

In Memoriam - Peggy Heller

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Fri 6/24/2011 10:27 AM

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IN MEMORIAM

HELLER, PEGGY

Jan. 8 1956 -June 20 2011.

Kathleen Margaret Heller was the daughter of Jean Case Morrison and Kenneth Lloyd Morrison. Born in Toronto, she grew up in Ottawa and Thunder Bay, Ontario, and always relished the life of the north, returning often to her family home and cottage on Lake Superior. As a teenager, she discovered her love of music, and learned to play the cello. She met her husband, Michael, in Thunder Bay and moved with him to Halifax in 1976, their home ever since. Her children Naomi (23) and Paul (21) have been an enriching presence in her life and a constant source of pride. Peggy held degrees in music and history from Lakehead and Dalhousie Universities, and in 2007 she earned her PhD from the Union Institute and University in Ohio. In 1982 Peggy began her academic career at the University of King's College. For almost thirty years she has been a pillar of that small community playing a central role in its growth and development, teaching in both the Contemporary Studies and the Foundation Year Programmes and serving for two terms as Director of Foundation Year. She was both nationally and internationally a strong voice for liberal arts education. She served on the Boards of the Atlantic School of Theology and the Association of Core Texts and Courses. She had a distinguished career as a writer and speaker on intellectual history. She was a team member of the Finnish Centre of Excellence in Political Thought and Conceptual Change and frequently taught and lectured in Finland. She was a beloved and respected teacher at King's, changing the lives and minds of generations of students, who have attested to her impact as a mentor, enabler and model. Her thought was always characterized by elegance, eloquence and precision, and she challenged students to rise to her level. Her life as a musician was also deeply important to her. She was a founding member of the Edward Street String Quartet, which has played regularly for over 25 years. She performed as a cellist often at many venues including the Crousetown Festival, and with Nova Sinfonia: recently she made her debut as a singer, in the King's Chorus. Music was a passion and she was delighted when "possessed" by the mighty works she performed. Peggy understood and encouraged gracious living; she stood for standards of generous hospitality and welcome, in her home and at work--and her grateful friends and family will always remember her conviviality and taste, her poise, her striking presence, and, most of all, her conversation.

Throughout her life, Peggy's family provided a constant and cherished source of love, support, and inspiration. Peggy is survived by her loving husband of 27 years, Michael Heller; by her two children Naomi and Paul; by her mother, Jean Case

Morrison; her two sisters, Tanya Morrison and Susan Di Tomaso; her cousin Heather Morrison; nephews Gregory and Dylan Di Tomaso; and by many other relatives.

A funeral service will be held in the Chapel of the University of King's College, 6350 Coburg Road, Halifax at 2 p.m. Wednesday June 29. A reception will follow in King's Prince Hall. Charitable donations honouring Peggy's life may be sent to the University of King's College. The University will match these gifts and will establish a student award for the Foundation Year Programme in her name.