Forever in Our Hearts



I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.
– 2 Timothy 4:7

Peter "Pete" Hagens

Husband, Father, Brother, Uncle, Grandpa, and legendary storyteller

March 11, 1935 – October 4, 2026

Peter "Pete" Hagens, 91 years young, passed away at St. Elizabeth Hospital surrounded by his loving family. Peter was born at home (on the kitchen table in those days) in Kimberly, Wisconsin to Lawrence and Helen Hagens. The oldest son of eight children. He proudly served in the United States Navy from 1954-1956. Following his service, he began employment at KC Corporation for 44 yrs until retirement.

On September 29, 1973 he married his beloved wife, Darlene. Together, they built a home in Stockbridge, Wisconsin "down by the lake" where we all have fun and fond memories of swimming and fishing on Lake Winnebago, nature walks through the woods behind their home, and watching the wildlife that wandered into their backyard, such as deer and turkeys. They moved to Copperstone Assisted Living, Neenah in 2022.

Dad loved Nature and there wasn't an animal or tree he couldn't identify. Autumn was his favorite time of the year. He enjoyed watching the Packer Game over a hearty bowl of Mom's chili. He was famous for imitating owl and bird calls and let's not forget his infamous 'Indian voice'.

In his free time, Peter could be found building bluebird houses in his garage workshop, while enjoying a few cold beers. He could sketch animals from memory. His birthday card envelopes always contained that 'weasel-like" design he sketched under our names. He loved bowling, fishing, and traveled to Canada on many fishing expeditions. He was widely known for his love of making people laugh through his storytelling and also for long goodbye's, as he walked you to the porch and waved goodbye, perhaps telling you one more story before you left. The phrase "the Hagen's Goodbye" was jokingly coined in his honor. LoL

Peter is survived by his beloved wife Darlene, his children, Kelly (Scott) Degaro, Chris (Steve) Van Deurzen, Niki (Mike) Mongan and Paula Hagens; his grandchildren Jordan (Miranda) Phillips, Tayler Phillips, Tanner (Katrina) Van Deurzen, Troy Van Deurzen, Kyra (Wade) Druar, Connor Mongan, Jacob Mongan, Trinity (fiancé Anthony Noska) Mongan, Marianna Mongan, Joshua Mongan, Helena Mongan, Ty Rowe, Faith (Zak) Hameister, Great-grandkiddos: Adahlia Phillips, Grayson Niemuth-Kerr, Otto Druar, Anita Druar, Clementine Druar, Ian Hameister and Lainey Hameister.

A Service will be held on Friday, October 16, 2026, Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Chilton.
Visitation at 9:30AM. Catholic Mass at 10:45AM.
Military honors following Mass, conducted outside of Church.
Lunch will be served at 12:30PM at Church.
Burial to follow, 3PM at St. Martin's Cemetery, Chilton.

Our family would like to thank the staff of St Elizabeth's and Copperstone Assisted Living.

Speaking of long goodbyes, we would like to share a story written by Dad (found in a drawer) that reflects his kindness, vast knowledge of science and nature, and unique artistic writing ability.

"Arriving home after a long nights work, the hour was late, and I should have gone into the house and went to bed, but the night was so peaceful. I decided to linger awhile. As I slowly walked from the car toward the house, I paused to glance up at the night sky.

The moon was full, casting its light through the spring foliage of the trees as though through lace. As I looked around me, I could make out the different patterns of light and dark, reminding me of a black and white movie.

What was most profound was the " silence" that descended upon my ears. Try as hard as I might, I could not hear a sound. Alarmed, I suddenly thought I had gone deaf, not even able to hear my own breathing. I sensed I was not alone in my own time in space, and that everything around me was asleep, making the night eerily quiet. There was no insect noises, not even a breeze to caress my face. If there were any night creatures around, they were going about their business without a trace of sound.

To me, it seemed that everything around me at this moment was holding its breath, that Nature itself was pausing to listen, for what I did not know.

I looked to my left and could see the lake through the trees. The surface was like a black mirror reflecting the light of the moon and looking like glass without a ripple to mar its surface. I've never seen the lake that still, moreover I've never experienced anything like what was happening.

All my senses were on alert, ready to react to the slightest sound. If I could coin a phrase "The silence was deafening".

How long I stood there I can't remember but looking back at the lake and seeing the lights on the opposite shore I noticed that they appeared frozen like the lights in a picture.

Normally the lights in a distance seem to twinkle, probably due to atmospheric conditions but not now. Could it be possible that I was in the center of a huge vacuum where there wouldn't be any atmosphere to carry sound or cause any wind?

That was one of the thoughts that crossed my mind as I pondered this phenomenon. After what seemed like hours, I slowly turned toward the house and with that first step, the spell was broken. Sound cascaded around me making my senses reel with the suddenness of it. A breeze sprang out of nowhere, rustling the leaves on the trees. Crickets began to chirp, and a buzz from the wings of a moth flying past my face entered the noisy arena. Many sounds of the night assailed my ears while only minutes earlier there was only silence. I paused again trying to recapture it but the moment was lost like a dreamscape slowly fading as reality reawakened and a thought came to mind. Could I have been an intruder on the nights symphony of sounds and my stepping into the stage was the sour note the director hears and waves the orchestra to silence with his baton?

I guess I'll never know but for a moment in time I was a participant it seems in what it must have been like before man entered upon the scene and forever changed it."
– Pete Hagens