James Warren Fowle

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Thetford, Vt. — James Warren Fowle of Thetford died peacefully on Friday, July 24, 2015, surrounded by family, friends and music.

Jim was an art history professor who organized his life so that he had plenty of time for his family and friends, as well as his flower and vegetable gardens, trees and carefully built (and rebuilt) stone walls in Thetford. Jim’s letters, either hand-written or typed on an old manual typewriter, were beautifully written and often long treasured by their recipients. They showed a keen sense of the changing seasons, and carried a warm concern and appreciation for the interests and experiences of his correspondents. He was, on Halloween, the Witch on Thetford Hill, entertaining or scaring both young and old in his black cloak and witch’s hat, mumbling guttural Turkish. As a professor, his interest was in his students, not in research. He shared with his wife, Alison Fowle, a love of music and gardening, travel, and creating special family occasions.

Jim was born in 1920 and spent his early years in Istanbul, Turkey where his parents were missionaries. He returned to this country at the age of 15 to attend Deerfield Academy and Williams College, graduating in 1941. Following officer training school, he served in the Navy on both fronts in World War II. After the war, he finished graduate school at Harvard, earning a PhD in art history. He traveled widely in Europe and the U.S. to visit museums and photograph paintings. He married Alison Bozorth in 1952 and became an instructor at Harvard. His teaching career included years at Harvard, Bryn Mawr, and the Rhode Island School of Design. In Providence, Rhode Island, he supported a Chamber Music concert series and worked for the preservation of historic houses.

Jim spent his summers in Thetford most of his life, in early years as a counselor at Camp Hanoun and then, with his own family, in his parents’ house on Thetford Hill. He became a town resident after his retirement, and was active in local community affairs including the Thetford Hill Village Improvement Society, Thetford Hill Fair and creation of the Thetford Hill Historic District. He and Alison spent winters in Siracusa, Sicily, where they gathered many friends and took their visitors on memorable trips. He had a wonderful ability to share his love of life and beauty, enriching the lives of a great many people.
Jim is survived by his daughters, Rebecca Lafave and Shelley Stokes; grandchildren, Jonathan and Sarah Stokes, and James Nicholas, Peter and Claire Lafave; by two brothers, Farnsworth ("Farny") Fowle and Richardson ("Rik") Fowle; and by his sister, Joy Smith.

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