

# Life stories

A celebration of lives well lived and people well loved

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## Malcolm Graham was quiet family man

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Malcolm Graham

In his quiet way, Malcolm Graham could light up a room with his smile and had a way of making anyone he spent time with feel special.

Malcolm died at the age of 68 on March 25 at Southlake Regional Health Centre from complications three weeks after suffering a heart attack.

The Grahams came to Newmarket in 1973, shortly after Malcolm graduated from Western University and a chartered accountant apprentice program with Pricewaterhouse in Toronto.

They moved to town when Malcolm was offered a job with accounting firm Cossar, Hector and Payne on Main Street.

They did have a tie to Newmarket since his wife Mary Beth's parents, Gordon and Helen Ough, were born and raised in town and her grandfather, Jack Nesbitt, had been the mayor in the mid-1920s and again in the early 1930s.

Malcolm and Mary Beth met in Blenheim District High School near Chatham when he was in Grade 11 and she was in Grade 9.

It was love at first sight.

"We met in high school and dated and that was it," Mary Beth laughed.

"He was very handsome, a fabulous smile, very athletic, just a nice guy. I don't think you'd find

anybody that would say anything negative about Malcolm. He was one of those people, very giving in a quiet way, but always had time for people. Didn't matter if it was business-wise or friends or neighbours. Just in a quiet way, he would be there."

They married on Oct. 29, 1966 while Malcolm was still at Western.

The couple, parents of sons John and Jeff, would have celebrated their 50th anniversary this fall.

When they first moved to Newmarket, Malcolm got involved with the Lion's Club.

In 1975, he and some friends founded the York North Racquet Club, a squash club that raised the hackles of some for its men's

only policy.

"There were a lot of women who were not very happy with that group, not happy at all. It didn't bother me, but there were several others that were not too happy about it," Mary Beth said.

"It was a group of guys, there were some professional people and all kinds of great guys. They just decided they needed something (for men)."

Initially, Malcolm, who would go on to establish accounting firm Bateman, Graham, Fitzpatrick on Davis Drive, was an avid squash player, but his interest waned as work demands grew.

He also looked forward to an annual ski vacation with friends to

Vale, Colorado every December.

Despite the pressure of work, from which he never retired, Malcolm loved spending time with family and friends at the cottage they have had in southwestern Ontario since 1977.

"That was a big point for all of our family. It was always a very special place for everybody," Mary Beth said.

The whole family, including John and his wife, Connie, and their children, Mackenzie, Ireland, Conner and Liam, and Jeff and his wife, Susan, and their children, Georgia and Jack, loved spending time at the cottage.

"Family was huge (to Malcolm). I just think he was very proud of what all of them have achieved," Mary Beth said.

"Particularly, for the grandchildren, I think (the cottage) is a fun place to be, you're that next generation. He enjoyed them all. He loved having them around, loved having them at the cottage. Lots of boating, lots of swimming, lots of sailing. It was wonderful, really. A lot of family time. Malcolm worked really hard, but we had some real quality family time. Those are good memories."

Sadly, Jeff died six years ago at the age of 40 of a brain tumour after being diagnosed 12 years earlier.

Because of his illness, the family has been big supporters of the

Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada, helping to raise about \$100,000 over many years.

When Jeff died, his flag football league started a memorial golf tournament in his honour, a venture the family helped support.

Initially, proceeds from the tournament went to the brain foundation. For the last three years, it has raised about \$200,000 for the hospice at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

"Those kinds of things were really important to Malcolm. You wouldn't find him out there being the big cheerleader saying, 'Hey look at us, what we're doing,'" Mary Beth said.

"It was always just in a very quiet way. It was huge for him to be giving back."

Malcolm will be missed by family, friends, neighbours and clients, Mary Beth said.

"He was probably one of the most generous people I've ever met. Very kind. Always put other people ahead of himself. Even at the office, if people came in with even just the smallest problem, it didn't matter. He would take just as much time with that person as he would with someone with a very complicated problem. Everybody felt he was giving his all," she said.

"And he had the most wonderful smile. It just made everyone else smile. He could just light up a room with that smile."

Life stories



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