



## Benjamin Allan Herr

May 12, 2019

Benjamin Allan Herr passed away peacefully Sunday, May 12, 2019 with his loving family at his side. He joins his beloved wife, Cornelia, whom he dearly missed.

A lifelong Lancaster resident, Ben was born on June 16, 1935 to Benjamin Herr and Edith Grim Herr. He and his sisters Benita and Mary grew up in the city and attended McCaskey High School, where Ben was an impressive student who was recognized for his outstanding art work. As a senior in high school, he was recognized with a full scholarship to the Philadelphia Museum School of Art. He always joyfully recalled years spent in Philadelphia, in a studio with the company of his many cats. He loved connecting with other artists, and created some of his early abstract expressionist work, from sketches to mixed media sculptures to large paintings. In 1956, Ben received an award from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts for one of his prints, which joined the permanent collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The U.S. Army, which he joined in 1957, took him overseas to Germany. While stationed in the city of Kornwestheim in January 1958, Ben met Cornelia Reichardt, a spunky kindergarten teacher who captured his attention at a costume party - she was dressed as a devil. Their love was a force to be reckoned with, strengthened by their mutual interest in the arts, their appreciation for nature and animals, and their complementary personalities.

Cornelia was always fiery and outspoken; Ben's was a quieter kind of strength, with a gentleness and poise that drew people to him. On Nov. 9, 1958, before Ben was released from the Army in 1959, the two were married. Cornelia moved to Philadelphia and began a nearly decade-long process to become a naturalized citizen.

Eventually, Ben and Cornelia moved to Lancaster to begin their family. Despite challenging odds, they fought for the life they dreamed of. At the time of their marriage, Ben loved to say, he had seven cents in his pocket - nothing more to his name. Even after doctors told them that it would be difficult for them to have children, they welcomed three; Benjamin, Eric and Andrea. In Lancaster, he took several different jobs until he began his own financial investment business, a self-taught skill in which he truly excelled. Though always an artist at heart, Ben devoted himself fully to supporting his family. When Cornelia was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1974, that burden intensified, but Ben was unshakeable in his commitment. As they had before, the couple persisted through new struggles. Their home was filled with the many animals they took in, with Cornelia's delicious cooking and baking, and with their shared love of learning, literature and the arts.

Ben and his family endured the unthinkable when faced first with the premature death of Eric in 1984, and then Ben in 2002. The tragedy the two faced never destroyed their loving relationship, though, and they became devoted grandparents to Andrea's two girls, Erin and Zelle. Ben found success in his business and became a critical resource to many of his clients, for whom he worked tirelessly. He began to revisit his own artwork and create passionately, and even collected art from all over the world with Cornelia. They sponsored two African girls through World Vision and contributed to animal welfare organizations. The two found solace and joy in their flourishing gardens at their Lancaster home, their menagerie of well-loved pets, their involvement in the art community and most of all, their family.

In the last 10 years of his life, Ben finally received well-deserved recognition for his incredible body of work, dating back to the 1950s. He showed at several exhibits, including Metamorphosis at the Susquehanna Art Museum, Condemned to Freedom at the Demuth Museum and Lancaster Museum of Art, The New Land at West Chester University, and Rites of Passage at the McCormick Art Gallery in Chicago. He and his family were incredibly proud to see his artwork received with much success and appreciation. Cornelia was able to be with him for the first of these shows before losing her battle to cancer.

Ben's Memorial Service will take place at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, June 15, 2019 at The Groffs Family Funeral & Cremation Services, Inc., 528 W. Orange Street, (corner of W. Orange & Pine Sts.) Lancaster, PA. Andrea, Erin and Zelle will receive guests beginning at 10:00 a.m. A reception will follow at The Groff Event Center, 234 W. Orange Street Lancaster, where guests are invited to observe some of Ben's art and celebrate his incredible legacy.

If desired, memorials in Ben's name may be made to the Lancaster County Conservancy, 117 South West End Ave, Lancaster, PA 17603.

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN **15**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

The Groffs Family Funeral and Cremation Services Inc  
528 W Orange St.  
Lancaster, PA 17603  
(717) 394-5300  
admin@thegroffs.com  
<https://thegroffs.com/>

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# Tribute Wall



“ *Benjamin Allan Herr*

October 22, 2023 at 11:34 PM



“ *I met Ben Herr while recovering from knee surgery early this spring at the Mennonite Home. What a joy to hear his stories during the ten days I was there! We talked Art and he gave me one of his Exhibit catalogs where I saw what a thoughtful, sometimes humorous, skillful imagination his varied creations revealed. It was a joy to hear about his art school days, time in Army where he met his beloved wife and their family. One of his granddaughters had just gone to, I think, Amsterdam to work in a clay studio. He happily yet humbly reminisced about his days with his Abstract Expressionist, 'Ab-Ex', group in Philadelphia too.*

*We sat together while shared his memories about creating art, service, love, family, loss and successful business. It was an Honor and a Gift for me to have met Ben, nearing his last days, still with a sparkle to tell his stories!*

*With deepest sympathy to his family,  
Susan B Clough*

Susan Beekman Clough - June 15, 2019 at 09:54 AM

WR

“ I had the privilege of knowing Ben briefly. During that time, he shared some stories about his life, artwork, and his beautiful wife that he missed very much.

*He was a talented and gifted man.*

*He also enjoyed his cats!*

*So sorry for your loss.*

*Wanda Reed*

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**Wanda Reed** - June 04, 2019 at 02:53 PM