

**SEDGWICK, George Gordon (Gord) [UNTD CATARAQUI 1952 U-66490] (1934 - 2017) Age: 83**



In high school Gordon Sedgwick saved a young boy from drowning in his beloved home town of Kingston, Ontario. The story is remarkable in its heroism, but it says more about the kind of man he was that he rarely spoke about it. He would much rather tell stories about the feats of his uncle and namesake who died in the First World War, his father Samuel George who fought in both World Wars or his mother Minnie Ellen who graduated from McMaster University in 1923, when few women attended university. Gordon was extraordinary in his humility.

Gordon was an outstanding student: Valedictorian of his high school class at Kingston Collegiate and Vocational Institute (1952); Permanent Class President of his Arts class at Queen's University (1956); and near the top of his class at Queen's University Law School (1961). True to form, when he spoke about those years his focus was never on his achievements in the classroom. He was more interested in reliving the exploits of his merry band of pranksters (particularly of the perfectly executed CCCP invasion of Kingston City Hall and British Invasion of four upstate New York towns on George Washington's birthday) or the friends he made and experiences they shared with the Fort Henry Guard and the Canadian Navy's University Naval Training Divisions program. He was awarded the Minister of National Defense's sword as best cadet on the East Coast., and retired from the Reserves with the rank of Sub-Lieutenant..

After law school Gordon moved to Toronto to embark on a thirty year career as a corporate and commercial lawyer at the firms of Tilley, Carson & Findlay and Borden & Elliott. Gordon was a brilliant, passionate and hard-working lawyer. He fiercely advocated for the hiring and advancement of women in the legal profession and was more driven by the opportunity to work with and champion young, talented lawyers than by the money and accolades.

In 1993 Gordon was appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice (General Division) where he would remain until the end of his career at age 75 in 2009. He loved his time on the bench. He enjoyed the intellectual challenge of the job and relished the opportunity that it gave him to play an active role in the safeguarding of Canadian justice. He believed justice should be accessible and fair and was a believer in the use of "plain language". He would frequently admonish lawyers for using antiquated Latin legal maxims to confuse unrepresented litigants.

During his 16 years on the bench Gordon also dedicated himself to learning French, determined to be able to hear matters in both of Canada's official languages (he succeeded). This was very meaningful to Gordon, who was also a VERY proud Canadian. Much of Gordon's pre-judicial appointment life was spent engaged in Canadian politics. As a young man, he was the Progressive Conservative Party youth chair and travelled the country with the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker. He later served as floor manager for Joe Clark in his successful 1976 party leadership campaign, besting Flora McDonald and her team which included Gordon's future wife Libby Burnham. Gordon wanted to be of service to his party and to his country, but preferred to stay behind the scenes.

Gordon had an insatiable thirst for knowledge about all things Canadian. His collection of books on Canadian culture, history and politics rivalled any library and he loved nothing more than to explore his

hometown. He accepted a judicial appointment in the Eastern Ontario region in part because it allowed him to work a circuit and sit on the benches in Pembroke, L'Orignal, Cornwall, Brockville, Napanee, Picton, Belleville, Ottawa and, most importantly, Kingston. He loved to drive around eastern Ontario and only took the most direct route when there were no other options available. If he could double the length of a drive using back roads, he would without hesitation. Gordon had the opportunity to travel many places, far and wide, but his most cherished adventures were always within Canada.

Gordon loved people. He loved learning. He loved history and politics. He loved reading and music. He loved to sing...loudly. Gordon loved the water (especially the St. Lawrence River in and around the Thousand Islands) and loved being on boats. He once circumnavigated Newfoundland, visiting remote out ports, aboard a mail delivery ship. He loved every minute of that trip. To those who knew Gordon, family surpassed all of his other passions. He was tremendously and vocally proud of his wife, children and grandchild (soon to be grandchildren). Their accomplishments, no matter how small, were the stuff of legend to be shared with anyone who would listen.

The Honourable Mr. Justice G. Gordon Sedgwick Q.C. died peacefully at the Wellesley Central Place in Toronto, Ontario on September 10, 2017. Born in Kingston, Ontario on July 27, 1934, Gordon is predeceased by his parents Samuel George Sedgwick and Minnie Ellen Ferguson and his younger sister Anita Jean Albrecht. He is survived by his wife Libby Burnham CM, QC, DCL, three children John (Leigh-Ann McGowan), Anne, and Jamie (Alice Cohen) and his much adored grandson Sam (and Sam's sibling, coming soon). He will also be missed by the countless others lucky enough to have encountered his gentle nature, keen intellect and playful sense of humour. In his final days, his mind and body failing him as he battled dementia, Gordon never stopped greeting everyone he met with the warm, kind and comforting smile so familiar to anyone who knew him. He was a wonderful husband and father and the love he had for his family was limitless and unconditional. The feeling is mutual Dad. We love you. Thank you for sharing your incredible journey with us.

If you wish to honour Gordon's life with a donation, his family would appreciate that it be made to the Salvation Army or the Boys and Girls Club of Kingston.