

Peter Patrick James Lynsky (RIP)

by his long-time Partner, Colleagues on the teaching staff and Pupils

Peter Lynsky (aka 'Sir' or 'Pete') – Drama and English teacher at Northview High School

BORN: 22 March 1936

DIED: 8 July 2015

AGED: 79 Years

On A Sunday afternoon in December of '69, after the final performance of "Murder in the Cathedral", Peter invited me around to his apartment in Hillbrow for tea. I went.....and just never left. I had found the person I was to spend the next 46 years with.

In all that time, only one fight did we ever have. It involved a milk tart I was carrying, full of fresh, sloppy runny custard. Somehow it left my right hand and landed smack bang in the middle of his face. What ensued was a custard fight like no other and took 2 days to clean the apartment up. We laughed till the tears rolled down our cheeks and that joy we shared, endured until that awful day in July 2015 when Peter passed away.

You all know what a wonderful person Peter was, full of compassion and kindness. Always on the front line defending the defenceless, helping those in need and counselling those who had lost their way. I have received hundreds of Messages of Condolences from all over the world and would like to read an extract from one of his students, Hilton Jacobs, who writes

Peter was the rudder that steered my childhood, the compass that directed my adolescence, the man who taught me how to be a man, the friend who loved me like a father loves his child....."

I have received many messages from students saying that without Peter their lives might have turned out very differently. Grant Styer from the '80s phoned Peter every few weeks and had been doing that over 30 years! From the 80s was George T, also in regular contact, who referred to Peter as "DAD". Always the teacher, "dad" constantly urged everybody to delete hurtful words from their vocabulary and to forgive and forget those silly "faribles" that break up families and friendships.

Peter was a devout Catholic who never missed a Sunday mass in his life. In accordance with his last wishes he lay in a plain pine Jewish coffin, wearing his Queens High colours blazer and yamulka. Three heart rendering eulogies were delivered from the pulpit and I recited kaddish. The church was packed for his funeral and was a glorious send off for a magnificent human being.

Peter would have been overwhelmed at the response to his passing. I certainly was !

Thanks to the Class of '62 for organising an entry to remember him in your 'on-line booklet'. That is certain to open a floodgate of memories.

Best Regards



Michael Cohen



I probably knew Peter better than any of the members of *The Class of '62*.

I suppose he was about 2 – 3 years older than I.

As a colleague he was always interesting, entertaining, and above all fully committed to his teaching. As teachers we could see how popular he was with the “learners”, and how gifted he was in both “official” languages..

I fondly remember getting a lift to school in his red Corvair, (was it?)

I frequently saw him in later years when he helped his partner to run the restaurant at the Peter Toerien Theatre in Doornfontein.

Estelle Brodie (Kagan)

I was privileged to have Peter Lynsky as a colleague in the English Department at Northview for many years. We were at the school in the very early years with 104 pupils in 1957 and 500 pupils in 1961 in a beautiful, new school. There was a pioneering spirit among the teachers and the pupils, even if snakes were encountered in the long grass at breaks.

Peter and I were thrilled when we produced Shakespeare in the hall for the first time in 1961. His extracts were from “The Merchant of Venice” and mine were from “Hamlet.”

Apart from being a very special, inspirational teacher, Peter was always full of life and enjoyment. Unfortunately I had not seen him for over 50 years, but my memories of him will always be very vivid and very happy.

As Mark Antony says of the murdered Julius Caesar “*Here was a Caesar! When comes such another!*”

Lorna Gordon

Such devastating news !!

How we all loved him.....

His cool, calm manner, his eloquence

And most of all, his twinkle in his eyes

He would have come to our reunion in Sydney, but that didn't happen

What a shame.... He will forever be remembered

Lorraine Besserabie (Friedlander)

Having a tribute page is truly a noble and fitting gesture to a man who played such an influential and uplifting role in our development as young adults.

Rob Bluen, seconded by Chava Tuchzinsky

It is a mark of the man that he leaves behind so many who honour and remember him

Kalmen Datt

One of the teachers at NHS who seemed almost to be a peer, one of us. He commanded respect in whatever he did because he understood us so well and brought out the best. It was wonderful to go to the theatre in Johannesburg and see him on stage and was terrific to work with in Drama Society but , I'm sorry to say, Sir, I still don't forgive you for not giving me the part of Hamlet! RIP, Mr Lynsky

Brian Eisenberg

So so sad! So so many wonderful memories of a great personality and outstanding teacher

Sheila Gien (Posen)

He was a spark of light, but he leaves his glow behind
Ronald Goldberg

Very sad indeed. He will be missed
Martin Griss

I have to thank Peter Lynsky for instilling in me a love of literature. Thanks to his bringing books to life, I continued to read, everything from the classics to the modern, to this very day. My enduring memory of him is when he decided to change the seating in the classroom one day to replicate a theatre, with him seated in the centre and us around, similar to The Globe in London. Each lesson was like a performance. My most charismatic teacher at school.

Elaine Jay (Oppenheimer)

In our Matric year Peter Lynsky taught our class both English and Afrikaans, two subjects out of six. Sometimes we had a double English lesson followed by a double Afrikaans lesson with him. It seemed to us that we were forever in his class. His appeal, I think, was that he was a child at heart, was humorous, and found it easy to relate to his pupils. I distinctly remember during tests and exams he would invigilate walking up and down whilst learning (and mumbling to himself) his lines for his forthcoming play. He was a passionate teacher and actor. He showed genuine concern for each and every one of his pupils. MHDSRIP.

Melvyn Jaye

Peter Lynsky. How I treasure the long phone conversation we had last year – you were so close and yet so far.

I will always keep the wonderful memories of my time with you at Northview
A truly remarkable teacher

Roslyn Hakim (Gilbert)

Oh, dear. There goes a good actor, teacher, and later principal.
I think we can all learn from his verve. He had such a twinkle in his eyes when he sang "Standing on the Corner, watching all the girls go by" at the Civic Theatre.

Ian Kennedy

A sad day indeed!
Stan Klaff

Peter Lynsky will always be fondly remembered as an incredible inspiration and wonderful English teacher! Go in Love and Light, Peter

Beryl Kolman (Slavin)

He was a great teacher and certainly produced in me a love for the English language.
(Even if it may not have seemed so in my school days due to limited diligence and lack of academic application & results in language studies)

Much of my engineering career has involved rather more-mundane technical report writing in some form, but his influence shows even through that.

Alastair Morgan

So very sad. What a wonderful person and teacher - loved all his lessons. He was an inspiration. He will be missed by those who knew him.

Reva Rosmarin (Morris)

It is amazing. I haven't seen Peter Lynsky in 45 years (I did see him once in Hillbrow when he was running a pancake & crepe coffee shop in the early the 70's) and yet the news still comes as a shock. Maybe because he was the best of the best in my book (equal to Lorna Gordon of course) and maybe in the back of my mind I was thinking of maybe visiting him someday.

I was in Brisbane a few years ago on my way to say a final goodbye to Alwyn Sherman in Sydney. Unfortunately, had I known Peter was there, I most certainly would have made every effort to meet with him.

Max Salminis

How sad - and I don't think he was that much older than we are. One of the better teachers we had

Rene Sidley (Chait)

With Peter Lynsky English was always a lesson to be enjoyed. He made it so exciting and interesting and his personality was what carried it off with such flair. A time looked back on with affection and nostalgia. So glad we could make contact again one more time.

Madge Tomsett (Nettle)

So sorry to hear this . We all liked him

Merle Waksman (Gordon)

How privileged we all were to have shared in his life.

He made each person feel so special.

And what fun we all had!

Marlene Wilton (Venn)

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