



Peter Benjamin, MD, CM, FRCP (C)

August 24, 1929 - January 15, 2023

Dr. Peter Benjamin passed away from complications of Covid-related pneumonia at Houston Methodist Hospital on January 15, 2023, surrounded by his loving family.

Born to Charles and Hilda Benjamin and raised in Montreal, Canada, he chose medicine over the family newspaper distributing company. Peter obtained his B.Sc. in 1951 and his M.D. from McGill University in 1955. He was the first First Class Honors Student to graduate in Physiology at McGill University and one of very few Jewish students to be accepted into the freshman medical class in the days of openly practiced antisemitic quotas in many Canadian universities.

Peter married the love of his life, Sonia Grover, in 1951. Their fairy tale romance of 71 years included a shared joy of travel, a love of the arts, music, literature, and fine dining. Together they raised 3 children, sons Eugene and Lloyd who followed Peter's footsteps into medicine, daughter Louise, a lawyer, and welcomed 5 grandsons to whom he was a devoted Papa. The family was recently expanded with the arrival of their first great-grandchild, at last a Benjamin girl.

Peter was a devoted and caring pediatrician. He was of the era when housecalls were still performed and his children can recall accompanying him,

often on cold and snowy nights, watching him trudge through the snow, gripping his black doctor's bag, into the house of a sick child. They would eagerly await his return to the car, telling them what he had done to help the family get through the night.

One of Peter and Sonia's greatest adventures was their move in 1977 from Montreal to Houston, Texas. He quickly developed a thriving pediatric practice, opened a satellite office, and affiliated with Texas Children's Hospital. They learned to wear cowboy boots, dance the "Cotton Eye Joe", eat Texas BBQ, made new friends, and lived a beautiful new chapter of their lives.

He recognized the importance of treating adolescents and pioneered separate clinics devoted to their care, at first at Montreal Children's Hospital and later through Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. He loved being a doctor and for years after he "retired", he continued well into his 80's to fill in for other doctors at various Texas Children's pediatric offices.

Peter always loved the outdoors and nature. As a young man, he enjoyed camping, fishing, canoeing, hiking, and skiing. He was always at peace and happiest in his beloved garden. He loved animals and rode horses as a boy; he adored and spoiled every family dog.

Peter was the original "Mr. Fix-It". He would teach himself every skill needed to get a job done, rather than hire someone.

Peter loved cars and, although he declared 10 years ago that "that" was the last car he would get, he got at least 2 more after and probably would have gotten another.

He was a brilliant thinker and strategist; there was never a problem he could not solve, particularly if it involved helping a loved one. A keen student of

history, politics, and finance; he read voraciously and enjoyed active discussion.

While short of patience and sometimes curmudgeonly, just below the crusty exterior was a big sentimental teddy bear who teared up when speaking of his loved ones and who would do anything for family and friends. He had a great sense of humor and loved to laugh, loved to “misbehave” for his grandchildren, and loved life.

When faced with adversity, Peter was brave and courageous. In 2016 he was diagnosed with lymphoma and underwent often difficult treatments for years, without complaint or self-pity. He was happily cancer free in recent years and, while isolated due to the pandemic, he found meaningful ways to fill his days.

In the end the Covid which he so carefully guarded against since the beginning of the pandemic proved too much of a struggle. He did not give in nor give up; he simply made a choice in which his actions and body language spoke louder than words. The choice to be free of suffering, the choice to demand quality of life and not just to be alive. The choice to be free at last.

Left to mourn him are his wife, Sonia, sons Eugene (Bryan and Robert/Margot and Reece), Lloyd (wife Lin, son Ian), daughter Louise Malek (spouse, Jean-Michel, sons Saul and Gabriel).

The family would like to thank Houston Methodist Hospital and its wonderful physicians and staff, including Dr. Doerr, Dr. Grimes, Dr. Nguyen and Peter’s wonderful oncologist and special friend who gave us these extra years, Dr. Beinart.

Donations may be made in Peter’s honor to Houston Humane Society,

Houston Methodist Hospital or McGill University Medical School.

A graveside service was held on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at Emanu El Memorial Park.

Cemetery Details

Emanu El Memorial Park

8341 Bissonnet St
Houston, TX 77074

Tribute Wall

IQ

“ *Dr. Benjamin was a marvellous pediatrician to my children. The world has lost an incredible life. Deepest condolences.*

*Ida Quesnel and family.
Montreal, Quebec, Canada*

Ida Quesnel - January 28, 2023 at 02:23 PM

MN

“ *I'm so sorry for your loss. I'm sending prayers and love. Dr Benjamin was our family Pediatrician. Wonderful Humble Md. Marlene Nelham*

marlene Nelham - January 28, 2023 at 11:05 AM

LV

“ *Dear Sonia, My sympathy to you on the loss of your precious Peter. I remember you both so fondly. When you moved to Houston, I replaced Peter on the Town Council of Hampstead where I served for 25 years.*

Lillian Vineberg-Goodman - January 28, 2023 at 08:37 AM

HB

“ *My sincerest condolences to the Benjamin family on their loss. The hospitality shown by Peter and Sonia when I first moved to Houston from Montreal was and is very much appreciated.*

Howard Better - January 22, 2023 at 11:29 AM

LB

“ He was my dad. The man. Brilliant, well-read, a survivor, incredibly talented and knowledgeable about so many disciplines, funny, and an extremely devoted father and husband. I will miss him forever. The pain of it is beyond description. Love you so much, Dad.

Lloyd Benjamin - January 19, 2023 at 11:05 PM



“ Peter will be missed. Our friendship started in Montreal in high school, then college and continuing all the years until the present. Peter proudly welcomed us to Houston many times. The bond stayed strong and we miss not being with the family at this sad time. Sonia, we love you. Love to the whole Benjamin family from Hinda and the Taninbaum-Letovsky family.

Hinda Letovsky - January 19, 2023 at 07:04 PM

GT

I have known Dr. Benjamin my whole life. My mother has known him since high school. When I went to Houston Texas in 2008 for life saving heart surgery, Dr. Benjamin drove us by the hospital the day before the pre surgery testing. He was my pediatrician until I remember him telling my Mom and me that I was too old to see a pediatrician. I have wonderful memories of the Benjamin family. RIP. GARY TANINBAUM.

GARY TANINBAUM - January 23, 2023 at 10:21 PM

FH

Dear Sonia, I am so sorry for your loss. You and Peter were so hospitable when I joined the McGill Montreal Hospital Learning Centre, and invited me for dinner. I have fond memories of you as a warm, wonderful teacher. May your own memories of wonderful times spent together with Peter, console you at this sad time. Sincerely Fiona Hellstrom

Fiona Hellstrom - January 28, 2023 at 10:12 AM



A contemporary in Montreal's suburban Outremont just a few weeks his junior, I recall Peter as the handsome son of my mother's friend Hilda. I also recall Peter's father as having been blind..
Lionel Alberr, Toronto, Ontario

Lionel Alberr - January 28, 2023 at 12:09 PM