



Henry Ploegstra

August 20, 1934 - September 18, 2023

Henry A. Ploegstra, 89, of Freedom Village in Holland, Michigan, ascended to his eternal home on September 18, 2023. Henry was born on August 20, 1934, in Rudyard, MI, to Menno and Katie Ruth (Kamper) Ploegstra. He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Gerrit Ploegstra, and his sister and brother-in-law Karen and Myron Meyer, and his nephew Mark Ploegstra.

Henry's education included Rudyard High School, Calvin University, Columbia University of New York, and the University of Chicago where he earned his PhD.

His teaching career spanned seven decades and included multiple years at Rudyard High School, Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, Trinity School of New York, and St. Mark's School of Texas, in Dallas.

He retired in 2012 after the previous 28 years at St. Mark's. Henry was a resident of Freedom Village for eleven years.

Henry is survived by his sister Elaine Ploegstra and Marne Perry, brother Joel and Angie (Pluger) Ploegstra, brother Glenn and Sue (De Boe) Ploegstra, nephews: Bruce and Dawn Meyer, Kelvin and Carla Ploegstra, Nicholas and Wendy Ploegstra; nieces: Sara and Brad Heeres, Tina and Jonathan Bossenbroek, Gretchen and Jeff Rottman, Erin and Josh Hutt, Ann Ploegstra, Lori and Duane Rawson, 26 grand-nephews/grand-nieces, and four great-

grand-nephews/nieces.

Henry's life was a testament to the goodness of God.

A memorial service will be held at 1:30 PM, Sunday, October 1, 2023, in the Auditorium of Freedom Village, 145 Columbia Ave., Holland MI 49423.

Memorial contributions may be made to Community Foundation of Holland/Zeeland-Freedom Village Scholarship Fund.

Tribute Wall



“ *Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes created a Henry Ploegstra Memorial Service in memory of Henry Ploegstra* ”



Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes - October 02, 2023 at 01:08 PM

ZO

“ Henry Ploegstra was my first teacher when I was a Lower at Exeter in the 1975-1976 school year. Oh my gosh he was a great writing teacher and also of literature. Really the best English teacher ever. He had a few quirks such as that he didn't like women coming to Exeter and I was a woman but he turned out to be a very good friend. He made me work hard and to this day I still look up almost every word I don't know because he scared us haha! Every day my first semester I woke up at 5 AM to look up all the new words I wrote down in my word notebook. I wish I still had a notebook of new words like that. I usually just highlight them in books on Kindle and look them up
but that word book, wow!

I was just thinking about him today when I was thinking about how to keep romance alive with my beautiful boyfriend by speaking like Shakespeare or Tolkien(or what the heck:
Led Zep) but american language has gotten so curt, short and dumbed down. In 2019 we were in Times Square and he said something gorgeous but I felt love-bombed and replied,
“Yeah I'm really glad we're hanging out and doing stuff.” We laugh about that phrase to this day but can't remember the beautiful thing he said. I know that with fascism and climate change, among other things, our romantic dialog doesn't amount to a hill of beans but I know Henry Ploegstra helped civilization! My heart goes out to his loving family. You must have been proud of him. He has fine and uncompromising standards and ethics. Love All. ps: I am shocked just learning this.

Zottali - August 09, 2025 at 01:17 PM

LC

“ Dr. Ploegstra was a wonderful teacher and wise advisor to our son Nate while he attended St. Marks. We send our sincere condolences to his family.

Loree Conrad - June 25, 2024 at 09:59 PM

TO

“ This is Tom Ogden, Exeter Class of 1974. Mr. Ploegstra is very fondly and respectfully remembered by me and my closest classmates. An inspiring teacher, something of a gadfly, a true original. They don't make old-school teachers like that anymore. My condolences to all his family.

Tom Ogden - October 12, 2023 at 10:37 PM



“ Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Henry Ploegstra.



September 27, 2023 at 05:37 PM

LS

“ Henry was my dear friend and mentor when I joined St. Mark's in 2000. He was a brilliant teacher and a one-of-a-kind person. He had a long and distinguished life and was greatly respected by his colleagues and friends



Lynne Schwartz - September 23, 2023 at 02:49 PM

ZE

Henry was my English teacher at St. Mark's School of Texas. I eventually earned a master's and a PhD in Spanish literature, so I had many, many literature teachers over the years, but none had a greater impact on my approach to literature than Henry. I will be forever grateful.

Zach Erwin - September 28, 2023 at 12:34 AM

JP

Henry continued to share his teaching ability with members of the Hope Academy of Senior Professionals after his retirement. He led discussions of a series of award-winning foreign films from his extensive library and taught several courses on Shakespeare's plays. He remembered the names of countless choral pieces and other musical works. He enjoyed attending performances of the Grand Rapids Choir of Men and Boys. He will be missed by many.

Judy Parr

Judy Parr - October 04, 2023 at 03:12 PM

KF

I enjoyed discussing spiritual journeys with Henry and found him a good person to discuss some of the big issues of life. He continued to search throughout his life. Of course, literature was one of the ways that he intersected with the spiritual. I will miss times of conversation with Henry. Kent Fry retired RCA Pastor

Kent Fry - November 02, 2023 at 11:51 AM