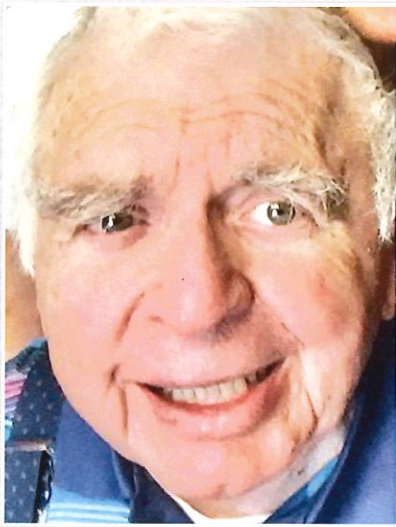


# Henry Francis Hicks Jr.

March 28, 2022



## Services

### VISITATION

Monday

April 18, 2022

4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Eaton Funeral Home

Needham, MA

### FUNERAL SERVICE

Tuesday

April 19, 2022

11:00 AM

Carter Memorial Church

Needham, MA

### INTERMENT WITH MILITARY

#### HONORS

Wednesday

April 20, 2022

12:30 PM

Massachusetts National

Cemetery

Bourne, MA

Henry F. Hicks 92, Hingham, MA

Henry Francis Hicks Jr. a U.S. Army veteran, passed away peacefully on March 28, 2022, at Rose Court, in Hingham, MA, after a long battle with cancer.

Henry was born on September 5, 1929, in Fall River, MA, the only son of Henry Francis Hicks Sr. and Vera (née Anthony) Hicks. As an only child, Henry treasured his cat companion, Rocky Billy, who reportedly was the best-read cat in history. Rocky Billy wasn't the only reader in the family. Henry was known to say; "Growing up I ate books for breakfast, lunch and dinner." His love of the written word stayed with him throughout his life. As an adult he carefully curated a library containing over 10,000 volumes.

Henry was predeceased by his parents, his brother-in-law Donald Brown, his sister-in-law Lois Emerson Brown, and his grandnephew, Warren E. Brown.

Henry graduated from Durfee High School in Fall River, MA. He went on to Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, MA, where he received his Bachelor's Degree in Education. During his time at Bridgewater, he enrolled in the ROTC and went on to serve as a member of the Air National Guard. After graduating from Bridgewater, Henry taught in the Dighton, MA school system. In 1952, he enlisted in the "regular" army. He served stateside during the Korean conflict as part of the signal corps at Fort Monmouth and Camp Kilmer in New Jersey.

Henry attended Harvard University on the GI Bill where he received his Masters Degree in Education. After Harvard, he went on to postgraduate study in history at Boston University. During his post-grad work Henry returned to teaching, this time in history and social studies at Needham High School in Needham, MA. It was there that he met the love of his life, Amy Louise Brown of Somerville, MA who taught physical education at the same school. They married on April 13, 1962, and remained devoted to each other until his passing — two weeks shy of their 60th wedding anniversary. Henry took a sabbatical from teaching after being awarded a John Hayes fellowship at Columbia University.

Upon completion of his Hayes fellowship, Henry resumed teaching history at Needham High School. He later served as the Director of Social Studies for the entire school system, a post he held for many years. From 1979 until his retirement from public school teaching, Henry particularly enjoyed sharing his enthusiasm for American history with 8th graders.

In 1965, the family moved to their Needham home where Henry and Amy remained until last year. Henry loved his adopted town and was known as the man who knew "all things Needham, including the warts." He rarely shared the warts, but could give a dissertation on the twin towns of Needham and Wellesley (formerly known as "West Needham"). With tongue firmly in cheek, Henry would paint a picture of an epic feud between the two towns that had raged for centuries, whereas, in reality, the battles have been confined to the football fields. Henry was a humorist as well as an historian.

Henry published numerous articles in academic journals on the Revolutionary War, U.S. maritime history and circus history. He also consulted for several educational radio and television programs on those same topics.

Service was a driving force in Henry's life, much of it devoted to the town of Needham. He served the Needham Historical Society for more than fifty years, first as Program Chairman and then as President. He was the President of the Friends of the Needham Public Library; Town Hogrieve; Needham Town Meeting Member; Chairman of the Needham Chapter of the American Red Cross (ARC). He was particularly proud of his service as ARC Disaster Chairman through a number of emergency disasters, including the Blizzard of 1978. He then served the ARC New England Division Council as Vice Chairman and Chairman, eventually becoming a Lifetime Honorary Director.

Henry was honored to serve on many educational councils and museums throughout New England. He was the President of the New England History Teachers Association and of the Bay State Historical League. He held the position of Chairman for Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom and on the State Archives Commission. He particularly enjoyed his work as Board member on the Battleship Massachusetts and as Overseer at Old Sturbridge Village. Henry thoroughly enjoyed bringing American Revolutionary War characters to life. For several years he portrayed Colonel William McIntosh at statewide historical events and John Adams at the National Parks Service in Quincy, MA.

Henry received numerous awards and citations for service and education in his lifetime, including the prestigious Horace Kidger Award for excellence in service to the history profession.

One cannot speak of Henry's service without speaking about his faith. Henry was a proud and devout member of the Primitive Methodist Church. He served as a Primitive Methodist Lay Preacher, beginning in his late teenage years and continuing as such until he was too ill to do so. Henry ministered to the sick and the needy and went wherever he was called. Anyone who knew him understood that when Henry asked, "And how are you, truly?" it was meant with all the love in his heart.

Henry and Amy shared many hobbies and journeyed far and wide to document photographically their interests while collecting memorabilia. They enjoyed visiting carousels and zoos, but most particularly they



shared a love of the circus. They traveled throughout the U.S and Europe to catch a great show, delighted by the fellowship of international circus fans and were members of several groups dedicated to circus history. Henry and Amy also shared a fascination with American utopianism, and would visit Shaker sites throughout the country during annual family holidays. In retirement, Henry and Amy enjoyed their voyages on the Queen Mary 2.

Henry and Amy loved a great meal, especially at "greasy spoon" diners, specifically those housed in old railway cars. They would travel near and far to find the most authentic spots, often with their friend Cathy Ambler. Henry was also a devotee of two old New England staples of confection: Moxie soda and Necco wafers. He comically referred to candy stores as 'houses of sin.'

Henry was a member of The Friday Evening Club since 1967. He held the positions of Most Venerable and Most Venerable Emeritus.

Henry is survived by his devoted wife Amy; his daughter Ruth May and her husband Brian Dalton of Stowe, PA; his son Wesley and Laurann Lento Black of Waltham, MA; his dear niece Carol Ann Brown of Acton, MA; nephews Kenneth Brown and wife Sharlene of Lawrence, MA; Laurence Brown and his wife Kay of Bedford, MA; Robert and Alan Brown of Bedford MA; his grandnephew James and his wife Christine of Methuen and their sons Jeremiah and Dominic and his cousin Doreen Noonan of East Providence, RI.

Visitors will be received at Eaton Funeral Home at 1351 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA, on Monday, April 18th from 4-7 PM. A funeral service will be held on Tuesday, April 19th at 11 AM, at the Carter Memorial United Methodist Church, 800 Highland Avenue, Needham MA. Interment with Military Honors will be at the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne, MA, Wednesday, April 20th at 12:30 PM.

**The family requests that masks be worn at the funeral home and the church. Fully vaccinated status is requested and advised.**

In lieu of flowers, gifts in memory of Henry may be made to: NVNA and Hospice/Pat Roche Hospice Home, 120 Longwater Drive, Norwell, MA 02061, [www.nvna.org](http://www.nvna.org); The American Red Cross to aid victims in the Ukraine, [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org); The Needham History Center and Museum, 1147 Central Avenue, Needham, MA 02492 [www.needhamhistory.org](http://www.needhamhistory.org).