

Former Alfred University carillonneur Joanne Droppers passes away

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Joanne Droppers playing the
Davis Memorial Carillon at
Alfred University

Joanne Droppers, former longtime Alfred University carillonneur, passed away May 23 in Topsfield, MA, at the age of 86.

Joanne was born in Ithaca, NY, on March, 29, 1932, the youngest child of Walter C. and Minnie W. Muenscher. She graduated from Cornell University in 1953 with a bachelor's degree in music. It was at Cornell that she met and dated Garrett Droppers, who sang in the choir she directed. They were married in August 1953.

She originally came to Alfred in 1961, when Garrett was appointed a professor of history at Alfred University. The couple had lived in Madison, WI, and Orono, ME, before settling in Alfred. In addition to being a housewife and mother to their three children, Joanne was employed periodically as an administrative assistant.

Joanne loved playing piano and singing with her family. She was organist for several Episcopal congregations, a hand bell ringer, and played violin in local community orchestras. In 1976, she became a member of the American Guild of

Carillonners and in 1977 she was appointed carillonneur for Alfred University, a position she held for 17 years.

As Alfred University carillonneur, Joanne toured the United States and Canada, performing on many North American carillons. She also composed and arranged a number of songs for carillon, including Bach's Suite #11 for Lute and Tubular Bells. One of her favorite tunes was the Oscar Meyer Weiner jingle, which she arranged for carillon and played at Alfred's annual Hot Dog Day celebration.

Garrett Droppers predeceased Joanne in 1986, and after her retirement in 1994, she moved to Arlington, VA, to be near her grandsons. While in Virginia, she continued her musical pursuits by playing carillons in the area. She moved to Fargo, ND in 2005 before settling in Lynn, MA, in 2012, where she lived close to her daughter, Ann.

In addition to her husband and parents, Joanne was predeceased by a brother, Frank, and two sisters, Elizabeth DeVelbiss and Helen Tryon. She is survived by three children, sons Seton Droppers of Arlington, VA, and Christopher Droppers of Staten Island, NY, and daughter Ann Droppers of Ipswich, MA; two grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral services are scheduled for June 16 at 11 a.m. at St. Stephen's Memorial Episcopal Church in Lynn, MA. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to the [Bergen Swamp Preservation Society](#) or the [Cornell Botanic Gardens](#).