



Jeff Grotsky

May 14, 1944 - September 6, 2023

Jeff Grotsky (Grotmo) passed away on Wednesday, September 6, 2023, in Baltimore, MD, from complications due to surgery. He was 79 years old.

Jeffery Neal Grotsky was born on May 14, 1944, in Passaic, NJ, a grandson of Russian and Polish immigrants. His father, Sidney, was a machinist. His mother, Sylvia (Cebulach), was a milliner. Sid and Sylvia raised Jeff and his brother, Alan, in Clifton, NJ. The Grotsky boys attended Clifton High School, where Jeff met his lifelong and closest friends. It was in Clifton High where his pals started calling him “Grotmo” and the nickname stuck. The Grotskys were not people of means. In a sense, this fact redoubled their aspiration to give their children a strong work ethic, to steer them toward academic success while supporting their love of sports.

Jeff was the starting center and middle linebacker on the varsity football team during his senior year. That same year he met Carolyne Ruth DeVries, a high school junior who became his sweetheart. After graduating from Clifton High in 1962, Jeff earned an undergraduate degree in elementary education from Kutztown University. After an academic hiatus working odd jobs, he went back to school to earn an MA in Special Education from Jersey City State University and to marry the love of his life, Carolyne, who would be his wife of over 57 years.

Jeff's earlier career focused on special education and, later, on urban education administration. While working on his master's degree, he took a job with the New Jersey Commission for the Blind. In 1970, Jeff accepted a job in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) with the American Federation for the Blind to train teachers in braille and set up schools for the visually impaired.

In 1971, with a toddler in tow and a pregnant wife, he returned from Asia to Coopersburg, PA, and eventually to Camp Hill, PA, where he worked for the Pennsylvania State Department of Education between 1972 and 1987 while completing a doctoral program in education from Temple University (1984). As if all this weren't enough, he also founded Brookside Montessori School (Camp Hill), volunteered for 15 years in the Camp Hill Fire Department, and coached little league baseball. Jeff served as the Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Milwaukee Public Schools (1987-1991). He then worked as the Superintendent of Schools in Grand Rapids, MI, and later as the Superintendent of the Harford County Public Schools in Maryland. Jeff's last full-time, professional engagement was at Baltimore City Public Schools, first as area superintendent and later as chief of staff.

In 2010, Jeff and Carolyne chose Chestertown, MD, as their retirement destination. There, Jeff served on the town planning commission and volunteered at the Kent County Community Food Pantry, while working at improving his golf game with unabashed zest but uneven results.

Jeff authored two books and a number of journal articles on special education, and a brief memoir. Jeff inspired a lot of young minds to pursue careers and dreams. Lots of people owe him who they are today because of his mentorship and stewardship. He will be remembered as that person you wanted to bounce off ideas with before you went into the world to try them out. We'll miss the wisdom, the warmth, and honesty of his responses. We'll also miss the way he listened to all of us, asked the right questions, and made us

believe that there was something valuable in what we had to say that he could learn from.

In addition to his parents, he is predeceased by his brother, Alan Joel Grotsky.

He is survived by his loving wife, Carlyne Grotsky; three children, Adam Grotsky (Olga), Ally Tierney (Jim), Job Grotsky (Taren); four grandchildren, Arden Tierney, Porter Tierney, Asher Grotsky, and Kallan Grotsky.

A memorial service will be held on Sunday, September 17 at 2 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church of Chestertown, 905 Gateway Drive, Chestertown, MD 21620.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to The Kent County Community Food Pantry. <https://kentfoodpantry.org/>

Cemetery Details

Chester Cemetery

Chestertown, MD

Previous Events

Memorial Service

SEP 17. 2:00 PM (ET)

Presbyterian Church of Chestertown
905 Gateway Drive
Chestertown, MD

Tribute Wall



“ Jeff Grotsky

October 26, 2023 at 06:42 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Jeff Grotsky.



September 17, 2023 at 02:04 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Jeff Grotsky.

September 17, 2023 at 02:04 AM



“ A donation was made to the Kent County Food Pantry in memory of Jeff Grotsky. Please accept the deepest condolences from the Mihindikulasuriya family (Ragama Sri Lanka, St. Louis, MO and Rockville MD).

S Mihindikulasuriya - September 16, 2023 at 06:25 PM



“ A contribution was made to the Kent County Food Pantry in honor of Mr. Jeff Grotsky.

Deepest condolences and regards from the entire USIEF family

USIEF - September 16, 2023 at 01:05 PM

DB

“ I am writing from London. England. I am very sorry to learn of Jeff's recent passing. We knew each other through our membership in SCORE, and because of our backgrounds in education, we routinely joined up as a team selected to review educationally oriented proposals. I was always impressed not only with Jeff's deep knowledge, but with the empathy he exhibited to those working through a start-up business proposal. We always worked well together, and I appreciated his insights as a fellow educator...and as a friend. I send my condolences to his wife and family.

Sincerely, Damon Bradley

Damon Bradley - September 16, 2023 at 05:20 AM

BJ

“ A donation was made to the Kent County Food Pantry in memory of Jeff Grotsky. Sending love and prayers to the entire family - Bhavvna, Aastha, Rupali, Megha, Aliza, Deepika, Amita and Monika (EdUSA New Delhi)

Bhavvna Jolly - September 16, 2023 at 02:18 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Jeff Grotsky.

September 15, 2023 at 01:02 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Jeff Grotsky.



September 15, 2023 at 11:11 AM

AN

“ A donation to the Kent County Food Pantry was made in honor of Jeff Grotsky. Our condolences -Julia, Anne, Teresa, Karina, and Shannon (The ECA/SCA Fulbright Team)

Anne - September 15, 2023 at 10:28 AM



“ Serene Reflections Bouquet was purchased for the family of Jeff Grotsky.



September 15, 2023 at 09:04 AM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Jeff Grotsky.



September 14, 2023 at 09:16 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Jeff Grotsky.

September 14, 2023 at 09:16 PM



“ *Enchanted Cottage was purchased for the family of Jeff Grotsky.*



September 14, 2023 at 07:40 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Jeff Grotsky.*



September 14, 2023 at 09:43 AM



“ *Our memories of being with Jeff and Carolyn are many. All of these memories bring us smiles and remind us of the joy that he brought to us and everyone. We are so privileged to have met him and shared those years of friendship. Barbara & Joe*

Joseph Comi - September 13, 2023 at 11:57 AM



“ *Anubhav N. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jeff Grotsky.*

Anubhav N. - September 13, 2023 at 11:15 AM



“ *Tracy R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jeff Grotsky.*

Tracy R. - September 12, 2023 at 10:04 AM

MR

“ Mia R. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jeff Grotsky.

Mia R. - September 12, 2023 at 10:03 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Jeff Grotsky.

September 12, 2023 at 10:00 AM

DS

“ Jeff Grotsky was my Superintendent in Grand Rapids Public Schools. I know him not only as my Boss also as a friend and a great acquaintance. I and my family enjoyed a special friendship because of Grotsky family's Indian connection. Jeff enjoyed Indian food and I was delighted to make Indian food for him often. He was an inspirational leader with a heart of compassion always wanting to impact the less fortunate in our schools. He left many foot prints on the sands of time. I pray that the goodness he demonstrated will continue forever. With our love and deepest sympathies to Carolyn and family. Margaret Solomon

Dr. Margaret Solomon - September 12, 2023 at 03:48 AM

AE

“ Abel E. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jeff Grotsky.

Abel E. - September 11, 2023 at 09:15 PM

JC

“ Joseph C. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Jeff Grotsky.

Joseph C. - September 10, 2023 at 06:24 PM