

## Ellen (Donovan) Searls, PhD Obituary

Feb 2, 2022



Ellen (Donovan) Searls, PhD

Ellen (Donovan) Searls died peacefully on Jan. 18, 2022 in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. She was born on Nov. 12, 1937 and raised in Arlington, Massachusetts, the oldest of four children of Kathleen (McKenna) and Joseph Donovan. She received a Bachelors of Science in Chemistry from Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts and worked in a laboratory at Brandeis University where she met her husband Robert (Bob) Searls. Ellen and Bob were married in 1961 and remained married for 55 years until Bob's death in 2017.

They moved to Charlottesville, Virginia in 1963, when Bob accepted a faculty position at the University of Virginia. They moved to Abington, Pennsylvania in 1968. Ellen was a preschool teacher at Abington Presbyterian Church before obtaining her M. Ed in Special Education and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Temple University. She worked as a college professor at several Philadelphia colleges, teaching early childhood education. One of her most rewarding positions was training teachers for the Head Start program in Philadelphia.

Ellen and Bob retired to Charlottesville, Virginia in 1966. Ellen actively pursued many interests, including volunteering at a health clinic, performing with local choirs, being a member/chair of the quilt guild and taking religion courses at the University of Virginia. Ellen was an active member in the Quaker meetings in Abington Pa., Charlottesville, Va. and Plainfield, Vt. She lived in Danville, Vt. during the last four and a half years of her life.

Ellen was predeceased by her brother Tim Donovan and sister Mary Harrold. She is survived by her brother Michael Donovan and her four children and three daughter in-laws: sons Tim Searls and Grace Garland of Portland, Maine, David Searls and Julie Kirrane of Belmont, Massachusetts, Paul and Andrea Searls of Danville, Vermont, and daughter Anne Searls and Tom Carrigan of Pennsylvania. She also leaves behind six grandchildren: Owen, Ned, Lila, Timothy, Peter and Elizabeth Searls.

Memories and condolences may be shared with family at [saylesfh.com](http://saylesfh.com).