

**LENDON, KENNETH Harry (Ken) [UNTD CATARAQUI '47] (1928 - 2015) Age: 87**



LENDON, Kenneth Harry Lendon, Ph.D., Professor of English at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan, has died in Owen Sound, Ontario, at the age of 87. His itinerant life of self-imposed exile from the conventional virtues of "Toronto the Good" carried him across the globe. As an undergraduate at Queen's he served as a cadet on the destroyer Athabaskan, until he was cashiered for writing a possibly naive article in a radical journal denouncing militarism in the military. He took his Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins University in 1954 with a brilliant dissertation on the early novels of D.H. Lawrence. This sojourn in Maryland made him a life-long fan of the Baltimore Orioles, a quixotic affiliation more productive of rueful disappointment than of triumphant joy, and left him with no great confidence in American law enforcement. Wearing a beard to look less absurdly young, he was arrested as a deserter from the US Army, it being taken for granted in the clean-shaven Fifties that only a fugitive attempting disguise would so conceal his face.

Ken's first academic appointment was at the University of California at Santa Barbara, a town that he found even more boring and hidebound than the Toronto of his youth. He consequently resigned and toured Europe with his wife Deborah in a Deux Chevaux: they disagreed in later years about who got to steer and who had to push when the underpowered car was defeated by the hills of Spain. A life of wandering in lands far from Toronto funded by spells of teaching suited him perfectly, and when his wife suggested that she would find such an existence more tolerable if accompanied by regular rations of food and hot water, he became a Lecturer for the British Council. That organization sent him on three-year stints teaching English literature at universities in lands even farther from Spadina Avenue: to Shiraz in Iran, to Jogjakarta in Indonesia, to Beirut in Lebanon and finally to Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan. When his British Council appointment lapsed, he passed into the direct employment of Waseda's distinguished English Department, and there he lectured, much loved by his students, until his retirement in 1998.

Ken came to maturity as an academic in the blissful era when being an author, rather than a literary critic, was regarded as unexceptional for a professor of English. Under the pseudonym Leo Vaughan (for his often eccentric colleagues, although renamed, were always perfectly identifiable in his work) he wrote a pair of successful comic novels, *The Jokeman* (1962), about his experiences teaching in Iran, and *It Must Be the Climate* (1966), about his time in Indonesia. Later the leading Japanese English-language newspaper, *The Japan Times*, commissioned from him a series of gently comic pieces under the title *Off and On Campus*, which were collected and published as a book of the same name (1982). He read this work onto tape as part of a course for Japanese wishing to improve their English--although he insisted that the recordings were only commissioned because the Japanese sound engineers were fascinated by the wave-patterns made on their equipment by his voice, an exceptionally pure baritone.

In retirement Ken joined his brother Hal and sister Judy in Owen Sound, where the family had removed from Toronto. And there in recent years he came ardently to appreciate exactly those old Canadian

qualities of civility, honesty, kindness, and family affection that he had found cloying in his teens and from which he had fled overseas for fifty years. He is survived by his wife Deborah; his sons Michael and Ted, and Ted's wife Elizabeth Meyer; his brother Hal Lendon, his sister Judy Lendon, and Judy's partner Joan Beecroft; his nephews and nieces Cleve Lendon, Maura Lendon, Graeme Lendon, Pat Brimblecombe, Cory Brimblecombe, and Lindsay Brimblecombe; five grand-nephews and grand-nieces; and his caregiver Sherry Forbes and her husband Ken, who became part of his family in his last years. Condolences may be posted at [woodfuneralhome.ca](http://woodfuneralhome.ca) Donations in Ken's memory to Residential Hospice of Grey Bruce would be received with gratitude.

The mention of the ATHABASKAN, refers to the famous Polio Cruise of '48 and ironically, it was just earlier this month that we reported on the passing of one of his Cruise-mates, Charlie Miller. The details of that cruise, including pictures, have been reported on over a number of successive issues of the UNTD Newsletter, beginning in September, 1999. All of those back-issues are available at;

<http://www.angelfire.com/on2/UNTD/newsletter.html>

As Ken's Obit alludes to, he did not return for a second UNTD year.

Bill C