



Mel (Melvin)'s obituary - 1955-2025

Mel Bridgman, a proud Canadian and a loving brother, father, grandfather, and friend, was born April 28, 1955, in Trenton, Ontario. He grew up with his sister Mary Ann and his brother Dick in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and then Victoria, British Columbia, before being drafted to the Philadelphia Flyers in 1975. Although he rarely spoke about it in later years, Mel was the first overall pick in the amateur draft and played 14 seasons in the NHL with the Flyers, the Calgary Flames, the New Jersey Devils, the Detroit Red Wings, and the Vancouver Canucks, serving as team captain of the Flyers and Devils.

Mel was also a graduate of the Wharton School of Business, and in 1991, he was named General Manager of the Ottawa Senators. He held that position for its inaugural two seasons. After that, he worked as a sports agent and financial consultant. Mel finally retired as a man about town and travelled the world, living in Medellin, Colombia, for almost three years during the Coronavirus pandemic. In retirement, he particularly liked riding his bike and visiting coffee shops. In recent years, he was splitting his time between California and Vancouver Island.

He will be remembered by his children for his generosity of spirit, the long road trips he would take across the United States and Canada, as well as the “tall tales” he would tell upon his return from those trips. He was a conversationalist and not a man known to rush through his daily errands. He was someone who could both tell a good story and listen to other people when they were telling him about their own lives.

In his last years, Mel struggled with mobility issues, stemming from a stroke in 2023, and complications from what may have been CTE (or Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy). But he showed no sign of slowing down. Even in dying, Mel seemed to meet the challenge head-on. If surprised, it was only because his death, unlike his life, could not be bent by his hard work and determination. He fought for what could have been his last act. But his heart gave out against his best wishes. He died with two of his children at his side and his other two children on the way to see him.

In celebration of his life and the impact he made, the Bridgman family welcomes contributions toward causes close to Mel's heart, including advancing CTE research and disability issues.

~ Mel was in the MD '73 class & he attended his 10th class reunion. ~

Former Victoria Cougars player and NHLer.

Mel Bridgman has died at 70

The NHL Alumni Association is heartbroken to learn that Mel Bridgman has passed away at the age of 70. (NHL Alumni Association Facebook)

Former Victoria Cougars, National Hockey League player and Ottawa Senators general manager, Mel Bridgman has died at the age of 70.

The NHL Alumni Association announced his death on Saturday but have not disclosed the cause.

Bridgman played for the Philadelphia Flyers, Calgary Flames, New Jersey Devils, Detroit Red Wings and Vancouver Canucks

across his 14-year career. Two years after retiring, he was named the first GM for the expansion Senators in 1991 and held the role until 1993.

In a social media post, the NHL Alumni Association says it is “heartbroken,” over the news, adding that Bridgman “recorded 157 points in just 66 games for the Victoria Cougars of the Western Canada Hockey League (now the WHL) in 1974-75, the Philadelphia Flyers selected Mel first overall in the 1975 NHL amateur draft.

He scored his first career goal with the Flyers in his first career game on Oct. 9, 1975.

“Mel played his first 462 NHL games in a Flyers sweater, before suiting for the Calgary Flames, New Jersey Devils, Detroit Red Wings, and Vancouver Canucks, respectively,” states the association.

At the end of his career, Bridgman had racked up 701 points across 977 regular-season games from 1975 to 1989.

“Always a trusted and dependable teammate, Mel twice served as team captain on two occasions over the course of his 14 NHL seasons, with the Flyers from 1979 to 1981, and with the New Jersey Devils from 1984 to 87,” states the association.

In the summer of 1991, two years removed from his final season of play, Mel was named the first general manager of the expansion Ottawa Senators in 1991 and remained in the role until 1993.

In 2005, he was inducted into the Greater Victoria Sports Hall of Fame.

“We send our deepest condolences to Mel’s family, friends, and former teammates during this incredibly difficult time,” states the association.

- Liz Brown, CHEK News Nov. 8/25

Background

In celebration of his life and the impact he made, the Bridgman family welcomes contributions toward causes close to Mel’s heart, including advancing [CTE research](#) and disability issues. After a stroke in late 2023, Mel struggled with mobility, but he never let it slow him down. He often noted how much kinder the world could be for those with mobility challenges. A memorial bench, next to disabled parking spot in one of his favourite places in Comox Valley, will stand as a tribute to his resilience, his compassion, and his vision for a more compassionate world.

In lieu of flowers or packages through the mail, the family is raising money for these causes, which can be donated safely through this site.

For those wanting a directed and/or tax-deductible donation, we also invite folks to make donations directly to Concussion Legacy Foundation ([CLF](#)) in memory of Mel Bridgman.

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