

Therese Anne (Terry) Grimes



Therese Anne (Terry) Grimes, Ed.D., 65, a devoted and passionate advocate for those suffering from mental illnesses, died peacefully at her home in Blacksburg, Va., on Sunday, February 20, 2011. In confronting her own mental illnesses, Terry gained insight and knowledge which she leveraged in providing support for others. A meticulous researcher and compelling speaker, she used her voice to educate and work for the rights of the mentally ill. Terry was born on July 6, 1945, in Queens, N.Y., to John and Adeline Ehr Gott. From a young age she developed a voracious appetite for knowledge and appreciation for the arts, spending much of her free time in museums. She attended Marymount Manhattan College receiving a Bachelors Degree in Psychology and Special Education.

After moving to Virginia, Terry studied at Virginia Tech where she was awarded both a Masters and Doctorate in Education. Terry was a lifelong educator having taught in New York City and Roanoke before moving on to assume administrative roles. In 1977, she worked as Director of the nonprofit child-care center affiliated with the Blacksburg Christian Church. In 1980, she moved on to become the Director of Special Education for the Wythe County School system. In this position she worked tirelessly on behalf of the students under her charge as well as their families.

Ultimately the severity of Terry's own disorders resulted in disability retirement in 1990. After a brief hiatus, Terry resumed her efforts as a mental health consumer advocate with special interest in areas of criminal justice issues and individuals living with mental illness. She became involved with numerous organizations, continued to train diligently and give freely of her time.

A very small selection of her activities included time as an emergency services phone line volunteer with New River Community Services, membership in the Strategic Planning team for the Bridge Project – a post-

booking jail diversion program, significant involvement with the New River Valley Crisis Intervention Team, and also served as a board member of the Mental Health Association of the New River Valley. In 2001, Terry co-founded and became president of Empowerment for Health Minds a nonprofit consumer run mental health advocacy and education organization.

Terry has received numerous awards for her efforts including the 1996 MHANRV Mattie Louise Smusz Award for Volunteerism, the 1999 MHANRV Distinguished Service Award for Advocacy, and the 2005 NRVCS RAFT Volunteer of the Year. She was also a two-time recipient of the NRV Crisis Intervention Team Bridge Builder Award for single-handedly inducing the most change and contributing greatly to the success of the program.

Since its formation in 2006, Terry served as a member of the Virginia Commission on Mental Health Law Reform and as Chairperson on the Task Force on Empowerment and Self-Determination. In 2010, Terry received a Resolution of Appreciation from the Supreme Court of Virginia expressing deep gratitude for her manifold contributions to the Commission's work and to the cause of empowering individuals with mental illness and honoring her for her openness of mind, for her wisdom, and for her unyielding belief that, acting together, we have the power to transform our systems and ourselves to improve the well being of each and every person.

A patron of the arts, Terry had a life long love of performing and performances of music, singing and dance. Only eclipsed by her passion for her work, Terry loved to cook and prepared countless meals nourishing the body and enriching the senses.

Terry is survived by her son, Andrew White and wife, Gwen, of Sheridan, Wyo.; granddaughter, Jessica Alderman, of Austin, Texas; great-granddaughter, Chloe; sister, Mary Alice Boden and husband, George, of Huntington, N.Y.; brother, John Ehrgott and wife, Sharon, of Castle Rock, Colo.; numerous nephews, nieces, cousins, and countless friends; and her dearest companion, Sadie Anne, the dog.

There will be a celebration of Terry's life 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 26, 2011, at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation Meeting House, 1301 Gladewood Drive, Blacksburg, Va.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, P.O. Box 477, Radford, Va. 24141
<http://www.wrcnrv.org/>.

A very special, heart felt thanks to all of those individuals from the various organizations that have cared for and supported Terry during this past year – Share the Care, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Hospice and her caregivers. What she emphatically deemed "the best year of her life" would not have been possible without all of your love and dedication.

Peace, Passion

Well-Being

Love