

In Memoriam
JOSEPH G. GRISWOLD, Ph.D.
1943 - 2017
Founder and Guiding Light

Joseph G. Griswold, Ph.D., Founder and Guiding Light of Real Partners Uganda and the Mustard Seed Academy, died on December 30, 2017.



Joe was born in Grand Rapids, Michigan on June 15, 1943. He graduated from East Grand Rapids High School in 1961. In 1965 he received his B.S. from Denison University and his graduate degrees in Animal Behavior from Penn State University in 1971. Joe embarked on a career in teaching and research in the Biology Department at City College of New York. He continued his career at City College as a well-loved full Professor until his retirement in 2002.

Joe and his wife Elaine, who also grew up in Grand Rapids, lived in Northern New Jersey, where Elaine taught high school science. They raised two children, James and Martha. Martha (Griswold Quijano) tragically died in 2015. Joe and Elaine

also have three granddaughters, Martha's daughter Sara, and Jamie and Karen's daughters, Mary and Kirsten.

Throughout his life, Joe was an active church member. He served in leadership positions in several Christian (Episcopal, Baptist, and Presbyterian) Churches. After retirement, Joe and Elaine moved to Brigantine, New Jersey, where they became members of Community Presbyterian Church.

They loved to travel and work with young people, so their travel often centered on educational trips to Belize with Elaine's advanced biology students from Eastern Christian High School. Birdwatching was always a part of their trips including their frequent field studies with students to Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, which formerly was named Brigantine NWR.

In 2003, Joe's passion for animals and his childhood dream to go on an East African safari led him to suggest that he and Elaine and their friends, Kathryn and Dana Hiscock, go to encounter the large African animals and the many birds. Near the end of the trip, on their way to see the Mountain Gorillas of Bwindi in Uganda, they made a pre-arranged stop at a public school in the village of Kalungi, which is part of the larger town of Lukaya. While there, Joe (and the rest of the group) were taken by the children and engaged with some of the young leaders of the school and village—particularly, George Kateregga and Reverend Godfrey Mpuuga Kasiita.

The trip of a lifetime became the first of 20 visits for Joe, often in ill-health, he stayed true to the calling received on November 1st, 2003. Joe followed up with George and The Reverend and others whom he had met, and a little more than a year later, the Good Shepherd Child Care Center opened its doors to serve poor pre-school children in Lukaya. It wasn't always a smooth path, but Joe's steadfast determination to assist the vulnerable children of Lukaya and his vision, informed by his deep Christian values and his experience as an educator, led to the Mustard Seed Academy of today and will serve as a guide for the future.