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NATIONAL NEWS STORY

Novelist Nigel Cox dies from cancer

28 July 2006

Wellington novelist Nigel Cox died of cancer this morning, four days after finishing runner-up in the Montana New Zealand Book Awards. He was 55.

Cox was born in Pahiataua in 1951 and grew up in the Wairarapa.

He had been a high-profile bookshop owner in Wellington and Auckland, as well as working for Te Papa as a writer.

In 2000 he took up a position as Head of Communication and Interpretation at the Jewish Museum, Berlin.

His novels *Waiting for Einstein* (1984) and *Dirty Work* (1987), were written during the period in which he worked as a bookseller in Auckland and Wellington (1993).

Both were set in and around Wellington.

Cox was awarded the Buckland Literary Award in 1988 and the 1991 Katherine Mansfield Memorial Fellowship.

In 1993 he left bookselling to become a freelance writer and, two years later, took up a position as senior writer for Te Papa. His novel *Skylark Lounge* (2000) broke a 13-year literary silence, and his fourth novel *Tarzan Presley* was a runner-up in the New Zealand Book Awards in 2005.

Responsibility, a dark comic thriller set in Berlin, was runner-up this year's awards.

Cox is survived by wife Susanna and three children - Kate, 11,

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Andrew-Jack, eight, and four-year-old Frank.

Cox, who returned to New Zealand from Berlin in March 2005, survived a cancer scare in 1996.


He thought he had beaten the disease with his "heroic red cells" when a secondary tumour was removed from a collarbone.

Last October, he was diagnosed with system melanoma, which is incurable.

He was working on the final draft of a sixth novel, *The Cowboy Dog*, when he died.

He had pushed himself to attend the book awards in Auckland on Monday, when gravely ill. He took a doctor to the awards with him.

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