

Peter Cullen Dead at 85: How His Faith Shaped the Voice of Optimus Prime

Peter Cullen, the legendary Canadian voice actor who gave the heroic Autobot leader Optimus Prime his commanding yet compassionate soul in the “Transformers” franchise, died Wednesday at his home. He was 85.

His agent confirmed his passing, though a cause of death was not immediately disclosed.

TMZ reported his family issued a statement to them saying:

Peter Cullen passed away peacefully, surrounded by his loving family – and held in the hearts of his many friends and countless fans worldwide. His family asks that you honor his remarkable legacy by serving your communities and leading others with compassion, integrity, and loyalty and always remember ‘be strong enough to be gentle.’

Cullen, born in Montreal, spent over six decades in voice animation, famously portraying Winnie the Pooh’s gloomy companion Eeyore, voicing King Kong in the 1976 remake, and creating the iconic vocal sound effects for the titular alien villain in “Predator”.

However, his definitive cultural legacy remained rooted in the towering, righteous robotic hero he introduced in 1984. Cullen frequently credited his brother Larry, a decorated Marine Captain, for inspiring the performance by advising him before his audition to “be strong enough to be gentle.”

This philosophy heavily informed Cullen’s quiet personal faith and lifelong framework of Christian stewardship. Raised and educated in Catholicism, Cullen viewed his global platform not

as a path to personal celebrity, but as a ministry of service and encouragement. Fans and colleagues frequently observed his deep humility during personal encounters, where he routinely expressed intense gratitude for faith-based gifts, including custom Bibles, and spent long hours counseling troubled fans with messages of divine worth and hope.