

John William Harrison

Dec. 25, 1924-April 8, 2014

Age: 89

Residence: Greeley

John William Harrison died on April 8, 2014, at Bonnell Good Samaritan Center. He was born to William Anson and Laura (Hornback) Harrison in Los Angeles. He earned a B.S. in chemistry from the California Institute of Technology in 1947, taught chemistry at the University of Denver for two years and earned an M.A. in English in 1949. He earned a Ph.D. in English from the University of Colorado in 1958 and taught English at Purdue University, Ind., from 1955-60.

For 35 years, he taught English at the University of Northern Colorado and covered subjects from Greek myth to film and plenty of composition and literature between the ancients and the moderns. He taught for two terms at UNC's Italian campus near Florence in 1978.

He published in musical theater, mainly opera, in periodicals like "Opera News," an organ for the Metropolitan Opera in Manhattan. He served as review editor for "The Opera Journal" for over a decade and was a reviewer for over 35 years. He served as chair of the scholarly papers' competition for the National Opera Association for more than a quarter of a century.

His marriage to Joan Harrison took place in Boulder on May Day, 1954. He credits her with keeping him humble for almost 60 years full of cultural panache, constant love, and a bit of needling. She was his constant aide as photographer for slides for his courses in mythology and the arts at archeological sites, art galleries and museums during their rewarding travels in Mexico, Greece, Turkey, Italy, France, Germany, England, Australia and New Zealand.

His wife Joan survives him along with son, Gerald Lee Harrison and wife, Lisa of Edmonds, Wash.; grandsons, Christopher and Michael; son, Philip Mackay Harrison of Greeley; daughter, Laura Joann Harrison of Phoenix, and several good operatic and musical friends such as Walter Prince and Steve Weston, both of the Denver area.

Services will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, April 25, 2014, at First Congregational Church in Greeley. Memorial gifts may be made to the Joan and John Graduate Scholarship Program in English at the UNC Foundation or a charity of your choice.