

Peter R. Breads, founder and CEO of Great Lakes Orthodontics

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May 20, 1937 – Jan. 14, 2013

Peter R. Breads, founder and former chief executive officer of Great Lakes Orthodontics Ltd., died Monday in St. Petersburg, Fla., after a lengthy illness. He was 75.

Born in Rochester, the seventh child of an industrial arts teacher, Mr. Breads, whose surname is pronounced “breeds,” graduated from high school in Chatham, near Albany. He later attended what is now Erie Community College and took business courses at Canisius College and the University of Buffalo.

He enlisted in the Navy in 1956 and, after attaining the first-ever perfect score in the Navy’s manual dexterity test, he studied in the Navy’s prestigious dental technology school in Bethesda, Md.

After leaving the Navy, he moved to Angola, where his widowed mother was living, and worked in animal research at the VA Medical Center in Buffalo and then as a technical assistant to orthodontists Dr. Carl F. Gugino and Dr. Dominic A. Colarusso.

He opened a PRB Orthodontic Laboratory in Buffalo in 1965, making appliances and study models for local orthodontists. Gugino gave him support to create Great Lakes Orthodontics in 1967 and it became one of the largest orthodontic laboratories in the nation. Now headquartered in the Town of Tonawanda, it became an employee-owned company after he retired in 1990.

Considered one of the leading experts in his field, Mr. Breads invented several orthodontic devices and lectured nationally and internationally on orthodontic technology. He also taught orthodontic technology at the ECC South Campus in Orchard Park and served as chairman of the college’s Dental Advisory Board.

He was a past treasurer and committee chairman for the Dental Laboratory Association of New York, a past president of the Western New York Dental Lab Owners Association and past chairman of the Upstate New York Dental Lab Owners Association.

Also active in business organizations, he was a former director and executive vice president of the Buffalo Jaycees, a past chairman of the Council of Small Business Enterprises and a 1986 delegate to the White House Conference on Small and Entrepreneurial Businesses.

Appointed to a three-year term on the New York Small Business Advisory Board by Gov. Mario Cuomo, he was a member of the governor’s 1986 Economic Summit.

An avid sailor and fisherman, Mr. Breads moved from Grand Island to Florida in 1992. Diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease when he was 49, he later battled multiple myeloma.

Surviving are his wife of 45 years, the former Carol V. Farrario; a son, Christopher; a daughter, Cheryl White; three brothers, Bob, Don and Lee Harvey; and a sister, Anne Chambers.