



Colin E. Bourn

October 5, 1937 - August 29, 2024

Colin E. Bourn, 86, of Ashby and Creggan, Northern Ireland, died at home on August 29th following a short battle with Paget's Disease.

Raised in Whitton, Twickenham, London, Colin was born October 5, 1937, at 8:30 PM—the elder twin by 10 minutes—to John Edward and Mary Ann (Bourke) Bourn.

Growing up in London, Colin attended St. Edmund's Primary School, Whitton, St. James Primary School, Twickenham, and St. Benedict's School, Ealing. During WWII, Colin and his twin evacuated to his mother's family home in Creggan. It was in class with Miss Crossey at the local primary school that Colin learned to knit, a passion he pursued long into his eighties!

In 1955, Colin immigrated to the U.S. to enter the seminary. He spent his Novitiate year in Mystic, CT, continuing his studies at St. Michael's College, Winooski Park, VT. Colin graduated at the top of the Class of 1959, Summa Cum Laude, with a BA in Philosophy. Colin continued his theological studies at St. Michael's for an additional three years and was active in the Society of Saint Edmund.

In January 1962, Colin decided to leave the seminary and moved to Ashby, MA to teach at Ashby High School. He taught for three semesters while

completing a Master of Education at Fitchburg State College in 1963. He also began his FSC tenure teaching in the summer sessions of 1962.

In the Fall of 1963, Colin moved to Amherst, MA to pursue a Master of Arts in English at the University of Massachusetts. At UMass, Colin met his future wife, Kathleen M. Fenton, whom he married in Whitton, Twickenham, London, on July 27, 1965. Colin and Kathy made their home in Ashby, raising a family and embedding their lives within the local community.

Colin joined the Fitchburg State College English Dept. faculty permanently in September 1965 and continued teaching at FSC until retiring on the last day of the millennium in 2000. Colin taught and subsequently coordinated the English course offerings for the FSC Evening and Summer School programs throughout his tenure. He was a popular teacher, promoted to Associate Professor in 1988, awarded the Vincent J. Mara Excellence in Teaching in 1996, and Professor Emeritus in 2002, among other accolades.

Colin was passionate about 19th-century literature, particularly Jane Austen. For most of his adult life, he was an active member of the Jane Austen Society. Colin was an avid fiber artist, forever gifting his knitting, embroidery, needlepoint, and other bespoke crafts and projects to friends and loved ones. Colin loved to garden and devoted much of his spare time to refinishing furniture and renovating and preserving the 18th-century home that he and Kathy purchased in the Spring of 1968.

Colin was not just a teacher but an active local community member. He served on the North Middlesex Regional School Committee for 25+ years, represented Ashby's Democratic Party as an Elector at state conventions, was a Lector at St. Camillus Catholic Church, Fitchburg, for more than 20 years, and was a docent for Boston by Foot for more than a decade.

In 2000, Colin and Kathy built a retirement “bungalow” in Creggan, where they spent half of every year living in the rural countryside, reconnecting with friends from Colin’s youth, exploring their Irish routes, and establishing new family connections, community, and traditions.

Colin is survived by four children and seven grandsons: Neal and his wife Kristen of Jubail, Saudi Arabia, and their sons Liam, Aidan, and Eoin; Mary-Kate of Ashby; CJ and his wife Karen of Merrimack, NH, and their sons Reginald, Christopher, Benjamin, and Nicholas; Drew and his wife Kristin of Stoughton, MA; his sister Janet and her husband Albert Kirkwood of Bangor, Northern Ireland, and numerous relatives and extended family worldwide. Colin was pre-deceased by his wife Kathy (2007), and his twin Gerard (2023).

In place of flowers, the family asks for donations to the Colin Bourn ‘63 English Scholarship Fund. Mail checks to Fitchburg State University Foundation, 160 Pearl St., Fitchburg, MA 01420, and note “Colin Bourn ‘63” in the memo line; or donate online at <https://alumni.fitchburgstate.edu/g/general-giving/>. Type “Colin” in the search bar and select the fund.

Calling hours are Monday, September 16th, from 4 to 7 PM, at Anderson Funeral Home, 250 Main St, Townsend, MA, 01469. The Funeral Mass will be at 10 AM, September 17th at St. John the Evangelist, 1 School St, Townsend, followed by interment at Glenwood Cemetery, 763 Main St, Ashby, MA 01431

Cemetery Details

Glenwood Cemetery

763 Main Street
Ashby, MA 01431

Previous Events

Calling Hours

SEP **16**. 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Anderson Funeral Home - Townsend
250 Main Street ~ Route 119
Townsend, MA 01469
(978) 597-2692

Funeral Mass

SEP **17**. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church
3 School St
Townsend, MA 01469
(978) 597-2291

Tribute Wall

AH

“ 1 file added to the album Colin Bourn



Anderson funeral home - September 16, 2024 at 10:56 AM

KB

That was so beautiful! What beautiful memories collected into a wonderful tribute to Colin/Grandpa!

Kristen Bourn - September 17, 2024 at 09:08 AM

MC

“ *Sending our condolences at this time to the family on the loss of Colin RIP.*

We have fond memories of Colin and Cathy, visiting my mother Mary Cumiskey Carrive, Silverbridge when on their trips back to Creggan.

May his gentle soul rest in peace.

Michael and Roseann Cumiskey

Michael Cuniskey - September 16, 2024 at 07:00 AM



Thank you both. We've missed Mary every trip back to Creggan. Miss her terribly. She and Dad can catchup, now, with my mother and Gerard over a cuppa.

Mary-Kate Bourn - November 12, 2024 at 09:56 PM

KB

“ Liam and Aidan’s best memories were visiting Kathy/Nana and Colin/Grandpa in Ashby when the boys were little and playing with all of their dad’s old toys and listening to Grandpa read the books that belonged to their dad and his siblings. Their favorite thing to do was sit on Grandpa’s lap and listen to a story, a poem, or a story from his life. One of my favorite memories was cooking in the wee cottage in Ireland and being Colin’s sous chef. We enjoyed talking about food and trying different recipes.

Kristen Bourn - September 13, 2024 at 03:18 PM

NB

“ Remembering a most dapper and enchanting professor who engaged every student in each of his classes. When registering for classes, I looked first to those he was teaching and took every one. As a 40 something displaced worker, I began my English lit degree enjoying not only the great literature he taught, but also how he laced so much of the history surrounding the era of each written piece. My daughter followed in my footsteps and also enjoyed his eclectic style of delivering instruction, inspired to become a professor herself. To his family, please know that we have fond memories of Colin and we just know he is enjoying catching up with those authors he shared with us! Slainte, Colin!

Nancy Thomas Byrne - September 12, 2024 at 10:09 PM

DH

“ Donna H. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Colin E. Bourn.

Donna H. - September 11, 2024 at 06:33 AM



“ *Basket of Memories was purchased for the family of Colin E. Bourn.*



September 10, 2024 at 12:56 PM



“ *Love, Kathy, JoeJoe, Kevin & Jason planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Colin E. Bourn.*

Love, Kathy, JoeJoe, Kevin & Jason - September 10, 2024 at 12:56 PM



“ *Bedford Big Band purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Colin E. Bourn.*



Bedford Big Band - September 10, 2024 at 09:43 AM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Colin E. Bourn.*



September 09, 2024 at 03:22 PM

RA

“ Colin was a wonderful colleague during my years in the Fitchburg State English department. His sense of humor and witty intelligence enlivened us all. A wonderful teacher, yet he always jumped in to do the work beyond the classroom that was so necessary and not always recognized or rewarded. A good person, who lived a good life, and made life better for others.

Roberta Adams - September 09, 2024 at 01:32 PM

AC

“ All of us at Family Dental Care purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Colin E. Bourn.



All of us at Family Dental Care - September 07, 2024 at 08:35 PM

BD

“ I was a member of the AHS class of '64 and Colin joined us midyear to teach Biology! He fit right in and became a friend, teacher and mentor to many of us. He joined us in 2014 to celebrate our 50th Reunion. Colin was one of the best!

Barbara C Despres - September 07, 2024 at 06:17 AM

CP

“ I took both 18th and 19th century lit - he was a great prof and his tests were tough. He talked often of his admiration for Jane Austen and Benjamin Franklin and “The Society of Friends.” He had a great sense of humor too. I wish I could take those classes again. Godspeed Professor Bourne.

Carolyn Palo - September 06, 2024 at 07:16 AM

MD

Sincere condolences to Colin's sons, daughters, grandchildren and extended family members. R.I.P. Colin. from Marian & Aoibhean. Crossmaglen. Co. Armagh. N.Ireland

Marian donnelly - September 06, 2024 at 11:19 AM

DB

Our thoughts and prayers go to Uncle Colin's family in US and beyond. He was our colourful and 'wacky' American uncle, who for us reserved English people was always larger than life. He was Uncle Sam personified to us when we were kids living through the 1970s and 80s. Uncle Colin said that in The US he was considered English and in England he was always considered American! Anyhow we loved his great character and sense of humour, not to mention interesting dress sense. It was good to see him a bit more often thanks to Colin and Kathy becoming regular neighbours to my Mum and Dad in Cregganbane. I think it made their retirement a lot more enjoyable and I hope it did the same for Colin and Kathy. We will remember them both very fondly. Lots of Love Dom

Dominic Bourn - September 08, 2024 at 11:07 AM

BT

“My thoughts and prayers to the family on the loss of a great man and exceptional teacher. He inspired me to teach and his passion for literature was amazing!! His comment on the first day of class in 19th Century Novels - “You cannot go to Heaven and sit next to these authors and not have read their writing” was memorable to say the least. He introduced me to my most favorite writer. If anyone can go to Heaven and sit with the many authors that he introduced his students to and loved himself it is Colin. His dedication to teaching and love of literature are never to be forgotten. “May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest”
Barbara Thorpe

Barbara Thorpe - September 05, 2024 at 09:55 PM

LT

“ I was blessed to have such a fine gentleman as a professor when I went to Fitchburg State. My condolences to his family. Heaven has gained a new angel, but the world has lost a great man- the world was a better place because of him. Rest in eternal peace 🕊️

LuAnn Thibodeau - September 05, 2024 at 07:29 PM

JK

“ Amazing man, consular, teacher. It is nice he has a chance to reconnect to his Irish roots. Judy Kulju

judith kulju - September 05, 2024 at 06:23 PM

TC

“ Tobe Conway lit a candle in memory of Colin E. Bourn



Tobe Conway - September 05, 2024 at 05:05 PM

TC

“ Dr. Bourn, was in the top 3 of my favorite professors at FSC! He really made our classes interesting and I can say all of us were engaged in our studies. My condolences go out to the Bourn Family, Dr. Bourn's friends and colleagues as well as his students. May his love and light shine on each of you everyday. Rest in Peace Dr. Bourn, and thank you for being you! I will grab my Robert Frost book from our class and re-read tonight in your honor.

Tobe Conway - September 05, 2024 at 05:05 PM

LP

“ I had Colin at FSU for a creative writing course back in 1973. He was one of the best teachers I ever had and I really loved his sense of humor. RIP...

Lou Poirier - September 05, 2024 at 04:10 PM

WS

“ Colin was my source for English inspiration. As his student in my AHS '63 experience, I found an example of skill and creativity in expression. I followed him to UMass Amherst and his class there led me to begin my English major BA '67. My career has been underpinned by my Colin-inspired focus using verbal skills carefully. His balanced demeanor and facilitation were the touchstone for my own replication of his classroom. Rest and blessed, love Colin.

William Stanwood - September 05, 2024 at 03:29 PM

LH

“ I had Colin Bourne as my Professor at Fitchburg State. He was an awesome teacher and I enjoyed his classes. He also use to have a great sense of humor. He also knew me from my business on John Fitch Hwy and because I also lived in Ashby he used ride back and forth with me as I was attending a night course. He always had something interesting to say. He will certainly be missed in academia but also on a personal level as we became friends. Rest in peace my friend.

Lawrence A Hier - September 05, 2024 at 03:12 PM



“ Our Ashby class of '64 was the first class he taught! He would take us (seniors) outside on nice days to play Password We really should have been doing math!

Linda Williams - September 05, 2024 at 01:37 PM

JM

“ Professor Bourn was my favorite professor at Fitchburg State. I will never forget "Decadents and Transition", he made Victorian England so exciting. Colin also vouched for me on School Committee when I was up for a move from teaching to administration. What wonderful memories thinking about him and his very positive influence on students.

Joann Marion - September 05, 2024 at 01:22 PM

MK

I am deeply saddened to learn of Professor Bourn's passing. I took nine of his classes during my tenure at FSC--from World Lit to Victorian Lit to Decadence and Transition to Dickens. Mr. Bourn was instrumental in my decision to become an English teacher myself. I have kept every book, notebook and essays from each of his incredible classes and used all of the material I learned from him with the high school students I taught in my 33 years of teaching. I so often have thought about contacting him to let him know how much he inspired me; sadly, I did not do that. To the family of Colin Bourn, please know how much he meant to his former students. May the road rise to meet you!

Mary Ellen Kelley - September 05, 2024 at 04:03 PM

JL

“ Oh, my goodness, Professor Bourn--not only was his English Composition I course the first college course I took, but I went on to become an English professor myself (despite majoring in Biology at Fitchburg State). I still have the book we used in his class. I also took Comp. II with him. Lovely memories come flooding back. I am so sorry for his family in this time of loss. What a positive, inspirational mark he left on the world.

Jean LeBlanc - September 05, 2024 at 01:16 PM