

## Donald B. Potter

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Donald Brandreth Potter, 91, of Clinton, died at his home on Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2015.

Born in Utica in 1923, he grew up on the Whitney Park at Little Tupper Lake and graduated from Saranac Lake High School.

His studies at Williams College were interrupted by distinguished World War II service in the 10th Mountain Division. He fought in the Appenine Mountains of Italy and was awarded a battlefield commission and the Bronze Star.



He returned to marry Jane Chapple and conclude his education at Williams College, Brown University (M.S.), and the California Institute of Technology (Ph.D). He also worked for the U.S. Geological Survey in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and the Piedmont of North Carolina before joining the faculty at Hamilton College in 1954. His many devoted students remember a passionate and dedicated teacher with a contagious love for life and for the natural world. He retired as Stone Professor of geology in 1988.

His research, based on exacting field work, ranged from a decades-long project in the Taconic Mountains of eastern New York to an assessment of volcanism in the Jemez Mountains of New Mexico. He included students in the research, and many participated in a field study of Mariscal Mountain in Big Bend National Park. His strong interest in planetary geology was marked by the first geologic map of a Mars quadrangle published by the U.S. Geological Survey.

He was a competitive skier in high school, college, and even on the cross country circuit well into his 80s. He maintained miles of well-travelled trails where he was not afraid to wear out the less vigorous of his students and family. He hunted and hiked with zeal. He loved singing tenor in the St. James Church choir for more than 50 years and was at the heart of many family campfire sings in the Adirondacks.

Don had a heart for civic work, and he led the Clinton Community Chest, the Clinton School Board, the Brandreth Park Association, and Cub Scout Pack 9. He and his wife Jane had a deep commitment to the Clinton ABC (A Better Chance) program that he co-founded and that intersected strongly with his passions for equality and education.

His retired years included significant writing projects. With his brother Orlando he wrote a richly illustrated history of Brandreth Park in the Adirondack Mountains. He continued to teach geology to students of all ages, lead field trips, and read voraciously.

Don's greatest joy and greatest work was his family. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Jane Chapple Potter, in 2004, and is survived by Bran and Cynthia Potter of Sewanee, Tennessee, Eric and Phyllis Potter of Austin, Texas, Jennifer Potter Hayes of Old Forge, Chris and Cathy Potter of Bound Brook, New Jersey, Mary Potter of Wellesley, Massachusetts, Rachel Potter and Melanie Sax of Madison, Wisconsin, Gordon M. Hayes Jr. of Clinton, nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at the Hamilton College Chapel at 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7 with a reception to follow. There will be no calling hours.

In place of flowers, memorials may be sent to St. James Episcopal Church in Clinton or the Clinton ABC Program.