



Mr. Thomas A. Walsh

October 15, 1939 - February 24, 2020

Thomas A. Walsh, 80, of Adams, a high-school teacher who touched the lives of countless students in his hometown over four decades, died Feb. 24 at North Adams Commons after a sudden decline from complications from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. A fiercely dedicated teacher and administrator — starting in 1963 at Adams Memorial High School and then, following regionalization with Cheshire in 1969, Hoosac Valley Regional High School — multiple former students recently recalled on Facebook his passionate, energetic, and dramatic teaching of Shakespeare and other cornerstone texts of English literature in his honors and advanced placement classes. Numerous former students credited Walsh with influencing their lives in myriad ways, from instilling a lifelong love of Shakespeare to inspiring their own teaching careers. He was promoted to vice principal of Adams Memorial High School in 1967. He then served as the longtime chairperson of the English department at Hoosac Valley. He also served for decades as advisor to the National Honor Society and de facto travel agent for the organization's annual trip to Washington, D.C., an event he planned with military precision. For years, he was also played a key role in coordinating graduation ceremonies with dignity, tradition, and gravitas. He left full-time teaching in 1997 but retained his AP English class and continued advising the NHS until 2002. Outside of the classroom, he nurtured his love of classical music and for years he sang at weddings and in several choral groups as a tenor. He carefully followed national politics and maintained resolute opinions expressed with civility, dry wit, humor, outrage, and an unabashed concern for democracy. Thomas A. Walsh was born Oct. 15, 1939 in Adams, the son of the late John J. and Mary G. (Toohey) Walsh. After earning his degree from Adams Memorial High School in 1957, he graduated cum laude in English in 1961 from St. Michael's College in Winooski Park, Vt. In 1963, he earned a master of arts degree in English from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind. He leaves a sister and brother-in-law, Mary and Richard Potter, of Plainfield, seven nieces and nephews, and numerous members of their extended respective families. He was preceded in death by two brothers, John F. Walsh and James V. Walsh, and by a sister, Roberta Ann Costine. Calling hours will take place Wednesday, March 4th, from 10 to 11 a.m. at Paciorek Funeral Home, 13 Hoosac St., Adams. A funeral service will follow at 11:00 AM. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Thomas A. Walsh's memory may be made

to HospiceCare in the Berkshires, Inc., 877 South St., Suite 1W, Pittsfield, MA 01201, or to Adams Ambulance Service, Inc., 185 Columbia St., Adams, MA 01220.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAR 4. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Paciorek Funeral Home
13 Hoosac Street
Adams, MA 01220
(413) 743-0815
jspaciorek@gmail.com
<https://www.paciorekfuneral.com/>

Service

MAR 4. 11:00 AM (ET)

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Tribute Wall

MY

“ Dear Mary, Rich and Family... so sorry to hear of Mr. Walsh's passing. He was an extremely talented and kind man. Looking back, I was lucky to have had him as a teacher. When I saw him recently, I introduced him to my husband as "one of my old English teachers". He immediately made me correct that to "my former English Literature teacher because former sounded better than old and, after all, English literature, not just English, was what he taught". A well loved legend for sure!

Maryellen (Roemelt) Young - February 29, 2020 at 02:53 PM



“ Mr. Walsh was an incredible English teacher and I feel so lucky to have been in his English class senior year. His knowledge of Shakespeare was extensive and he made what could have been a difficult subject easily understood by acting out all of the parts, in Old English. He so spoiled me with his abilities that I never took an English class in college. I just couldn't imagine any professor topping his performances. He will be missed!

Linda Haggerty - February 28, 2020 at 04:12 PM

NH

“ We were all lucky to have teachers like Mr. Walsh. He made accessible some of the literary world's most important – and often misunderstood – works. His quiet wit and thoughtful manner made him a joy to be around, in and out of the classroom. (Also, it takes a *brave* man to chaperone a couple dozen 17-year-olds to Washington, D.C. – and he did it for decades!) Mr. Walsh, thank you for being such a great writing mentor. You won't soon be forgotten.

Nicole (Petithory) Habif - February 28, 2020 at 12:52 PM

JF

“ When I look back I realize that we were very lucky to have high school teachers like Mr. Walsh. His AP English class could easily have surpassed most college classes. His passion and deep knowledge of literature shone through each class. He worked his magic and brushed away the stodgy veneer of Shakespeare's English and made it accessible for all of us. I have many fond memories of his class but one sticks out for me...him reenacting the despair of Eveline as she grabs onto the railing at the end of James Joyce's short story...RIP dear teacher - Jessica Ferro Class of 1999

Jessica Ferro - February 28, 2020 at 11:35 AM

AM

“ GOOD FRIEND, MASTER TEACHER, EXCELLENT ADMINISTRATOR, TOUCHED MANY LIVES IN A POSITIVE WAY--EVEN GOT SENIOR BOYS TO SING THE CLASS SONG AT GRADUATION WITH GUSTO--HE IS IN OUR PRAYERS-ANN AND BILL MCLAREN---NORTH FORT MYERS, FL.

ANN AND BILL MCLAREN - February 27, 2020 at 03:34 PM

SM

Condolences to the Walsh family. I knew Mr. Walsh from Adams High School. He was an exceptional teacher and person. May he be blessed in Heaven forever. Susan Massaconi, Saraspta, FL.

Susan Massaconi - October 12, 2021 at 01:35 PM