

Joe Grannis

August 8, 1932 - August 1, 2021

Published by The Brattleboro Reformer on Aug. 7, 2021

Joseph (Joe) Culver Grannis, 88, (b. August 8, 1932), of Stuyvesant Falls, New York since 2015, formerly of West Townshend, Vermont and New York City, died August 1, 2021, at the Columbia Memorial Hospital in Hudson, New York Hospital after a period of declining health.

Joe's father, Joseph Culver, died when Joe was two years old; his mother, Mary, married Douglas Grannis. Born near Philadelphia, PA, Joe grew up in Columbus, Ohio and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He graduated from Harvard College in 1954, earned an M.A.T. from Harvard in 1955, and a Ph.D. in Education and Psychology from Washington University in 1965. He worked at Hull House in Chicago prior to entering the U.S. Army in 1956. During his service in Germany, besides his military commitments, he enjoyed the intellectual and artistic life around him; he also learned to play the viola.

From 1959 to 1967 he taught at the Harvard School of Education. For the next 28 years Joe was a professor at Teachers College, Columbia University. As professor, in addition to theoretical work and writing, Joe led the Project Follow Through Classroom Environments study, the New York City Dropout Prevention Initiative from 1986 to 1990, the Stay in School Partnership program to reduce dropout, and several others. He worked with a street academy in New York, studied student stress in middle school, developed curriculum, and throughout, focused his attention on how students experienced school with a particular interest on the experience of at-risk students. Joe also devoted himself to community education projects, including the renovation of playgrounds. He served on parent committees for the local New York City public schools his children attended.

After retirement Joe was a Fulbright Professor at the University of Namibia. As he was leaving, a couple of students came into his department chair's office to say, "Send more Americans!"

At the end of the Fulbright year, Joe settled full-time in his beloved small farm in Jamaica, Vermont. He pursued his several loves: sailing, canoeing, gardening, hiking, cross-country skiing, and helping with the small dairy on the farm. With all of this he enjoyed the company of his cherished family. He loved the excitement of mushroom recognition and was successful but for a couple of misidentifications that landed him in the local hospital. He always loved and knew music. In Vermont he studied organ and became the musician at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Chester, Vermont. He was a parishioner of St. Michaels Episcopal Church in Brattleboro before moving to New York State. In Vermont, he led the restoration of the Town Hall turning the neglected town building into a unique, historic venue for community activities.

Joe married Alexandra Wharton in 1964. They were the parents of two boys, Eric and Alexander. The marriage ended in divorce. He married Susanna Whitney Pflaum in 1987. Joe was preceded in death by his son, Alexander Grannis and his brother, Oliver Grannis. He is survived by his wife, Susanna Grannis, sister Frances Whyatt, son Eric Grannis, step-son William Pflaum, step-daughter Melanie Pflaum, three grandchildren, and five step-grandchildren.

[Back to the Home Page](#)