

Get to Know

Jane Graham



As a young woman, Jane Graham moved two states eastward and we are glad she did. Jane has had a varied and interesting life in the Upper Valley, where she is a member of the Hanover Center Congregational Church and has graced the life of our community. It is a pleasure to get to know someone dedicated to a life of service leavened with gratitude.

Where was your original home? I was born in upper New York state a few miles from the Vermont border and lived on a farm. I grew up in the East Whitehall Brick Church, which was built in 1826 and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. Five generations of my family were baptized there. You might be interested to know that the church was heated by two wood stoves and that my grandfather used to supply the wood and build the fires before every service. Just across the road from the church was the one room schoolhouse where I began my education. At 192 years and counting, the church is still without central heat and electricity. Every year it hosts one service on the second Sunday in August.

Will you be there this year? Absolutely!

Tell us a bit about your education and career. After college I became a Registered Nurse and joined my brother in Hanover, where he was an intern at the original Hitchcock clinic. He eventually became a

gastroenterologist and worked at the Mayo Clinic for over 40 years. I served at the Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital for many years in different capacities, the last of which was at Dick's House, the college infirmary, before the college became co-educational.

Along the way I married John and we had a daughter and a son. We were truly blessed with five grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

And after Hitchcock and Dartmouth? In 1966, I got into school nursing, which I loved. I began in Hanover, which had about 1600 children in grades K-12. When the Ray School opened in 1970, I moved there. It was perfect for me! The little ones were so open and teachable and the staff were so close knit. It has an amazing reputation that continues to this day.

Did you have any memorable experiences as a school nurse? Among many, one in particular stands out. It was the day Stanley the Python made the trip from the Montshire to the Ray kindergarten class. All the children were excited, but so, unfortunately, was Stanley. He somehow managed to bite one of the little girls on the cheek. She was not really hurt, but the pandemonium was general. I must say that Stanley's visit was indeed a dumb idea. Interestingly, a number of years later, a young lady came up to me and asked if I remembered her. It turned out that she was the little girl who had the too close encounter with Stanley.

As I understand it, your career extended beyond school nursing. It did. I retired from school nursing in 1989, after 23 years. My husband and I regularly attended Dartmouth sports events. After he passed away in 1998, I really missed the experience. My son suggested that I work in the Athletic Department. I have done so for 18 years, am still loving it, and have even added one long morning at the alumni gym to my duties at football, soccer, and hockey games. Over the years I have met so many nice people who have become friends.

What are the prospects for the Big Green this year? The football team will do well, but I worry about the hockey.

You mentioned that you have lived in the same house in Hanover for over 60 years. Does one ever graduate from being a "flatlander"? My husband was a true Vermonter and always considered me a flatlander. Out of respect for him I remain a flatlander.

How did you come to be a part of the Hanover Center Congregational Church? I attended many churches in the Upper Valley over the years, but the Hanover Center Church has always seemed a perfect fit.

If newcomers to our area asked you for suggestions for a church home, what would you advise them? I would simply invite them to come experience our church.

I feel blessed to have lived a healthy and active life and to have a grandson nearby who always keeps me busy.