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Ex - WH writer Peter Citron dies

By *Betsie Freeman* June 28, 2003 Publication: *Omaha World-Herald (NE)* Page: *4b* Word Count: *417*

Former entertainment reporter Peter Citron, known for such stunts as pitching in a Little League game and posing as a high school senior, has died.

Citron, 63, had been a World - Herald columnist and reporter for WOWT - TV.

He was found dead Thursday in his home on Happy Hollow Boulevard. Acting Douglas County Coroner Tom Haynes said it appeared he had been dead for at least two days.

Haynes said an autopsy indicated Citron died of natural causes, but the exact cause may never be known.

Citron lived on the third floor of his house, and it wasn't unusual for his boarders not to see him for a few days, said his brother, John Citron of South Harwich, Mass.

The 5 - foot - 4 Citron had several health problems in recent years, John Citron said, and that his brother had surgery for circulation difficulties two weeks ago.

Peter Citron grew up in Scarsdale, N.Y., and studied English at Dartmouth College. He left school before getting a degree and started a weekly newspaper in his hometown, his brother said.

He came to Omaha in 1966 to work for the Omaha Sun Newspapers. He joined The World - Herald as an entertainment columnist in 1971.

His popularity grew as he engaged readers with columns describing his masquerade as a Grand Island High School student and successful attempts to get into the Guinness Book of World Records for pickle - eating and nonstop joke - telling.

He had been known for such stunts and his sense of humor since his days at Scarsdale High School, where he was elected "class pride and joy," his brother said.

Citron did entertainment reports for WOWT - TV while he was a World - Herald columnist, then left the paper in 1979 to work at the station full time. He moved to KRON - TV in San Francisco in 1981.

He returned to The World - Herald in February 1988 and resumed his column.

In February 1990, he was charged with two counts of felony sexual assault of a child - accused of fondling two young boys in separate incidents. He resigned from The World - Herald and was convicted in May 1990.

Citron was sentenced to three to eight years in prison and was paroled in January 1993.

In 1998, Citron told The World - Herald he was too ill to work and that he got by on Social Security disability, a small pension, renting rooms and donations from friends.

Citron's body was cremated, and a private memorial service was planned. Other survivors include his mother, Ruth Citron of Chatham, Mass.

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