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## News columnist, Tigers lover George Cantor dies at 69

*FRANCIS X. DONNELLY*  
*The Detroit News*

*West Bloomfield* -- For nearly half a century, George Cantor's pen was his paintbrush and Detroit his canvas.

In newspapers, magazines and books, he wrote gracefully about the highs and lows of people he had come to know well.

Mr. Cantor, 69, died this morning after a lengthy battle with prostate cancer.

"Whatever he did, he did a good job at," said Pete Waldmeir, a longtime friend and former Detroit News columnist. "He could handle any assignment you gave him."

Among his fields of expertise were baseball and the Tigers. He covered their 1968 championship as a young reporter for the Detroit Free Press and the 1984 championship as a columnist for the News.

"He was the world's best-read and most literate baseball writer," said Kurt Luedtke, a former executive editor of the Free Press. "The other guys would sleep late, file something early and hit the bars. George would go to museums."

Most of Mr. Cantor's writing was in Detroit's two dailies, where he toiled 39 years as a reporter, columnist and editor. At The News, he wrote a popular Saturday column where he weighed in on local issues.

Colleagues described him as a fluid writer who had an encyclopedia-like grasp of the city.

"He was a great font of Detroit lore," said Jeff Hadden, deputy editor of The News' editorial page.

After leaving The News in 2003, he wrote a column for the Detroit Jewish News and taught sports writing at Oakland University. He also continued writing books, 30 in all, with subjects ranging from the Tigers to University of Michigan football to a series of Michigan travel guides.

In April, he received a lifetime achievement award from the Detroit chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

In 1998, a tragedy placed him on the other end of the media lens. His daughter, Courtney, 18, died after falling through the window of her sixth-floor dorm room at the University of Michigan. She lost her balance while operating the window or climbing a ladder to her loft bed, authorities said.

Mr. Cantor, who settled a lawsuit with the college, wrote a book about the death. He was baffled when people told him how brave he was to write about the experience.

"How could I not write about it?" he said in a News column. "Writing is what I do. It is who I am."

He is survived by his wife, Sherry; daughter, Jaime; mother, Evelyn; brother, Michael; and three grandchildren.

The funeral will be 2:30 p.m. Sunday at Ira Kaufman Chapel, 18325 W. Nine Mile Road in Southfield.

Contributions may be sent to the Courtney Lisa Cantor Travel Scholarship Fund, 5725 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield, MI, 48323

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