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Obituary of Kurt Landsberger

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Kurt Landsberger is no longer with us. Our US member Martin Frère Hillyer has written an obituary.

On December 19, 2014 we said goodbye to this fellow laborer in Caissa's vineyard.

Kurt Landsberger was many things and had accomplished much in his 94 years with us. Although he did not play chess he was a great friend to the history of the game. His 2 time great uncle was the former world Champion of chess Wilhelm Steinitz. Kurt researched and wrote two books on Steinitz and captured for all time that page in the history of chess for players around the world.

I met Kurt in 1999 at the Manhattan Chess Club and we were instant friends. We went to lunch and exchanged ideas and notes on our individual researches. If you would have told Kurt about an idea that you had, he would say well do something with it. Go do, and Kurt knew how to go and do!

Kurt wrote two books on Steinitz but he also wrote a book about his life that few may know of and in 2000 he gave me a copy, "The Root Box" by Kurt Landsberger. In the introduction he wrote: "I love life and so far I have very few regrets. Time is running out and I will not be able to do everything I have wanted to do. Not to have seen every strange place there is to be seen; not to have read all the books that I wanted to read; not to have seen every play that I thought would be of interest; not to have built up another business. Not to have saved the world, or even a smaller entity. We each have our priorities and sometimes it is just as nice to have a "cozy evening" at home, doing nothing, instead of seeing the world, or seeing a Broadway play, or trying to save the planet."

He was born in Prague in 1920 and immigrated to the United States in 1939. He served during WWII and soon after the end of the war he started Bel Art Products in 1946. He was also involved in saving the environment, human rights activist, author, columnist, entrepreneur, chess enthusiast as well as a great husband, father and friend. All of his accomplishments are noted in his many other obituaries on line and in the newspapers so here I wanted to talk about the example he has left to his friends in the KWA and chess.

Kurt was an inspiration to all of us on how to get involved and accomplish your dreams. He was the one that inspired me to write the book on Thomas Frere, and through his example he has shown all of us how to live life to the fullest and be a part of a better future.

"We shall soon rejoin him, and, meanwhile, lovingly cast a stone on his cairn."

"Age departs as corn full ripened."