

IN MEMORIAM

**Péter Basa
1935-2000**

On April 12, 2000 AHEA lost one of its founding members, who was an active supporter and the loving husband of our Executive Director. This is a great loss to us and Peter will be missed. We offer our heartfelt condolences to his wife, Enikő Molnár Basa. We all knew and loved Péter, he was a very private and kind person who showed much more interest in listening and helping others than talking about himself. He will always be part of AHEA and our organization should always remember his unselfish personality and continuous supporting work.

I think a review of his life will be a revelation to many of us since we know so little about Péter's personal life. He was born in Nagykáta, Hungary. He participated in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, at that time he was a medical student. He drove an ambulance and ferried supplies to where these were needed. Wounded twice, he eventually fled Hungary to Austria, and came to the United States. After language courses at Bard College, he was accepted at Georgetown University. Before the completions of his studies he was drafted and served in the Pentagon and later as a medical technician in Fort Belvoir.

Even during these years he was ready to help his community in the USA and he worked as the personal secretary of Father Irányi, who was the superior of the Piarist House of Studies in Washington DC.

Upon leaving the Army, he continued his studies in sciences. Eventually he became a computer specialist, working at the National Institute of Health [NIH] for many years until his retirement in December, 1999. It is sad that he was not able to enjoy his well-deserved retirement years with his wife and undertake the many plans they had made for the future.

Péter married Enikő Molnár in 1966 and they lived in the Washington area always taking a leadership role in American Hungarian cultural life. In 1974 they helped to establish the American Hungarian Educators' Association and both have been active in our Association's work ever since. Although Enikő assumed more leadership roles in the organization, Péter was always a "behind the scene" worker, supporter and financial contributor. He was generous with his time and resources in welcoming Hungarian and other Eastern European visitors, students, or researchers. He was most interested in the establishment of the AHEA Scholarship, which, although it had modest means, provided significant support to Hungarian minority students in Slovakia and Romania.

Peter was a wonderful husband and a caring friend. He will be remembered and will continue to be part of our lives for decades to come, due to his unselfish work for our AHEA community. We ask that Péter be remembered kindly by all those who knew him and have touched their lives, and we pray that his wife, Enikő, will remain to be strong to carry out all those wonderful plans they formulated together, but could not complete due to Péter's untimely departure.