

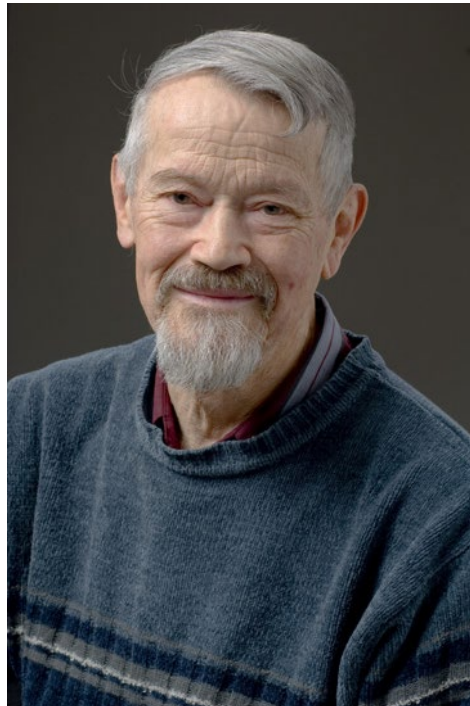
# Remembering Duane Whittier

Philosophy professor Duane Whittier passed away on Sept. 3, 2018

Sunday, August 5, 2018



Philosophy professor Duane Whittier passed away on Sept. 3, 2018, just shy of his 90th birthday. There are few if any individuals who have had as long-standing an association with UNH as professor Whittier. Growing up in Lebanon, New Hampshire, professor Whittier enrolled as a freshman at UNH in 1946, graduating in 1950. He left New England to receive a



DUANE WHITTIER

Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Illinois, and to begin his teaching career, first at the University of Illinois, then at Penn State. But he returned home to New Hampshire to begin teaching at his alma mater in 1967. He taught philosophy here for 49 years, retiring in 2016, marking 70 years between his arrival at UNH as an undergraduate and his retirement as professor of philosophy.

SUBSCRIBE  
TO THE UNH  
TODAY  
NEWSLETTER

SUBSCRIBE  
TO UNH TODAY  
RSS

As a teacher, professor Whittier inspired many students, some of whom said that his impact on them was life-changing. One of his methods was to take a position, perhaps deliberately chosen as a provocative or unpopular point of view, and challenge his students to talk him out of it. He loved the give and take of philosophical inquiry and was much more interested in getting his students to think critically than in having them arrive at a particular point of view he might have favored.

One of those he inspired, when he was teaching at Illinois, was an undergraduate named Robert Scharff, who later joined professor Whittier for several decades as one of the core faculty members in the UNH philosophy department. "What Duane 'taught' me in that first course," recalled professor Scharff, "is that good philosophy, for all its jargon and fancy arguments and ambitious topics, ultimately deserves to be conveyed straightforwardly, with as few frills as possible."

Professor Whittier loved classical music, as his collection of over 6,000 classical music albums attested. He and his wife Joan, who died in 2017, gave a significant bequest to UNH in the form of scholarships for undergraduates majoring in music, especially those interested in performance on stringed instruments or piano.

Professor Whittier will leave a continuing legacy with the students coming to UNH under these scholarships. His love of philosophy will endure in the generations of students he influenced. His colleagues in the philosophy department will remember him as a model to emulate for lively engagement with their students in their collective pursuit of philosophical understanding.

To celebrate professor Whittier's life, on Friday, Sept. 21, from 2:10 to 3:30 p.m. at the [Freedom Café](#), the Socratic Society will hold its meeting in his honor and will discuss the purpose of philosophy in relation to one's life and death. After the discussion,

all are invited to a gathering at 4 p.m. at professor DeVries' nearby home. Please contact Mary Beth Myers for directions:

[MaryBeth.Myers@unh.edu](mailto:MaryBeth.Myers@unh.edu).

WRITTEN [Timm Triplett](#) | Department of Philosophy |

BY: [timm.triplett@unh.edu](mailto:timm.triplett@unh.edu)

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

## RELATED ARTICLES



September 16, 2021 | ALUMNI

# UNH Research Finds Witnessing Abuse of

# Sibling Can Lead to Mental Health Issues

---



August 28, 2020 | PETER T. PAUL COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

## New Paul College Associate Dean For Undergraduate Education Named

---



October 5, 2020 | INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH POLICY AND PRACTICE (IHPP)

## Unpacking Health Care and Policy in 2020

---



**University of New Hampshire**

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of **UNH Communications and Public Affairs**.

Email us: [unhtoday.editor@unh.edu](mailto:unhtoday.editor@unh.edu).

**MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION**  **CONTACT US**



UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234  
Copyright © 2022 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)

