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Stephen M. Mindich, longtime Boston Phoenix owner and publisher, dies at 74

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By [John R. Ellement](#)

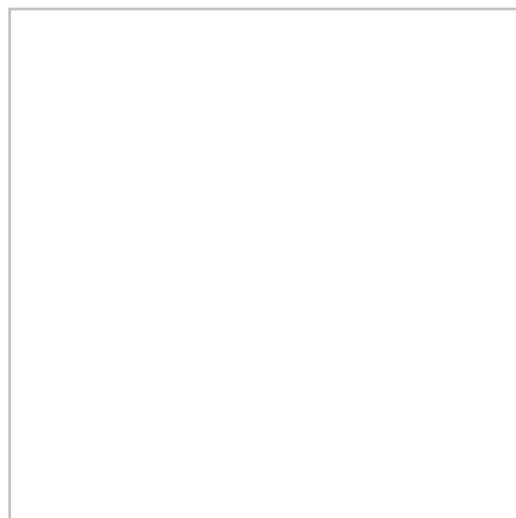
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Stephen M. Mindich, the publisher of the now-closed Boston Phoenix newspaper, the legendary alternative weekly that for decades provided a liberal view of Massachusetts politics and sweeping coverage of the arts, has died from pancreatic cancer, his son said Thursday.

The 74-year-old Mindich battled pancreatic cancer for the

last four years and passed away Wednesday night at hospice, Brad Mindich said in a telephone interview Thursday. He noted that about five minutes after his father passed, the skies lit up with lightning followed by thunder.

Brad Mindich said he got text messages from friends and heard from close relatives who noted the proximity to the change in weather and his father's passing. "I'm 100 percent sure that he's still around," Brad Mindich said.



DINA RUDICK/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

Boston Phoenix owner-publisher Stephen Mindich, shown in a 2012 file photo.

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He said a celebration of his father's life — not a somber funeral — will be held sometime next week, the details of which he hopes to complete later Thursday.

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this early-morning email.

Brad Mindich said he considered his father’s legacy to be “extraordinary” on the region’s cultural and political scenes. He says he often runs into people who remember how his father launched their careers, or a story covered in the Phoenix.

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“He was really brilliant and complex and interesting and challenging,” Brad said. “I think his legacy is undeniable and I know he was very proud that he could make a difference in so many people’s lives.”

Mindich’s daughter-in-law, Rachael Mindich, posted news of Mindich’s death to the Facebook group for former employees of the Phoenix, which was started in the 1960s and grew into a major force in both politics and the arts.

“It with great sadness that I share with you the loss of our PMCG founder, Stephen Mindich,” Rachael Mindich wrote Thursday. “The man who brought every one of us in this group together passed away last night after a courageous 4 year battle with pancreatic cancer. May he now rest in peace.”

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Dan Kennedy, a long-time media critic who formerly worked for the Phoenix in that role, also reported Mindich's passing. "I have just learned that Stephen Mindich, the founder and publisher of the late, great Boston Phoenix, has died after a long illness," Kennedy tweeted. "In the midst of everything else that's going on, this is sad news."

Kennedy, who appears regularly on WGBH-TV's "Beat The Press," also wrote that he "had the honor of working for Stephen from 1991 to 2005. He was a man of vision, passion and intense loyalty. My thoughts are with the Mindich and Phoenix families."

Mindich also purchased an FM radio station that became 101.7 WFNX-FM, an alternative-rock station that operated between 1982 and 2012.

In a March 2013 interview with the Globe, Mindich described the process involved and the emotions he felt as he shuttered the Phoenix, which had been whittled down in advertising revenue by the growth of free media on the Internet.

"I'm numb," he said.

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Asked during the 2013 interview to recall any specific stories he was proud of, Mindich balked, but then remembered one headline in particular. "Enemy Bombs Hanoi," he said. "And we were the enemy."

Mindich was named to the [New England Newspaper Hall of Fame in 2016](#), according to Northeastern University, [which maintains a digital collection](#) of the Phoenix and its related publications.

Mindich was native of the Bronx who came to Boston to attend Boston University, where he earned an undergraduate degree from the School of Theatre, according to his biography posted on at the digital collection site.

He worked at WBUR-FM radio station as an arts critic and began writing for Boston After Dark, a free alternative weekly in 1967. Five years later, he owned the newspaper and transformed it into the Boston Phoenix.

“Mindich encouraged an edgy coverage of arts, entertainment, lifestyle, and politics that was often controversial, such as the 2002 publication and hosting of pictures and a video of the execution of kidnapped Wall Street Journal reporter, Daniel Pearl,” the biography states.

The last edition of the Boston Phoenix was printed on March 22, 2013 and a companion publication in Providence closed in 2014. A Portland version was sold.

No further information is currently available.

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