

Michael Schuler, our friend and neighbor, has been a long-time supporter for Pel and I, during many tough times. One of several times, we thought Pel was going to die and was in Hospice. Michael and Pel had the same intellectual proclivity. After discussing a number of issues with Michael and Helen, like what do you want for your memorial service when you are gone, his response was "I think you Claire will know what to do." The last question was from Michael, "Do you have any unresolved existential issues? Pel with a slight smile, said, "No I do not take myself that seriously." I am so grateful Michael and Trina that you are here today.

I am so grateful and full of joy to see all of you today. And a special hurrah for Jose who conceived this idea and has done so much for well over a year, a loyal and much-loved friend to Pel and myself. As I look around the room, so many memories and stories fill my heart,

And so many memories and thoughts about Pel- George's life. The last year of his life was quite a journey with a lot of joy as well as sadness.

You may not know that George was in inpatient Agrace Hospice for a couple of months. The reason that following surgery for colon cancer, I began chemo. In the last few months I was too sick for him to be at home. This was one of many times that Frankie and Judy supported both of us in each of their own ways. Frankie has been our friend for many years and he and Pel were pals. During this time, he visited Pel in hospice and helped me with other issues. Judy Allen also a friend for years continued to work with Pel as his editor for "The Accidental Statistician" during this time and before. Now she is master gardener among her many other talents. An editor was new and she was excellent, patient and always kind and has always been so.

As soon as my body could not tolerate any more chemo, I called Hospice and said he was coming home. They were concerned but with the support of so many, it worked! Still Judy, Frankie, his family, friends, so many caring and loving people and Agrace outpatient. Pel had some very good weeks although quite ill. The book was sent into Wiley for publication.

One morning Pel told me he could not understand a simple lovely poem, we talked about his heart failure and this might impact. A bit later I called Hospice and told them that Pel would not be around very long. You are overreacting, the kind person said. However, I was OK after my treatment and I believed that if Pel got confused and could not use that creative brain, it would let go soon. And that began with a day or so. Home hospice started coming as well as other friends and loved ones.

Isaac and Helen came up on the weekend, it was spring break, so that was a huge comfort for Pel and I. And then the next week Tom and Andy came. Pel and I felt loved and supported by many. That week Pel began his final journey and each day was letting go of life.

Exactly a week after I initially called Hospice, Pel was obviously close to death. That AM I heard the doorbell ring. It a bit vague however I think it around noonish. Wiley had been trying to get a copy of *The Accidental Statistician* to him quickly. Isaac took the unbound copy and put the cover on it. After a bit, he came into the room, with the book. Grampa Pel, your book is here and gently placed it under his hand. He asked if I though Pel knew, and I said yes. Tom was with me when Pel took his last sweet breath.

It was Easter weekend so the burial at Farley Green Sanctuary had to wait until the following week.

Michael led us in the gravesite service. At the end, Andy walked over to where Pel's body lay, and dropped his favorite rainbow-colored hat over his body. Someone said oh no you want to keep that but Andy was firm! We left for a reception up at the house and a few stayed to fill in the grave including Michael.

Pel lived and died with dignity, support and love, his humor, quick wit, wisdom, love continue to live within my heart. He sits on my shoulder these days.

Grief has become a sweet sadness and he continues to give me wise advice — are you sure you want to do that, check out your assumptions, if you change two medications at the same time, the results will be confounded, are you really sure you **are not** able to do that, take a risk and believe in yourself. And I would rather cut my throat than vote conservative, something his father also said. And he walks beside me as I participate in climate crisis events. He holds this sign and is always there.

Read Isaac's essay

People say that childhood implies innocence— not perceiving that Florida will be flooded due to climate change, that the current congress is incapable of legislating, or that in certain parts of the world, girls can be shot because they stand up for their right to attend school. Learning this has changed me, but no matter how much I read, no matter how I studied the world's problems or lay awake thinking about them, these problems were still far away. I cannot fully comprehend these problems because I have not lived them, rather like how I cannot fully understand what it is like to fight against a powerful evil wizard from just reading *Harry Potter*.

Something that was immediate and tangible for me was the death of my grandfather, George Edward Pelham Box. He was a brilliant and innovative statistician— he changed statistics with his work, and in 1985 he was made a fellow of the Royal Society of London. "Statistician" is not the title I associate with him. He could have been ruler of the known universe, and I still would think of him as "Grandpa Pel." To me, he was a book-lover, a storyteller, a jokester, and a man who had a song (often '30s or '40s radio favorites, and often by Cole Porter) for every occasion. My grandpa was a man who could put everyone in a room

at ease, and was always ready with a quip that only Alzheimer's disease could make a person forget.

He died a few weeks after my birthday last year. We knew it was coming. Grandpa Pel was in his tenth decade, and his organs were failing simultaneously. Often, the medications that he took to help ease one part of his body would cause a problem in another.

I don't remember getting the call that he was dying. I don't remember the car ride up to Madison. Maybe I took a bus up. When I arrived, I'm not sure if I remember running into my Grandparents' house or waiting by the door, unsure of what to do. I know I felt like doing both. The memories that I am sure of start with me sitting by his bed. His choking breaths were death and pain, and they broke my heart. He looked at me and rasped some words into Claire's ear, which she translated. I wished that he had the strength for one last silly song, and felt so selfish for wanting that. He was dying, and I wanted to make requests.

Time gradually went by, and his condition worsened. He lost consciousness. I wasn't convinced he could hear me, even subconsciously, but I tried reading to him. It didn't work. I felt ashamed to interrupt his ragged breathing with my voice, as if it were the same as saying "shut up" when he was telling one of his funny stories. He died the next day.

I spoke at his funeral, and read from his favorite book, *Alice in Wonderland*. I talked about how he brought us all to magical place, and things I'd learned from him in life.

I learned from his death, too. Before his death, I don't believe that I understood what death was. It was an abstract concept. I knew it existed, but I had never felt it. I never faced it. Even now, I can't say that I understand it completely. But it made me understand (more) when my classmates suffered losses in their lives. Grandpa Pel's brought me into a world where death ceased to be an abstract concept but became a reality. It destroyed the innocent part of me that never faced death. My childish hope was replaced with a hope that combined with knowledge. Through this new understanding death, I became a wiser (and less innocent) human being than I was before.

And let us hold all those within the statistical community as we progress thru this day, as may we honor and remember those who have professionally and personally left us a legacy.

Florence Nightingale 1820—90

R. A. Fisher 1962—72

Frank Wilcoxon 1965—73

Gertrude Cox 1978—78

Gwilym M. Jenkins 1982—49

W. Edwards Deming 1992—93

George Barnard 2002—86

William Bill Hunter 1986—49

George-Pel Box 2003—93

Soren Bisgaard 2009—58

May their legacy continue to inspire all of us, with courage, the challenges of our times.

