

Losing Jim Seabrook

Written by Susan Hollingshead
Thursday, 16 September 1993 00:00



Jim had a presence that was larger than life. I met him when I was 16 and he was 17. I remember the day I first saw him and a voice in my head said, "Someday you are going to marry him". He was so quiet and shy with a slight stutter, but I was swept off of my feet. We moved in together when I was just shy of my 19th birthday. Actually, I moved into an apartment that he shared with two other guys so that I could pay his third of the rent while he trekked to South America, a trip he'd planned for a year. When he returned we got our own place. We moved to Peterborough so he could attend university and I went job hunting. I was hired by [Combined Insurance](#) as a door to door sales rep. My second day in the field, I brought home \$97, big money back then for one day's work. Jim saw what I did and said, "Hey, if YOU can make that much money, I'll make a killing." He quit university that day and the rest is history.

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Jim became a legend in Combined Insurance. He broke every sales record they had. He won so many trophies and awards, it became a weekly event. His reputation was well known within all insurance circles. He was offered many promotions but only accepted the ones where he could continue to make commissions for his efforts. In 1988 when we bought Grandview Lodge Resort, he quit with Combined and by doing so became a "free agent". He had planned on getting out of the insurance business altogether but he was wooed by several other insurance companies and one of them made him an offer he couldn't refuse.

Jim was highly motivational, both in the insurance business and at the resort. People were drawn to him like moths to a flame. He was a visionary, an avid reader, devouring every kind of book he could get his hands on and he was tireless. He worked hard and he played hard. He was an amazing water skier, strong swimmer and proficient in any sport he chose to tackle. He was a gifted speaker and he used the management skills he had acquired in the insurance industry and applied them with the staff at the resort. He was well respected and loved by all.

The night that Jim died, he was preparing for a weekend conference with his partner Larry and his team of agents. Jim and Larry worked all day planning and decided to take some needed r & r in the form of a leisurely boat ride out on Sparrow Lake. It was a cool evening, but clear and there was a haze covering the surface of the water. They would continue planning as they slowly cruised around. I went outside at one point and tried to wave them in but it was dark and they couldn't hear me over the sound of the engine as they trolled not far from shore. At 9:45 pm, on September 16, 1993, I received "the call" from a neighbour on the lake that indicated my life was changed forever.

Jim's body was missing for eight agonizingly long days. He drowned in the lake he loved, in front of the resort he loved, from the boat that was his pride and joy. He was 39 years old and left a wife, three children, his mother, step-father, sister, nieces and nephew, brother-in-law and sister-in-law and hundreds of friends who loved him with a huge void in all of us.