

Graham Stiles Newell, of St. Johnsbury, died at the Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, in St. Johnsbury, on Friday evening, June 20, at the age of 92. He was born to George Graham Newell and Maude Marion Newell (Berry) on Nov. 27, 1915, the first baby born in the old Brightlook Hospital in St. Johnsbury. Newell, a seventh generation Vermonter, was delivered by Dr. Charlotte Fairbanks, the granddaughter of Thaddeus Fairbanks of the Fairbanks Scale Company. Graham graduated from his beloved St. Johnsbury Academy in 1933; attended Middlebury College for two years and subsequently graduated from the University of Chicago with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1938; and from the University of Chicago, again, with a Master of Arts degree in Latin in 1949. He continued his studies in Medieval Latin at Chicago and completed all course work for a Ph.D. except the dissertation. Graham taught Latin and other classes in the humanities at St. Johnsbury Academy from 1938 to 1947. Newell then taught for one year at the Hatch Preparatory School in Maine before continuing his education at Chicago. He also taught geography for one year at the St. Johnsbury Junior High School. In 1959 Newell was appointed chair of the social sciences department at Lyndon State College, a position he held until he retired as Professor Emeritus 1979. As a professor at Lyndon State College, he taught a dozen courses in history and social science. He was especially known as the teacher of Vermont history and his lecture on Eleanor of Aquitaine, the mother of Henry VIII of England. While at the College, he was proud of the fact that he was asked to research the history of noteworthy Vermonters and propose the names of most of the current buildings at LSC. Graham retired as Professor Emeritus from LSC in 1979. Not a man to sit in a rocking chair, he continued teaching part time at Lyndon with

courses in Vermont History and the History of England until 1996. Newell returned to teaching Latin at St. Johnsbury Academy in 1982 until his death. Not able to navigate on the slippery terrain in the winter as well as he liked, he taught for the past two years in the living room of his home. His love of teaching and of his students defined his life. As one student, pressed to choose between Latin IV and AP Physics, said, "I just can't forego the pleasure of having Mr. Newell for another year." He was copying the names of his new students into his grade book and preparing his classes for the coming year start three days before he passed away. Graham Newell earned or was awarded many public acknowledgments for his work in education. Among them was the Vermont Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year award in 2005. In 2003 he received the first Victor R. Swenson Humanities Educator Award from the Vermont Humanities Council. Newell was inducted into the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2005 and received an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, awarded by President Dan Fogel of the University of Vermont in 2006. Not satisfied with an enormously fulfilling career in education, Newell entered politics as St. Johnsbury's representative to the Legislature in 1952. He served four non-consecutive terms in the Vermont House and eight terms in the State Senate. His long career in government service included work both on state and national fronts. Newell's accomplishments in politics equaled his accomplishments in education. He was instrumental in promoting a mental health program to be part of the state's annual budget and a bill to abolish the state death penalty as well as the acquisition of land in Addison County known as Mount Independence. He authored the, "Fair Dismissal Bill for Educators" and worked to ensure education for children

with disabilities. As Chair of the House Education Committee, he was the principal sponsor of the first special education law, a law that gave children with disabilities their right to a publicly funded education. This legislation preceded the federal special law by more than 20 years. During his legislative career he was most proud of his service as clerk of the Senate Judiciary Committee under Chairman Asa Bloomer of Rutland County. He was appointed by Gov. Deane C. Davis to the Little Hoover Commission, which reorganized state government into agencies that largely exist today. He counted national leaders, governors, commissioners, and legislative leaders among his close friends. As chair of the Senate Education Committee, Graham Newell was a strategic force in the creation of the Vermont State Colleges. While chair of the Education Committee, Newell was instrumental in his long support of public education in Vermont. In his 1955 legislative speech opposing the use of public funds to support busing of students attending parochial schools, Newell stated the following; "passage of this measure could threaten one of our greatest legacies - the principle of the free public school which provides a common education for future citizens of a free country." This speech was published and reprinted by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of which Newell was a Vermont founding member. On the national front, Graham Newell was twice elected as a delegate to the Republican National Convention. He was appointed by President John F. Kennedy and served on the National Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. He also served on the New England Board of Education. Newell was a past president of the Vermont Historical Society and a member of the Vermont Historic Sites Commission. He also chaired the Caledonia County Republican

Committee and was a member of the town Republican Committee for 33 years. He served as a Justice of the Peace for 12 years. Other than legions of friends and admirers, Graham Newell is survived by David and Sherry Giguere of Montpelier, and their daughters Debbie Peterson and Wendy Giguere Adams, Wendy's husband Scott, and their children Amanda Mae Adams and Braeden Alexander Adams, perhaps his closest friends on earth, and the surrogate family that he chose. There will be a celebration of Graham's life and accomplishments on Saturday, Aug. 16, 2008, at 11 a.m. in Fuller Hall at St. Johnsbury Academy in St. Johnsbury. All are welcome.