



## Harrison A. Glasgow

June 11, 1940 - December 2, 2025

Harrison A. Glasgow was born in Chicago and raised in its northern suburbs, graduating from Lake Forest High School. After majoring in history at the University of Illinois, Harry joined the U.S. Army and served three years in intelligence in Turkey and the Army Intelligence Training Center at Fort Devens in Massachusetts. At the conclusion of his enlistment, Harry became a civilian employee of the Intelligence Training Center and served there until 1989, when the base closed and intelligence operations were consolidated in southern Arizona. Given the choice of moving to Arizona or moving to the hotbed of intelligence in Washington, he moved to Virginia because he preferred the East Coast. In Virginia, he served in various intelligence positions with the Army and national three-letter agencies until his retirement in July 2001. He was very proud of his service and contribution to the nation.

Back in 1989, when Harry moved to Virginia, he believed that it was only a temporary change of residence and that he would move back to New England upon his retirement. He had been an active conservation volunteer with Mass Audubon, Mount Wachusett, and the Town of Ashburnham. However, once he discovered Huntley Meadows Park in Fairfax County, he forgot all about returning to Massachusetts and became a devoted volunteer for the park.

Harry traced his love of the outdoors, and birds specifically, to the summer camps he attended in Ely, Minnesota on the Boundary Waters. He was

enchanted by the haunting call of the Common Loon.

Harry devoted his retirement years to the conviction that we must protect our natural world. To this end, he associated himself with local government agencies whose missions most closely aligns to this end. In Fairfax County government, these agencies are the Park Authority, the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. He served in volunteer positions with all of these, as well as other groups, in the hope of making a difference in the environmental wellbeing of his community. Harry also served as a Board Director on The Thoreau Society based in Concord, Massachusetts. The Thoreau Society exists to stimulate interest in and foster education about Thoreau's life, works, legacy and his place in his world and in ours, challenging all to live a deliberate, considered life.

Upon moving to Manassas in Prince William County to be with Nancy Vehrs, he joined the Prince William Soil and Water Conservation District as an associate director; the Prince William Conservation Alliance, where he was its representative on the Potomac Watershed Roundtable; and the Solid Waste Citizens Advisory Group. The Prince William Ducks Unlimited honored Harry and Nancy with its 2019 Conservationist of the Year award. The PWCA presented him with its 2019 Wildlife Hero Award.

In 2013, the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust named Harry the "Fairfax Conservationist of the Year." Harry was honored as recipient of the 2016 Sally Ormsby Environmental Stewardship Award for years of dedicated service to Huntley Meadows Park. In 2021, the National Association of County Parks and Recreation Officials selected Harry with the NACPRO Outstanding Contributor Award for devoting his retirement to protecting the natural world, including service on the Fairfax County Park Authority Board and Park Foundation Board. Harry contributed countless volunteer hours to park advocacy, scholarship funding, land acquisition, and environmental education.

Until Harry's health declined, he seldom passed an opportunity to take a walk in a park – his favorites were Huntley Meadows and Manassas Battlefield – with those who wanted to know more about nature and the world around them – birds, trees, insects, plants, soil – and how they all work together. He very much enjoyed his role as “First Dude” of the Virginia Native Plant Society, of which Nancy is the president.

Survivors include his loving companion Nancy Vehrs, two daughters, Debbie Burns (David) of North Grafton, Massachusetts and Cindy Ottaviani (John) of North Andover, Massachusetts, as well as grandsons Jake and Nick Ottaviani and Ethan and Liam Burns.

In lieu of flowers, mourners may donate to the conservation organization of their choice.

A Celebration of Life will be held Tuesday, December 16, at 11 a.m. in the clubhouse at Laurel Hill Golf Club, 8701 Laurel Crest Drive, Lorton, VA. A reception will follow.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Life

DEC 16. 11:00 AM (ET)

Laurel Hill Golf Club  
8701 Laurel Crest Drive  
Lorton, VA 22079

# Tribute Wall

GK

“ I met Harry a few years ago as part of the Monday Morning Birders group at Huntley Meadows. He was so kind, generous, and knowledgeable about all things related to birds, wildlife, and nature. I always enjoyed any time I had a chance to chat with him. I especially remember a recent post-walk breakfast where Harry and I were having a chat during the bird count, and we were mockingly scolded "no talking during class." I think we both got a kick out of that. Harry's contributions to the parks and people who enjoy nature will live on for years. He had such a gentle spirit and will be so fondly remembered. My prayers to Nancy and family. -- Gifford Krivak

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**Gifford Krivak** - December 16, 2025 at 02:54 PM

NI

“ I've known Harry for many years, since he became an Associate Director with Prince William SWCD. He came to just about every meeting and event that we held, always wanting to learn more and help. I did learn the hard way to always make sure we had coffee available, no matter the time of day. 😊 At one point, Harry couldn't drive anymore, so Nancy would chauffeur him to our meetings and events. Nothing would slow him down. That passion and dedication is very admirable. Harry was someone who once you met, you could never forget. Rest in peace, Harry.



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**Nicole** - December 15, 2025 at 11:09 PM

PA

“ Prince William Conservation Alliance purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Harrison A. Glasgow.



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**Prince William Conservation Alliance** - December 11, 2025 at 04:29 PM

MP

“ Harry played such a tremendous role in conservation in Northern Virginia. As one of the original founders of the Fairfax Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalist program, he was instrumental in launching what is now a nearly 20 year old group that has trained nearly 700 people to become engaged natural resource volunteers in NoVa. I didn't even realize before reading these tributes how many people joined the program due to his personal encouragement. He will be missed by so many, but he leaves an incredible legacy. Nancy, you are in my thoughts.

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**Michelle Prysby** - December 11, 2025 at 01:07 PM

AF

“ Oh Harry, what a funny and special person. He could make me laugh with jokes, and I learned about Mayapples and tried to learn birds from him. (I am more of a frog person) He also inspired and encouraged me to apply for the Master Naturalist program which encouraged me to give back to the natural world that has given me and so many of us so much. I loved seeing him and Nancy at Huntley Meadows events and VA Native Plant Society ones as well. Thank you, Harry for touching so many lives, to encourage us to be stewards, and to laugh along the way! Much love to him and Nancy always.

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**Anna Finch** - December 11, 2025 at 09:35 AM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Harrison A. Glasgow.*



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December 09, 2025 at 11:20 AM



“ *Harry and I met in third grade in Bannockburn Illinois and were great friends from that time on. He was involved in my meeting the girl that I have now been married to for 62 years. While we lost touch after high school we were fortunate to reconnect at his high school reunion in Lake Forest Illinois. My wife and I will miss him but remain deeply grateful for his role in our lives. He was a special human being and we were so glad to meet Nancy and how much she and he loved each other. To his daughters and Nancy we extend our heartfelt sympathy. Bless his soul!*

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**steve seiler** - December 06, 2025 at 02:39 PM



“ *So sorry, Nancy, to hear of Harry's passing. We first met when I sort of yelled at him for shocking fish at ECLP. He was leading a Master Naturalist group. And he was on the Park Authority Board at the time. He could have been officious and offended, but Harry just thought it was funny. He then started chatting about staff there - he knew everyone and was interested in everything. The world is a little dimmer today without him.*

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**Cheryl Repetti** - December 06, 2025 at 01:07 AM

MK

“ Harry was such an enthusiastic source of encouragement for me in teenage years-- helping me truly believe that I could pursue ecology and that I had something worth saying. The gift of his love and support have had ripple effects in my life and I will always be grateful for the time he took to talk to just a nerdy homeschooler. ❤️ He was an incredible testament to a life lived in service. My prayers to his family and Nancy

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**Meredith Keppel** - December 04, 2025 at 06:15 PM

DO

“ Harry brought joy to every gathering with his quick wit and astute observations. He was keenly aware of the critical need to protect and preserve our natural spaces . . . and he always did his full share. Harry once saw me with a clipboard at our infamous Farm Field Days and informed me the person with the clipboard was in charge. I suspect he was handed a clipboard as he passed through the gates! Take heart, we are all better people for knowing him, the world is a better place because he was here and he left many reasons to be missed. Thoughts and prayers are with Nancy and his family.



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**Deb Oliver** - December 04, 2025 at 12:05 PM

“ I don't remember the first time I met Harry, but I think it must've been at the Huntley Meadows Monday Morning Bird Walk eons ago. My earliest memory of him is just that I felt incredibly welcomed at this bird walk that was otherwise attended far more frequently by others than by me. But there, and everywhere, Harry made everyone feel like they were the only one in the room - welcoming everyone and chatting them up. Over the years it was Harry who encouraged me to take the Master Naturalist class. But I had my head buried in my tech job and didn't feel as though I had the space to do it. Harry asked every time I saw him if I'd applied yet. He never showed disappointment, he just keep encouraging.

Years later, far later than I should've, I finally took the class and it's not an overstatement to say that it changed my life. Ultimately I left my tech job and made the career shift to conservation work. Though so many years, I kept Harry's kind encouragement in my heart - his smile, his tenacity, his insistence that I keep going and do the things that he could see so clearly that I wanted to do. He shared his conservation advocacy experiences with me over the years, how he drove change, who I should talk to or get to know.

Over the years, at any event where Harry was, he was a celebrity to all of us - one of the world's most approachable local celebrity's but a celebrity none the less. Over this past week, I've come to think of him as our own personal Jane Goodall: optimistic, action-oriented, and always encouraging. I have a lot to learn from that approach to life and I owe it to Harry to try to channel some of that into my own days. When I was awarded the Lady Fairfax Award in 2021, Harry also happened to be in attendance and my good friend Toni Genberg captured this super sweet photo of Harry and my husband Matt congratulating me on my award. It captures who Harry way perfectly. We all stand on his shoulders and he is greatly missed. But I also imagine him hanging out with Jane Goodall and thinking it's pretty awesome.





**Renee Grebe** - December 04, 2025 at 12:03 PM



*Renee, such a touching heartfelt tribute! Harry touched us all.*

**Greg Crider** - December 08, 2025 at 07:45 PM

JB

“ *I was saddened to hear of Harry's death. It was always such a joy to be around him, so the sadness dissolves when I look at the pictures Nancy is posting on FB. Harry was quite a leader in the Northern Virginia conservation community. His approach to leadership was demonstrated in the weekly Huntley Meadows bird walks where he led by welcoming newcomers and engaging them with respect and appreciation of their interests and leaving those of us walk-veterans to guide ourselves. One of my life's small pleasures was his creation of the bird list from that walk as we breakfasted at Denny's. Harry's humor kept us laughing as we repeated, week after week, the same corny bird jokes. Harry established the Fairfax County Green Breakfasts when he was a director of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and provided speakers on many valuable conservation topics, as well as a wonderful opportunity for members of the conservation community to get to know each other. Harry leaves a big gap in the conservation community; and he is a wonderful example of a life well-lived.*

*Judi Booker*

**Judi Booker** - December 04, 2025 at 11:41 AM

SM

*Harry brought so much to the Northern Virginia conservation community. Among his good deeds was helping create the Fairfax Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists. He organized the full training course, created the curriculum, edited all training materials, and recruited our wonderful lecturers. They all agreed to lecture for free just because Harry asked them to help the fledgling organization. FMN could never thank him enough, but it did honor him with Trailblazer status. FMN will miss him.*

*I will miss him for his friendship and encouragement when I first moved to Fairfax to join the local conservation community. As everyone notes, he made me feel right at home in a new place. I try to follow his example.*

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**Sarah Mayhew** - December 04, 2025 at 04:09 PM