



VIRGINIA P. CLARK - WILLISTON - Virginia Louise Prescott Clark, 82, died peacefully on March 31, 2012, after a mercifully brief illness. She was born on Dec. 24, 1929, in Boston, the only child of Frank and Phyllis (Whyte) Prescott. Raised in Chevy Chase, Md., she attended St. Johnsberry Academy where she met and married St. Johnsberry native, Harry L. Clark. They lived in the Washington D.C. area, St. Johnsberry, and Burlington, and settled in Shelburne in 1966. Virginia spent 36 fulfilling years there, and retired to Williston in 2002. With a lifelong passion for reading and language, Virginia worked as an executive secretary while launching an academic career that would become her life. She held a BA (University of Vermont, 1961, magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa), M.A. (UVM, 1963), and Ph.D. (University of Connecticut, 1968). She taught English and linguistics at UVM throughout her career, beginning as an assistant professor in 1968 and, by 1976, becoming one of the university's youngest full professors. She was appointed to the Graduate College faculty in 1969. She was the author or coauthor of several influential textbooks including, *Language: Introductory Readings and Language Awareness*, as well as many academic articles and conference presentations. Courses taught included, *Structure and History of the English Language and British Literature*. She was the first faculty member at UVM to teach a course on Women in

Literature. Her academic pursuits were so unusual for a young mother in the 1960s, that the Free Press sent a reporter to photograph her sitting with her three children on the swing set in her cap and gown. An early feminist, Virginia prevailed against the "glass ceiling" many women hit in academia, and became a role model for many female academics and students. She served as Chair of the UVM English Department for many years. Her early interest in technology, unusual among English professors, helped bring the department into the computer age. She chaired the UVM Faculty Senate from 1979-1981. She and her husband were passionate skiers. Harry volunteered on the ski patrol at Smuggler's Notch, and Virginia took pride in the number of days they skied, regardless of the weather. They enjoyed summers at their home on Lake Champlain, including swimming and Harry's gourmet cooking. She was predeceased by her husband, Harry in 1990. She is survived by her three children, daughter, Delia (formerly Deborah) Clark and her husband, Timothy Traver, of Taftsville, son, David Clark of Shelburne, and daughter, Susan Clark and her husband, Mark Bushnell, of Middlesex; six grandchildren, Annakalmia Traver of Brooklyn, Mollie Traver of Brooklyn, Toben Traver of Burlington, Alexander Clark of Manhattan, Miranda Clark of Shelburne, and Harrison Bushnell of Middlesex. She is also survived by her brother-in-law, Richard Clark and his wife, Joyce, of Green Valley, Ariz. A memorial service is being planned for mid-May; for details, call Susan at: 802-223-5824. In lieu of flowers, her children suggest making a donation to Williston Fire and Rescue, 645 Talcott Road, Williston, VT 05495, or to the academic or women's [charity of your choice](#) .