

= Peter Jennings =

Peter Charles Archibald Ewart Jennings , CM (July 29 , 1938 ? August 7 , 2005) was a Canadian @-@ American journalist and news anchor . He was the sole anchor of ABC 's World News Tonight from 1983 until his death in 2005 of complications from lung cancer . A high @-@ school dropout , he transformed himself into one of American television 's most prominent journalists .

Jennings started his career early , hosting a Canadian radio show at the age of nine . He began his professional career with CJOH @-@ TV in Ottawa during its early years , anchoring the local newscasts and hosting a teen dance show , Saturday Date , on Saturdays . In 1965 , ABC News tapped him to anchor its flagship evening news program . His inexperience was attacked by critics and others in television news , making for a difficult first stint in the anchor chair . Jennings became a foreign correspondent in 1968 , reporting from the Middle East .

He returned as one of World News Tonight 's three anchors in 1978 , and was promoted to the role of sole anchor in 1983 . Jennings was also known for his marathon coverage of breaking news stories , staying on the air for 15 or more hours straight to anchor the live broadcast of events such as the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991 , the Millennium celebrations in 2000 , and the September 11 attacks in 2001 . In addition to anchoring , he was the host of many ABC News special reports and moderated several American presidential debates . Having always been fascinated with the United States , Jennings became a naturalized United States citizen in 2003 .

Along with Tom Brokaw at NBC and Dan Rather at CBS , Jennings formed part of the " Big Three " news anchors who dominated American evening network news from the early 1980s until his death in 2005 , which closely followed the retirements of Brokaw and Rather .

= = Life and career = =

= = = Early life = = =

Jennings was born on July 29 , 1938 , in Toronto , Ontario , Canada ; he and his younger sister Sarah were children of Elizabeth (Osborne) and Charles Jennings , a prominent radio broadcaster for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) . Peter Jennings started his broadcasting career at the age of nine , hosting Peter 's People , a half @-@ hour , Saturday morning , CBC Radio show for kids . His father was on a business trip to the Middle East when the show debuted ; upon returning , Charles Jennings , who harbored a deep dislike of nepotism , was outraged to learn that the network had put his son on the air .

When Jennings was 11 , he started attending Trinity College School in Port Hope , Ontario , where he excelled in sports . After the CBC moved his father to its Ottawa headquarters in the early 1950s , Jennings transferred to Lisgar Collegiate Institute . He struggled academically , and Jennings later surmised that it was out of " pure boredom " that he failed 10th grade and dropped out . " I loved girls , " he said . " I loved comic books . And for reasons I don 't understand , I was pretty lazy . " Jennings then briefly attended Carleton University , where he says he " lasted about 10 minutes " before dropping out . He also attended the University of Ottawa .

Although Jennings dreamed of following in his father 's footsteps in broadcasting , his first job was as a bank teller for the Royal Bank of Canada . He had hoped that the company would assign him to its Havana branch ; instead , it located him to the small town of Prescott , Ontario , before transferring him to its nearby Brockville branch . During this time , he explored acting by appearing in several amateur musical productions with the Orpheus Musical Theatre Society , including Damn Yankees and South Pacific .

It was in Brockville that the 21 @-@ year @-@ old Jennings started his rise in broadcasting . In 1959 , CFJR , a local radio station , hired him as a member of its news department ; many of his stories , including his coverage of a local train wreck , were picked up by the CBC . By 1961 , Jennings had joined the staff of CJOH @-@ TV , then a new television station in Ottawa . When the station launched in March 1961 , Jennings was initially an interviewer and co @-@ producer for Vue

, a late @-@ night news program . His producers saw a youthful attractiveness in him that resembled that of Dick Clark , and Jennings soon found himself hosting Club Thirteen , a dance show similar to American Bandstand .

The next year , CTV , Canada 's first private TV network and a fledgling competitor of his father 's network , hired the 24 @-@ year @-@ old Jennings as co @-@ anchor of its late @-@ night national newscast . While reporting for CTV , he was the first Canadian journalist to arrive in Dallas after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy . In 1964 , CTV sent Jennings to cover the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City , New Jersey . There , he ran into Elmer Lower , then president of ABC News , who offered him a job as a correspondent for the American network , an opportunity Jennings initially rejected . " The job was pretty intimidating for a guy like me in a tiny city in Canada , " Jennings later recalled . " I thought , What if I screw up ? What if I fail ? " Three months later though , he changed his mind and moved to the United States .

= = = United States ' youngest anchor = = =

Jennings started reporting for ABC at its New York news bureau . At the time , ABC lagged behind the more established news divisions of NBC and CBS , and the network was trying to attract younger viewers . On February 1 , 1965 , ABC plucked the fresh @-@ faced Canadian from the field and placed him at the anchor desk of Peter Jennings With the News , then a 15 @-@ minute nightly newscast . He replaced Ron Cochran , a fellow Canadian . At 26 , Jennings was , and remains , the youngest @-@ ever U.S. network news anchor . " ABC was in bad shape at the time , " Jennings said . " They were willing to try anything , and , to demonstrate the point , they tried me . "

An inexperienced Jennings had a hard time keeping up with his rivals at the other networks , and he ? and the upstart ABC News - could not compete with the venerable newscasts of Walter Cronkite at CBS and Chet Huntley and David Brinkley at NBC . Some in the American audience disliked Jennings ' Canadian accent . He pronounced lieutenant as " leftenant " , mangled the pronunciation of " Appomattox , " and misidentified the " Marines ' Hymn " as " Anchors Aweigh " at Lyndon Johnson 's presidential inauguration ; his lack of in @-@ depth knowledge of American affairs and culture led critics to deride Jennings as a " glamorcaster " . " It was a little ridiculous when you think about it , " he later reflected . " A 26 @-@ year @-@ old trying to compete with Cronkite , Huntley and Brinkley . I was simply unqualified . After three rocky years at the anchor desk , Jennings quit to become a foreign correspondent .

= = = Foreign correspondent = = =

Jennings was determined to build his journalism credentials abroad . In 1968 , he established ABC 's Middle East bureau in Beirut , Lebanon , the first American television news bureau in the Arab world . The next year , he demonstrated his growing expertise in Middle Eastern affairs with Palestine : New State of Mind , a well @-@ received half @-@ hour documentary for ABC 's Now news program . As ABC 's Beirut bureau chief , Jennings soon became familiar with the intricacies of the Arab @-@ Israeli conflict , including the rise of the Palestinian Black September Organization during the early 1970s . He conducted the first American television interview with Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasser Arafat . While stationed in the Lebanese capital , Jennings dated Palestinian activist Hanan Ashrawi , who was then a graduate student in literature at the American University in Beirut .

In 1972 , Jennings covered his first major breaking news story , the Munich Olympics massacre of Israeli athletes by Black September . His live reporting , which drew on the expertise he had acquired in the Middle East , provided context for Americans who were unfamiliar with the Palestinian group . By hiding with his camera crew close to the athletic compound where the Israeli athletes were being held hostage , Jennings was able to provide ABC with clear video of the masked hostage @-@ takers . He would later be criticized for insisting on using the terms " guerillas " and " commandos " instead of " terrorists " to describe the members of Black September .

After the events of Munich , Jennings continued to report on Middle East issues . In 1973 , he

covered the Yom Kippur War , and the following year , he served as chief correspondent and co @-@ producer of Sadat : Action Biography , a profile of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat that would win him his first of two George Foster Peabody Awards . The documentary established Jennings as Sadat 's favorite correspondent . That summer , Jennings married for the second time , to Anouchka Malouf , a Lebanese photographer . His first wife had been childhood sweetheart Valerie Godsoe .

Jennings returned to the U.S. at the end of 1974 to become Washington correspondent and news anchor for ABC 's new morning program AM America , a predecessor to Good Morning America . ABC was hoping that the show , in which it had invested \$ 8 million , would challenge NBC 's highly popular Today . AM America debuted on January 6 , 1975 , with Jennings delivering regular newscasts from Washington . The show never gained ground against Today , and was canceled in just ten months . In November 1975 , Jennings moved abroad , this time as ABC 's chief foreign correspondent . He continued to cover the Middle East , and in 1978 he was the first American reporter to interview the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran , then in exile in Paris .

Meanwhile , ABC News and its newly installed president , Roone Arledge , were preparing an overhaul of its nightly news program , which was then known as ABC Evening News and whose ratings had languished in third place behind CBS and NBC since its inception . In the late 1970s , a disastrous pairing of Harry Reasoner and Barbara Walters at the anchor desk left the network searching for new ideas . Arledge decided to implement a three @-@ anchor format for the program . On July 10 , 1978 , World News Tonight debuted with Frank Reynolds in Washington , Max Robinson in Chicago , and Jennings in London . Jennings ' official title was " Foreign Desk Anchor , " although he continued to serve as the network 's chief foreign correspondent . By the summer of 1979 , the innovative broadcast , which featured some of the same glitzy presentation as Arledge 's previous television coup , Wide World of Sports , had climbed in the ratings . The newscast had gained 1 @.@ 9 million households from its debut , and was now in a dead heat with NBC 's evening newscast .

Jennings also found renewed success in his personal life . In 1979 , he married for the third time to fellow ABC correspondent Kati Marton . That same year , he became a father when Marton gave birth to their daughter , Elizabeth . In 1982 , Jennings ' and Marton 's second child , Christopher , was born .

As part of ABC 's triumvirate , Jennings continued to cover major international news , especially Middle East issues . His nightly appearance at an anchor desk in London gave the impression that ABC News was more dedicated to foreign news than the other networks . Jennings reported on the Iranian Revolution and subsequent hostage crisis , the assassination of Sadat , the Falklands war , Israel 's 1982 invasion of Lebanon , and Pope John Paul II 's 1983 visit to Poland . His insistence on covering the major international stories himself irked some of his fellow ABC foreign correspondents , who came to resent being scooped by what they deemed as " Jennings ' Flying Circus . " Jennings , too , was not completely satisfied with his job in London . When his contract expired with ABC in the early 1980s , Jennings flirted with the possibility of moving back to Canada and working with the CBC on its new nightly newscast , The Journal . The CBC could not meet Jennings ' renegotiation deadlines , though , and the deal fell through .

= = = Sole anchor = = =

In 1983 , Reynolds fell ill with multiple myeloma , a type of blood cancer that often attacks the bones , and was forced to stop anchoring in April . His absence caused a dip in the ratings for ABC 's nightly newscast . ABC originally expected a full recovery , and relocated Jennings to its Washington bureau to fill in for Reynolds while he was sick ; the move helped buoy the newscast 's ratings , although it remained in third place . On July 20 , 1983 , Reynolds died unexpectedly after developing acute hepatitis .

On August 9 , 1983 , ABC announced that Jennings had signed a four @-@ year contract with the network and would become the sole anchor and senior editor for World News Tonight on September 5 . Jennings would anchor the program from New York City , the program 's new base of operations . The announcement signaled a generational shift in the evening news broadcasts , and the

beginning of what the media would deem the " Big Three " era of Jennings , Dan Rather of CBS , and Tom Brokaw of NBC . Rather had already been elevated to anchor in 1981 after the retirement of Walter Cronkite , and Brokaw of NBC Nightly News was set to become sole anchor the same day as Jennings . At the time , Jennings expressed apprehension that the impending competition among the three newsmen was at risk of becoming superficial . " With me , Brokaw and Rather , I recognize that there will be the factor of three pretty faces , " he said . " That 's an inevitable byproduct of television . But if that is what it comes down to in terms of the approach we take , if our approach is that singular , then we will all have made a mistake . "

Jennings ' debut on September 5 , 1983 , marked the beginning of a steady climb in the ratings for ABC News . He spent his first year at the anchor desk educating himself on American domestic affairs in preparation for the 1984 presidential campaign season . In June 1984 , Jennings , who later admitted that his political knowledge was limited at the time , co -@-@ anchored ABC 's coverage of the Democratic National Convention with David Brinkley . " I had not covered an election campaign in 16 years , " Jennings said , " so here was I going to co -@-@ anchor with David Brinkley in 1984 , and he wasn 't even sure I knew who the faces belonged to , and he was right . " Jennings and ABC were criticized for suddenly halting coverage of the convention for 30 minutes and airing a rerun of Hart to Hart instead .

Despite a shaky start at the anchor desk , Jennings ' broadcast began to climb in the ratings . Jennings was praised for his performance during the 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger disaster , when he anchored ABC 's coverage of the event for 11 straight hours . By 1989 , competition among the three nightly newscasts had risen to fever pitch . When the Loma Prieta earthquake struck the San Francisco Bay area , media pundits praised Jennings and ABC News for their prompt on @-@ air response , while criticizing the delayed reaction of Tom Brokaw and NBC News . The next month , Brokaw redeemed himself by scooping the other networks with news of the fall of the Berlin Wall . It was World News Tonight , however , that ended the year at the top ; ABC 's evening newscast spent the last 13 weeks of the year in first place , and its average ratings for the entire year beat CBS for the first time .

Jennings ' on @-@ air success continued in 1990 , and World News Tonight consistently led the ratings race . In January , he anchored the first installment of Peter Jennings Reporting ? hour @-@ long , prime @-@ time ABC News specials dedicated to exploring a single topic . His inaugural program on gun violence in America drew praise . His second installment of Peter Jennings Reporting in April , " From the Killing Fields " , focused on U.S. policy towards Cambodia . The program alleged that the federal government was covertly supporting the Khmer Rouge 's return to power in the Asian nation , a charge that the Bush administration initially denied . On July 18 , though , the White House announced that it was ending recognition of the Khmer Rouge .

When the Gulf War started on January 16 , 1991 , Jennings began a marathon anchoring stint to cover the story , spending 20 of the first 48 hours of the war on @-@ air , and leading ABC News to its highest @-@ ever ratings . After interrupting regular Saturday morning cartoons on January 19 to broadcast a military briefing from Saudi Arabia , Jennings and ABC became concerned about the emotional impact of the war coverage on children . Out of that concern , Jennings hosted a 90 @-@ minute special , War in the Gulf : Answering Children 's Questions the next Saturday morning ; the program featured Jennings , ABC correspondents , and American military personnel answering phoned @-@ in questions and explaining the war to young viewers .

On October 13 , 1991 , breaking news forced ABC News to interrupt regular Saturday morning programming again . Jennings was once again mindful of his audience , prefacing the coverage of the Senate confirmation hearings for Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas with remarks for children . " You may hear some not very nice language , " said Jennings . He noted that Thomas and his accuser , Anita Hill , " have a very painful disagreement about some things the woman says the man did to her when they were working together ... You can ask your parents to tell you more . " Jennings continued to produce special programs aimed at young viewers , anchoring Growing Up in the Age of AIDS , a frank , 90 @-@ minute @-@ long discussion on AIDS in February 1992 ; and Prejudice : Answering Children 's Questions , a forum on racism in April 1992 .

Politics dominated network news in 1992 . Jennings moderated the final debate among the

Democratic presidential candidates in March , and anchored Peter Jennings Reporting : Who Is Ross Perot ? and a subsequent 90 @-@ minute town forum with Perot and a studio audience in June . On September 9 , 1992 , ABC announced that it would be switching the format of its political coverage to give less recognition to staged sound bites . " We 're aware that a lot of you are turned off by the political process and that many of you put at least some of the blame on us , " Jennings told viewers on World News Tonight . " We 'll only devote time to a candidate 's daily routine if it is more than routine . There will be less attention to staged appearances and sound bites designed exclusively for television . " After Bill Clinton was elected as president in November 1992 , Jennings featured the new administration in two of his specials for children ; he anchored President Clinton : Answering Children 's Questions in February 1993 ; and Kids in the Crossfire : Violence in America in November 1993 , a live special from a Washington , D.C. junior high school which featured Attorney General Janet Reno and rapper MC Lyte .

The early 1990s also served up a series of difficult experiences and public embarrassment for Jennings . On August 13 , 1993 , Jennings and Kati Marton publicly announced their separation in Newsday . The couple had previously split in 1987 for four months after Jennings found out that Marton was having an affair with Washington Post columnist Richard Cohen . In January 1994 , he locked horns with his executive producer on World News Tonight , Emily Rooney . The public firing of Rooney made national headlines , and put Jennings on the defensive .

With the rise of media watchdog groups , such as the conservative Media Research Center (MRC) , Jennings came under increasing scrutiny for what some observers deemed a liberal bias . The anchor drew fire from conservatives , such as the MRC and Cal Thomas , for his November 14 , 1994 , remarks on ABC Radio , in which he analyzed the results of the 1994 U.S. midterm elections . " Some thoughts on those angry voters . Ask parents of any two @-@ year @-@ old and they can tell you about those temper tantrums : the stomping feet , the rolling eyes , the screaming , " said Jennings . " Imagine a nation full of uncontrolled two @-@ year @-@ old rage . The voters had a temper tantrum last week Parenting and governing don 't have to be dirty words : the nation can 't be run by an angry two @-@ year @-@ old . " A July 1995 documentary , Peter Jennings Reporting : Hiroshima : Why the Bomb Was Dropped , which aired a week before the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima , also drew scorn from conservatives and some television critics , who called the program a revisionist look at the decision to drop the bomb . Some viewers of the documentary mailed bus fares to Jennings , telling him to return to Canada .

Jennings pleased some conservatives though , after his three @-@ year lobbying effort to create a full @-@ time religion correspondent at ABC News succeeded in the hiring of Peggy Wehmeyer in January 1994 , making her the first such network reporter . ABC increased its coverage of religious topics , and in March 1995 , Jennings anchored Peter Jennings Reporting : In the Name of God , a well @-@ received documentary on the changing nature of American churches . At a taping of a " town meeting " segment for KOMO @-@ TV of Seattle in February 1995 , Jennings expressed regret for his ABC radio remarks on the 1994 midterm elections . " People thought I had insulted their sacred mandate and some thought I should go back to Canada , " he said . " I hope I don 't make that mistake again . "

During the mid @-@ 1990s , television critics praised Jennings for his insistence on not letting the O.J. Simpson murder case swamp the newscast . Instead , Jennings devoted his energies to covering the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina , anchoring three hour @-@ long prime time specials on the subject and one Saturday @-@ morning special aimed at children . ABC dedicated more time to covering the conflict than any other network from 1992 to 1996 . Jennings received the Goldsmith Career Award for Excellence in Journalism from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University , in large part for his passion for the story . Jennings was also credited for raising the profile in the U.S. of another international story , the 1995 Quebec referendum . The Canadian press in particular raved about his in @-@ depth coverage of the issue , and he was the only anchor to broadcast from Canada on the eve of the referendum .

Despite these critical successes , in 1996 , World News Tonight started gradually slipping in the ratings race . Bolstered by strong viewership of its coverage of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games , NBC 's Nightly News overtook the ABC newscast for two weeks in late July and early September .

This short bump provided momentum for NBC , which started making steady gains in the ratings . Worried , Jennings and ABC decided to cut back on international reporting and give more air time to " soft stories " , in an effort to emulate the success of Nightly News . The changes provoked a backlash from regular viewers , and ratings plummeted . " We did very badly with it , " Jennings said . " The audience kicked us in the teeth . " Although changes were made to World News Tonight to restore its luster and stop the hemorrhaging , Nightly News ended 1997 as the number @-@ one evening newscast .

The slide in the ratings coincided with some rockiness at ABC News . The company scrapped plans to develop a cable news channel . On May 29 , 1998 , David Westin succeeded Roone Arledge as president of ABC News . Both denied that the disappointing ratings performance of World News Tonight contributed to the decision . A 24 @-@ hour strike by the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians disrupted ABC 's coverage of 1998 's November elections after talks between the union and ABC broke down . Several Democratic candidates denied interviews to support the union .

None of the shake @-@ ups helped Jennings retake the nightly ratings crown , but World News Tonight still offered stiff competition at second place . As the millennium approached , Jennings and the network started preparing for extensive retrospectives of the 20th century . The anchor teamed with former Life magazine journalist Todd Brewster to pen The Century , a 606 @-@ page book on 20th @-@ century America . Designed as a companion book for ABC 's upcoming documentary series of the same name , the book topped the New York Times Best Seller List in December 1998 , a month after it debuted . On March 29 , 1999 , Jennings anchored the first installment of ABC 's 12 @-@ hour miniseries , The Century ; production on the monumental project started in 1990 , and by the time it aired , it had cost the network \$ 25 million . Jennings also anchored a longer , 15 @-@ hour version , The Century : America 's Time , on the History Channel in April 1999 .

On December 31 , 1999 , Jennings was on the air for 23 straight hours to anchor ABC 2000 Today , ABC 's massive millennium eve special . An estimated 175 million people tuned into at least a portion of the program . Jennings ' American prime @-@ time audience , an estimated 18 @.@ 6 million viewers , easily outpaced the millennium coverage of rival networks . Television critics praised the program , and described the anchor as " superhuman " . Although production costs totaled a hefty \$ 11 million (compared with \$ 2 million each for NBC 's and CBS 's millennium projects) , ABC managed to make a profit of \$ 5 million . The success of the program , though , failed to transfer into any lasting change in the viewership of World News Tonight ; ABC 's evening newscast spent the first week of January as ratings leader , before dropping back to second place .

With another presidential election taking place in 2000 , Jennings had some more political reporting duties that year . On January 5 , Jennings moderated the Democratic primary debate , held at the University of New Hampshire . He hosted the primetime news special The Dark Horizon : India , Pakistan , and the Bomb , which ABC broadcast on March 22 , as then @-@ President Clinton began his trip to the region . Jennings was the only American news anchor to travel to India for Clinton 's trip . Paul A. Slavin became the new executive producer for World News Tonight in April .

== == September 11 == ==

Jennings anchored ABC 's coverage of the September 11 attacks for seventeen straight hours , an effort described as " Herculean " by television critics . Like other network news anchors , he was widely praised for guiding Americans through the tragedy . At one point , Jennings broke his composure after receiving phone calls from his children . " We do not very often make recommendations for people 's behavior from this chair , " he said , " but ... if you 're a parent , you 've got a kid in some other part of the country , call them up . Exchange observations . "

His coverage was not without controversy though . After conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh criticized Jennings for supposedly denigrating President George W. Bush on @-@ air during September 11 , ABC was flooded with more than 10 @,@ 000 angry phone calls and e @-@ mails . Jennings , however , never made the remarks , and Limbaugh later apologized and made a retraction . On September 13 , Jennings received more criticism from conservatives ? this time for

hosting a forum for Middle East experts that included Palestinian Authority negotiator Hanan Ashrawi . In the summer of 2002 , Jennings and ABC refused to allow Toby Keith to open their coverage of July 4 celebrations with " Courtesy of the Red , White , & Blue " , prompting criticism from Keith and country music fans , who highlighted the anchor 's Canadian citizenship .

The events of September 11 added new meaning to In Search of America , the project Jennings and Brewster started after the success of their previous collaboration . The two began writing the book in early 2001 ; after the terrorist attacks , they revisited many of the people they had interviewed to see how the events had affected them . To promote the book , the anchor and World News Tonight started a 50 @-@ state tour of the United States in April 2002 as part of a yearlong project , 50 States / One Nation / One Year . Jennings also anchored a six @-@ part television series in September 2002 , which featured the same name as the book . Despite the success of the TV series and heavy promotion by the book 's publisher , In Search of America failed to generate much interest or sales .

Jennings ' work on In Search of America and the September 11 attacks contributed to his decision in 2003 to become a dual citizen of Canada and the United States . " I think that 9 / 11 and the subsequent travel I did in the country afterwards made me feel connected in new ways , " he said . " And when we were working on the America project I spent a lot of time on the road , which meant away from my editor 's desk , and I just got much more connected to the Founding Fathers ' dreams and ideas for the future . " His work had prepared him well for the citizenship test , which he passed easily . " Can you imagine I , who just finished a whole series on America and had been an anchorperson for an American broadcast ... could you imagine if I had failed ? " he asked . " It would have been horrendous . " The anchor 's formal pledge of allegiance took place at a regular citizenship ceremony on May 30 in Lower Manhattan . The occasion overwhelmed him . " I went in the front door and came out the front door . They were regular people . They were very touching . And I cried a little bit ? my kids didn 't cry , but I cried a bit ? but I 'm a fairly emotional character anyway . "

= = = Leaving the chair = = =

As he did in 2000 , Jennings moderated the 2004 Democratic presidential primary debate , which was held that year at Saint Anselm College in New Hampshire . He was noted for questioning General Wesley Clark over Clark 's silence over controversial comments made by filmmaker Michael Moore , a supporter of Clark . Moore called then @-@ President George W. Bush a " deserter " .

By late 2004 , Brokaw had retired from his anchoring duties at NBC , ceding the reins to Brian Williams ; Rather planned to step down in March 2005 . Jennings and ABC saw an opportunity to gain viewers , and initiated a publicity blitz touting the anchor 's foreign reporting experience . However , despite having almost always reported from the scene of any major news story , Jennings was sidelined by an upper respiratory infection in late December 2004 ; he was forced to anchor from New York during the aftermath of the Asian tsunami , while his competitors traveled to the region . For Jennings , the situation was agonizing .

In late March , viewers started noticing that Jennings ' voice sounded uncharacteristically gravelly and unhealthy during evening newscasts . On April 1 , 2005 , he anchored World News Tonight for the last time ; his poor health also prevented him from covering the death and funeral of Pope John Paul II . On April 5 , 2005 , Jennings informed viewers through a taped message on World News Tonight that he had been diagnosed with lung cancer , and was starting chemotherapy treatment the following week . " As some of you now know , I have learned in the last couple of days that I have lung cancer , " he said . " Yes , I was a smoker until about 20 years ago , and I was weak and I smoked over 9 / 11 . But whatever the reason , the news does slow you down a bit . " Although he stated his intention to continue anchoring whenever possible , the message was to be his last appearance on television .

Throughout the summer , Charles Gibson , co @-@ host of Good Morning America , and Elizabeth Vargas , co @-@ host of 20 / 20 , served as temporary anchors . On April 29 , 2005 , Jennings

posted a letter on ABCNews.com with an update of his status and expressing thanks to those who had offered him their good wishes and prayers . In June , Jennings visited the ABC News headquarters , and addressed staff members in an emotional speech ; he thanked Gibson for closing each broadcast with the phrase , " for Peter Jennings and all of us at ABC News . " During his visit , however , his colleagues noticed he was ill to the point where he could barely speak at times . He posted another short letter of thanks on July 29 , 2005 , his 67th birthday .

= = = Death = = =

On August 7 , 2005 , just after 11 : 30 p.m. EDT , Charles Gibson broke into local news in the Eastern U.S. and regular programming on ABC 's western affiliates to announce Jennings 's death from lung cancer . He read a short statement from the family , and disclosed that Jennings had died in his New York apartment with his fourth wife , two children by his marriage to Kati Marton , and sister at his side . The anchor 's ABC colleagues , including Barbara Walters , Diane Sawyer , and Ted Koppel , shared their thoughts on Jennings 's death . The next morning , Brokaw and Rather fondly remembered their former rival on the morning news shows . " Peter , of the three of us , was our prince , " said Brokaw on Today . " He seemed so timeless . He had such élan and style . " Canada 's television networks led off their morning news shows with the news of Jennings ' death and had remembrances from their " big three " anchors , Peter Mansbridge at the CBC , Lloyd Robertson at CTV , and Kevin Newman at Global .

American President George W. Bush and Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin offered statements of condolence to the press .

On August 10 , 2005 , ABC aired a two @-@ hour special , Peter Jennings : Reporter , with archival clips of his reports and interviews with colleagues and friends . The special drew over 9 million viewers , and was the most watched television program of the night . For the week of his death , World News Tonight placed number one in the ratings race for the first time since June 2004 .

Jennings 's widow , Kayce Freed , and family held a private service in New York . Jennings was cremated and his ashes split in half . Half of his ashes remained in his home in Long Island and the other half was placed in his summer home in the Gatineau Hills , near Ottawa . The 57th Primetime Emmy Awards on September 18 , 2005 , included a tribute to Jennings by Brokaw and Rather . A public memorial service for Jennings was held two days later at Carnegie Hall . Notable journalists , political leaders , and other friends of Jennings attended . Jennings left a \$ 50m estate : half went to Freed , and most of the rest to his son and daughter . On December 5 , 2005 , after much speculation , and nearly eight months after Jennings stopped anchoring , ABC named Vargas and Bob Woodruff co @-@ anchors for World News Tonight .

= = Honors = =

Jennings won numerous honors throughout his career , including 16 Emmys and two George Foster Peabody Awards . His work on World News Tonight and Peter Jennings Reporting consistently won Overseas Press Club and duPont @-@ Columbia awards . At the peak of his popularity , Jennings was named " Best Anchor " by the Washington Journalism Review in 1988 , 1989 , 1990 , and 1992 . The Radio and Television News Directors Association awarded Jennings its highest honor , the Paul White Award in 1995 , in recognition of his lifetime contributions to journalism . In 2004 , he was awarded with the Edward R. Murrow Award for Lifetime Achievement in Broadcasting from Washington State University .

Just eight days before his death , Jennings was informed that he would be inducted into the Order of Canada , the nation 's highest civilian honor . His daughter , Elizabeth , accepted the insignia on his behalf in October 2005 . On February 21 , 2006 , New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg designated the block on West 66th Street between Columbus Avenue and Central Park West as Peter Jennings Way in honor of the late anchor ; the block is home to the ABC News headquarters . In October 2006 , The Walt Disney Company , which bought ABC in 1996 , posthumously named Jennings a Disney Legend , the company 's highest honor . He was the first ABC News employee

so honored . In January 2011 , Jennings was posthumously inducted into the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences ' Television Hall of Fame .

= = Publications = =

= = = Articles = = =

" Moose Jaw , U.S.A. ? Never ! Jamais ! " Maclean 's , p . 86 . June 25 , 1990 . Available at HighBeam Business

" TV 's opportunity for service at Geneva . " Christian Science Monitor , p . 28 . November 12 , 1985

.
with Todd Brewster . " Variations for Four Hands On a Theme by Tocqueville . " The New York Times , p . E1 . January 27 , 2003 .

= = = Books = = =

with Todd Brewster . The Century . London : Doubleday (1999) . ISBN 0 @-@ 385 @-@ 48327 @-@ 9 .

with Todd Brewster . The Century for Young People . New York : Random House (1999) . ISBN 0 @-@ 385 @-@ 32708 @-@ 0 .

with Todd Brewster . In Search of America . New York : Hyperion (2002) . ISBN 0 @-@ 7868 @-@ 6708 @-@ 6 .

= = TV / video narration = =

In 1969 @-@ 1970 , Jennings narrated The Fabulous Sixties , a 10 @-@ part Canadian television documentary miniseries that first aired on CTV on October 12 , 1969 , with the following episodes broadcast as occasional specials into 1970 . Each episode covered one year of the 1960s . The series was released on DVD on April 24 , 2007 , by MPI Home Video . [1]

= = = Books = = =

= = = Online = = =