



Obituary

Died: Friday, April 26, 2019

Glenn Frank “Swanee” Swanson passed away on April 26, 2019 at his home in Easthampton, MA at the age of 73. He had just finished chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer and the cause of death was sudden and unexpected, but he did not suffer and his family is thankful for that. He will be remembered as a dedicated teacher, loving father, and supportive friend. Swanee was born in 1946 in Brockton, MA to Frank and Maida (Grindell) Swanson. He graduated from the Williston Northampton School in Easthampton, MA, where he served as both proctor and captain of the soccer team and also played basketball and baseball. He attended Haverford College, graduating in 1968 with a degree in history, after which he returned to Williston as a teacher of history, and philosophy. He also earned a Masters in history from UMass Amherst. During his 46 years at Williston, he also coached many sports, and served as the Dean of Students for 17 years. He published a book about this experience titled, “The Dean on Duty” He taught a popular course on Hitler and Nazi Germany, but is most remembered for being an advocate, champion, and supporter of students.

Service Summary

Visitation

4:00 PM to 6:00 PM, Mon Apr 29,
2019

Mitchell Funeral Home

15 Park Street
Easthampton, MA 01027

Memorial Service

4:00 PM Sat Jun 08, 2019

Mill Park

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Swanee remained a beloved member of the Williston alumni community after he retired from the school in 2015, having taught thousands of students in his 46 years of service there. He is remembered as fostering connections and community, particularly through Facebook, and for many he is an enduring symbol of Williston. He also served on the Easthampton Democratic Committee and was active in the Western Massachusetts Atheist and Secular Humanist group, the Better Angels Debate Club, Learning in Retirement, and more. He published a book focused on the Civil War, “Independence.” During his retirement, he was reflective about his years at Williston and his life generally and believed in honesty and humility about mistakes. He never stopped considering what he could learn from his own students about forgiveness and the power of mercy. He posted daily about his thoughts on current events but also sent many birthday messages and well-wishes to his thousands of friends, family, and former students. “His legacy is in his children, his students and his friends...His was a life well lived full of openness, love, joy and learning right to the very end.” (Laura H. Spittle, WNS ‘75)

He is predeceased by his parents, Frank and Maida. He is survived by his children, Persis Maida Ticknor-Swanson of New York, NY and Calvin August Ticknor-Swanson. Both graduated from Williston. Persis is currently a working in research at the Columbia University School of

Public Health, and Calvin is a junior at Northwestern University. He is also survived by the mother of his children (Estey Ticknor), her partner (Tara Lagu), and their daughter (Freddie Ticknor-Lagu), all of Easthampton, and his sister (Wendy Avirgan) of Stamford, CT, and many cousins and extended family. A memorial service will be held on June 8, 2019 from 4:00-6:00 PM at Mill 180 Park, Easthampton, MA. Please direct all donations specifically to the Class of 1964 at the Williston Northampton School. Special thanks to his many friends and those who cared for him. He is deeply missed.