than I am. May he rest in peace.”

Lionel Levasseur

THE NEWAYGO BASEBALL TEAM, photo provided by Maxine Phair.



Back L-R: Max Phair, John Wrinn, Al Jansson, Gabe Léger, Chris Frampton, Jim Mooney, Gaetan Beauvais, Gerry Hensen, Jacques Cantin, & Dennis Bienvenue..Front L-R: Andre Côté, Harold Frost, Scott Matheson

Rémi Lacasse, who drove him to the hospital in Ottawa when he was experiencing chest pains on Aug. 27, adds:

“Gabe and I were Very Fortunate to be able to spend several days together. Although the circumstances were by no means the best, it was High Quality Time, we Bonded and Reminisced. I am very grateful.”

Rémi Lacasse.



Gabe and Rémi Aug. 29. 2015 (photo by Rudy Bies)

While Gabe is not in the picture below of a Teen Town gathering at the Northway Restaurant in Hearst in 1959, his brothers Robert and Jean are as well as some of his friends, including Remi Lacasse.



Back Row: Aimé Chevrier, Marcelle Dehaitre, Mario Barrette, Peggy Garnett, Paul Laprise: Jeanine Fontaine, Gaston Jacques

Third: Paul Darrah Peggy Wade, Patsy Smith, Robert Léger, Roger Comeau, Dorothy Girard, Jeanine Néolet, Rémi Lacasse, Clemence Ruel, Sonny Ward

Sitting: Lucien Gagné, Claudette Néolet, Marcel Vaillancourt, André Roy, Lise Levesque, Denise Lavoie, Rosaire Levesque

Front: Jean Léger and Colette Trudel

His wife Margaret provided the following poignant description of his final days which are a testament to his strength and dignity and ability to maintain his sense of humour right to the end.

“Hi Everyone

Just a little update of Gabe's last few days and how your life can change in just 45 days.

Gabe flew to Ottawa on Aug 26th for his buddy Steve Siska's memorial service which was scheduled for August 29. He experienced extreme chest pains so his good friend Rémi Lacasse brought him to the Emergency at the General Hospital at 6:30 on the morning of August 27th. After several hours of tests he was diagnosed with lung cancer. He did not tell me until he flew home a few days later as he wanted to tell me in person. Hardest thing he ever had to do he said. He enjoyed seeing many of his old friends, some for the first time in 50 years, only he knew it was for the last time.



Gabe with Rudy Bies. Photo by Gloria Bies

He saw the lung specialist on September 15 here in Thunder Bay and was told it was in both lungs and had spread to the rib cage, that's why his ribs were so sore....Incurable and no treatment would help....September 20th he turned 72 years old..September 23rd he saw the Dr. at the cancer care centre for pain management and was given the prognosis...maybe till Christmas. Friday October 2 was our 50th anniversary. Sunday the 4th he made spaghetti and he drove to town. Monday and Tuesday. nauseated & in pain. Wednesday, October 7th, he drove to his Doctor's appointment and walking from the parking lot into the hospital he was so short of breath and nauseated he needed a wheelchair .The Dr immediately gave him a shot for nausea, gave him oxygen, started an IV and admitted him. Thursday his kidneys were failing....prognosis weeks... Friday his kidneys were failing worse, had a lot of pain....prognosis only days. Saturday heavily medicated ...prognosis HOURS left....Wow he was going fast....2:00 transferred to a private room... Lillian/Derek/Carmen/ Paul were there....6:30 I noticed his breathing was laboured and I knew it wouldn't be long. I was holding his hand saw his eyes roll back, called the nurse, Lillian got two more breaths from him and then the Dr. said "I'm sorry". My one and only precious love left us at 10 to 7 PM Sat. Oct. 10

Scott/Louis/Andre missed him by 35 minutes. It just was not meant to be for them to be there. Darkise waited in Hearst for Sonia (our God-daughter) they were coming the following day as planned.

He made all the cremation arrangements on September 30th. We choose his urn together. We liked two and I asked him which one he would like....He said you choose, you're the one that will be looking at it...I'll be inside. He was very open about his cancer & talked about it freely and was not afraid to die....he got his wish to go fast and not suffer. But I must say that it was a little too fast for me, but you know Gabe he never let any grass grow under his feet...he liked to do things fast...I came, I saw, let's go. Now that #\$\$#@ cancer is no more. He is pain free and with all his family & friends that have paved the way for him.

Mackenzie, our six year old grand-daughter said that she was very sad but Tracy told her that's okay to feel sad and you won't see pe-pere everyday BUT he is always in your heart and you can talk to him any time anywhere, so she looks up and says in a loud voice (as heaven is far away you know) je t'aime pe-pere and she was happy.

As per Gabe's very vocal instructions...there would be NO funeral & NO memorial.

He was always organized and didn't want to inconvenience anyone. He chose to leave us when everyone was together and give each other support, then each can go back home to carry on with their lives and not miss a day's work....he was considerate to the end.

Margaret

P.S. Nicole our oldest grand-daughter asked Tracy "Is pe-pere still afraid of heights?"

Tracy replied "yes, why?" She said "he better get over that quick or he will be going in the other direction" I would love to of heard what Gabe's response would have been, as he always had a fast come back answer. “

Let us remember Gabe with love and respect and also take care of each other. Never be too busy to take a phone call or a visit from an old friend.