

# Peter E. Oettinger

## Obituary



Peter E. Oettinger, age 73, passed away suddenly on July 8, 2010. He was the beloved husband for 43 years of Marlys (Klug) Oettinger. Peter was born in Antwerp, Belgium, in 1937. When he was just three years old, the Nazis invaded Belgium, and his father and grandfather were taken and deported to work camps. Peter, his mother, and his grandmother fled to France, where they were caught and interned in a work camp, which was a staging area for deportations to the Polish extermination camps. Peter fell ill in the work camp and his mother convinced a Nazi guard to allow them to leave the camp to receive medical attention from the Red Cross. Once outside the camp, a Red Cross worker advised them to flee the work camp and warned them of the horror that lie ahead; Peters mother heeded the warning and bravely fled. In 1942, Peter and his mother crossed the Jura mountains by foot into the comparative safety of Switzerland where they lived until the end of the war. In 1945, they both emigrated to the U.S. and were miraculously reunited with Peters father and maternal grandmother. The Holocaust tragically claimed the lives of virtually all of his other family members. After settling in New York City, Peter attended the New York City Public Schools, including the Bronx School of Science. The pursuit of education was highly regarded in his family, and Peter went on to obtain several degrees | a bachelors degree from Cornell University, a masters degree from the California Institute of Technology, and a PhD from Stanford University. An accomplished scientist, Peter was a dedicated employee as well as an entrepreneur. He spent a good portion of his career working as a physicist at ThermoElectron (now ThermoFisher) in Waltham. From there, Peter decided that his contribution to society would be greater if he applied the skills he had acquired in X-ray technology to try to help fight the spread of cancer, and he launched his own company, PhotoElectron, which focused on making X-ray devices to irradiate malignant cancer tumors in the brain and breast. In addition to his formal career, Peter always enjoyed innovating and inventing, and numerous patents can be credited to his name. In his free time, Peter enjoyed playing classical guitar, and he was also passionate about skiing, sailing, and playing tennis. He had a witty sense of humor and a balanced outlook on life. In addition to his wife, Peter is survived by four children who love him dearly: Philip Oettinger and his wife Trina of San Carlos, Calif.; Marc Oettinger of Washington, D.C.; Ariane Purdy and her husband John of Swampscott, and Andrea Oettinger of Philadelphia; and three grandchildren: Ethan, Jacob and Ellis. He was the brother-in-law of Anthony Klug and his wife Ahnna of Arvada, Colo. Services were held on July 12 at Congregation Kerem Shalom in Concord, Mass., and burial was at the Woodlawn Cemetery in Acton. In lieu of flowers remembrances may be made to the American Heart Association , 20 Speen St., Framingham, MA 01701 or the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Plaza, SW, Washington, D.C. 20024-2150.

Published in The Boxborough Beacon from July 20 to July 27, 2010