



Nigel Hampton

December 19, 1934 - January 1, 2021

Nigel Hampton, 86

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Nigel Hampton, 86, died peacefully in his sleep in Sterling Heights, MI, on January 1, 2021. Born on December 19, 1934, in LaFayette, Georgia, Nigel was the son of Andrew Madison and Ellen (Bobbi) Hampton. Raised largely in Georgia and Tennessee, Nigel graduated from Hueytown High School in Alabama and from Livingston (Alabama) State Teachers College (now the University of West Alabama) with a Bachelor of Arts in English. After briefly teaching 10th-grade American history in Birmingham, Alabama, and serving in the army in Germany, Nigel worked for the International Chemical Workers Union Council (ICWUC) for five years in Akron, Ohio, as an organizer and later as Director of Public Relations while simultaneously pursuing interests in journalism and photography.

Returning to school at the University of Connecticut, he earned his Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy, both in English. In 1969, Nigel joined the English Department of Oakland University, then a branch of Michigan State University, in Rochester, Michigan, where he taught journalism and American literature for 30 years. His popularity as a teacher was officially recognized in 1984 when, as Associate Professor of English and Journalism, he was awarded the Oakland University Teaching Excellence Award. In addition to his

teaching duties, Nigel organized the first teachers union for collective bargaining at the university level in the United States in 1970 through the American Association of University Professors.

Nigel's early career as journalist and photographer often put him in the midst of historical events, most notably the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Writing under pseudonyms to protect his parents, Nigel covered the Freedom Riders' arrival in Birmingham, Alabama, and interviewed many leaders in the Movement, including Martin Luther King Jr, Stokely Carmichael, Andrew Young, Walter Reuther, John Lewis, and John Salter. At Salter's invitation and under constant surveillance by local Ku Klux Klansman, Nigel addressed the Northeastern North Carolina Black Belt Voter Registration Conference in 1965 regarding organizing the registration drive. Representing the ICWUC at the White House, Nigel interacted with the Kennedy family (John, Robert, Edward, and Jacqueline) as well as with Lyndon Johnson as both Vice President and President and with Hubert Humphrey; he received a private tour of the building's restoration from the First Lady. In the previous decade, Nigel guided ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax around central Alabama, locating regional folk musicians for Lomax to record, and also covered Johnny Cash's early concert career in Alabama and Illinois.

Nigel's favorite authors included William Blake, Herman Melville, and Henry David Thoreau. His other interests included photography, genealogy, cinema, and folk music; he was also an avid guitarist.

Nigel leaves his wife, Anna Hampton of Romeo, MI; daughter, Carol Hampton of Norwalk, CT; son and daughter-in-law, David and Mary Hampton of Fayetteville, NC; son, Reed Hampton of Romeo, MI; and two granddaughters, Sabrina Hampton of Lake Orion, MI, and Katherine Hampton of Fayetteville, NC.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a memorial service for Nigel will be postponed

until later this year. Inquiries may be directed to Carol Hampton at carolhampton@msn.com.

Tribute Wall



“ We knew and loved Nigel when he was a graduate assistant teaching at UConn... just reached out to his daughter Carol whom we knew as a little girl. So sad he’s no longer walking this earth— but so happy to know his spirit lives on



harriet jerusha korim (arnoldi) - June 26, 2025 at 11:00 PM



“ Nigel Hampton

October 23, 2023 at 04:00 AM



“ 1 file added to the album 1950s



Carol Hampton - April 14, 2023 at 02:39 AM



“ 2 files added to the album 1940s



Carol Hampton - April 14, 2023 at 02:38 AM



“ *Nigel Hampton*

January 06, 2023 at 05:24 AM



“ *Nigel's ashes were scattered in the St. George River on Otis Point, Maine, as he requested on June 18, 2022, on Father's Day weekend, by his three children.*

"The most mighty of nature's laws is this, that out of Death, she brings Life."

--Herman Melville, 1852

"Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home."

--Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1847

Carol Hampton - August 01, 2022 at 10:52 PM



“ *Nigel won the Judd Family English Department Faculty Achievement Award in 1998. His citation for the latter read in part, "He has established himself as a preeminent teacher, whose knowledge, warmth, and idealism has edified and inspired thousands of OU students. In addition to his very popular classes on everything from British Romanticism to the automobile in American literature, Professor Hampton is widely known and loved for the specialized attention he has given to the many independent studies he has sponsored; he has supervised far more master's degree projects than any other member of the department."*

Carol Hampton - January 30, 2022 at 10:12 AM

CH

“ 1 file added to the album 1950s



Carol Hampton - December 13, 2021 at 03:56 AM

CH

Nigel interviewing Johnny Cash in the early 1950s

Carol Hampton - December 13, 2021 at 03:57 AM

CH

“ 2 files added to the album 1960s



Carol Hampton - March 18, 2021 at 02:59 AM

CL

Nigel was a kind friend to me in Akron, Ohio, where we were both newcomers.

chuck Levenstein - March 17, 2023 at 02:37 PM

GC

“ *Nigel was the kindest man we had ever met. Intelligent, interesting to listen to and simply pleasant to be with. He will be very missed by his family and friends. Rest In Peace DEAR Nigel.*

Gilbert and Antoinette Cramer - March 12, 2021 at 03:22 PM