



## Margaret (Peggy) Amirault

February 19, 1948 - April 26, 2023

Margaret (Peggy) Amirault came into the world at the Grace Maternity Hospital in Halifax on February 19, 1948. Peggy departed this world on April 26 at 2:47 a.m. at the Halifax Infirmary.

Peggy was pre-deceased by her father, Louis Edgar Amirault (1986) and her mother, Joyce Audrey (Burton) Amirault (2022).

Peggy's dad hailed from Amirault's Hill in N.S. He met Joyce Burton in England shortly after he left home to serve overseas during the war. Louis and Joyce corresponded for two years while he was a prisoner of war in Germany. They married after the war, and Louis carried on with his career in the armed forces back in Canada with his new bride.

When Peggy was a teenager, her dad was posted to Germany and the family followed; Peggy completed her high school there. Later, the family returned to Gagetown in Oromocto, N.B.

After graduating with a BA majoring in political science from the University of New Brunswick in 1971, Peggy had a brief stint working for the federal government in Halifax, doing unemployment insurance-related assignments. "Too much office politics," she said. Shortly after this, she decided to forego the possibility of a pension and dove into the freelance writing world.

Some of her early assignments were for The Scotian Journalist, during which time the paper tied with the Globe & Mail for the Michener Award for Journalism. She also conducted interviews and wrote profiles and stories for professional trade journals and mainstream magazines on topics ranging from business and current events to legislation, medicine, and the environment. The prolific writer said with her characteristic dry wit, “I once wrote for a trucking magazine. I didn’t have a driver’s licence for a car let alone a 16-wheeler. I had an uncle who was a long-haul driver ... but that’s the closest I ever got to trucking.”

Peggy’s national writing credits include Quill and Quire, Financial Times, and publications from the MacLean-Hunter and Southam Groups.

During the late 1970s, Peggy joined the Writers’ Federation of Nova Scotia (WFNS) where she produced Eastword, a hefty newsletter celebrating who’s who in the writing realm. Eastword also provided resources and promoted programs and opportunities for writers throughout Nova Scotia (and further afield.) Those were the days when production involved using Linotype, paper, scissors, wax, and glue. She did it all: collected content, wrote several articles, and did the layout, editing, and typesetting. This is also where she was introduced to the writing community in Atlantic Canada and started to foster lifelong friendships.

“I’ve known Peggy since we were young freelancers about to conquer the writing world,” says friend and colleague donalee Moulton. “Peggy was always steadfast in her path: to love what she was doing, to spend time with friends, to find joy whether in the pages of a book, over tea with a neighbour, or cuddling a cat. What Peggy may not have realized—but all of us who knew her did—was the life lessons she taught us without ever trying.” donalee adds, “I learned kindness from Peg. I learned to savor small pleasures. Most

recently as Peggy's path came to an end, I learned courage.”

Lorna Parlee met Peggy when they took a class together at university. They have been best friends ever since then. “Peggy was a homebody and family oriented. Early in life Peggy was rather shy but became more adept at speaking her mind. I think she was socially and politically aware as well,” Lorna says.

Recalling how Peggy loved to travel, and a trip they took to Europe in their mid-20s, Lorna adds, “We stayed in England with her grandmother for a few days, then headed to Amsterdam. Arriving late in the day we managed to find a room that we liked with two beds, a bathroom, and breakfast included.” As it turns out, their lodging was smack in the heart of the red-light district, with a porn store on one side of the hotel and a bordello on the other side. Lorna adds, “We stayed there for five days. It proved to be a very interesting neighborhood.” No doubt that experience tied into Peggy’s quirky sense of humour.

Peggy’s been described by writers who’ve had her as a book editor as being “an incredibly hard-working woman of letters [who was] deeply interested in the books and the writers she edited,” “a wonderful force,” “meticulous and insightful; always kind and thoughtful.”

Up to a few days before being admitted to the hospital and despite being in great pain, Peggy was trying to read manuscripts—in hopes that it would lessen the work of her co-workers. Although her editing ceased while she was in the hospital, Peggy continued to say “Thank you”—whether to a friend passing her a glass of water or a nurse probing for a vein to administer an IV.

Lesley Choyce hired Peggy to join his core team over 30 years ago. The publisher of Pottersfield Press says, “Peggy was a skilled, diligent editor of many of our books. She always went beyond the call of duty to keep things running smoothly and support our authors,” adding, “Peggy was a spirited individual, a brilliant editor, and a loyal friend through many years of us working together. She remained feisty to the end and will be greatly missed by me and many others in the Nova Scotia writing community.”

There will be a gathering to celebrate Peggy’s life on June 10 from 3 p.m.–5 p.m. at the home of Barb Cottrell in Halifax. Contact Barb to let her know you’ll be coming and to get directions: [2baracott@gmail.com](mailto:2baracott@gmail.com). Please pass the invitation along to anyone you think would like to toast Peggy.

Peggy wanted everyone attending to have a memento that meant something to her, so she generously gave several large boxes of books from which you can choose one that speaks to you. As Peggy spoke to all of us.

# Tribute Wall

LK

“ *Dearest Peggy,  
Our last chat was indeed our "last chat". Just was picking up the phone to check on you again, that would have been something, eh? I will miss our calls. Fond memories of Halifax and Gagetown. Say hello to Uncle Louis, Aunt Joyce, Aunt Ev, and Uncle Russ. Wish we could make it to the Memorial, but we'll be there in spirit.  
Love,  
Your cousin, Linda Kleinschmidt.*

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**Linda Kleinschmidt** - May 30, 2023 at 11:41 AM

JS

“ *Peggy and I worked together at Pottersfield Press for more than thirty years. We were co-editors, colleagues, and friends. I relied on her knowledge of the local publishing community, her good judgement about the editing process, and her decisiveness in getting the job done. During the course of conversations about work, we also exchanged views on various other subjects: cats and books and life in general. I always enjoyed her ironic sense of humour, and I admired her generosity and devotion to her mother, her cat, and her friends. She was great company for us all.*

*Peggy, we were a good team, and I will miss you.*

*Julia Swan*

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**Julia Swan** - May 11, 2023 at 07:13 AM