

**Colin B. Gracey**  
**Chaplain,**  
**Northeastern University**  
**Class of 1953**

**Susan Glover Gracey**  
**Teacher and Court Reporter**  
**Class of 1952**



These joint winners of a Distinguished Career Award, natives of Needham and "best friends" during their NHS days, are husband and wife, parents of four daughters, and life partners in their devotion to civil rights and the welfare of humankind. They both loved school.

Cheerleader, student council member, and *Advocate* editor, Sue played basketball ("not very memorably") and served on numerous committees. As her class' graduation speaker, she spoke on imperialism, and with characteristic good humor admits that she "learned what it meant about ten years later." Teachers who influenced her were: "the famous 'Scrumpy' Frost," whose idiosyncrasies and forward thinking she admired; and both Miss Dodge and Miss Steele, whose exceptional English classes not only prepared her for college but served her well later when she took up court reporting.

Sue acquired a BA at Middlebury College, then taught elementary school. While raising her children, she continued to teach part time. Later, supported by a prestigious Radcliffe Institute Fellowship, she earned a master's degree in education from Wheelock College, and became supervisor of student teachers at Simmons College. For a mid-life career change, Sue studied court reporting, a skill at which she excelled for eighteen years, thereby contributing substantially to the financial security of the growing Gracey family. Sue considers that she has had three careers: homemaker, educator, and court reporter.

Playing community sports, Colin learned from team experiences to appreciate ethnic and religious diversity. And, at NHS, playing baseball, serving as a class and homeroom officer, and playing in the band taught him the merits of cooperation and inclusive participation. These experiences influenced his choice of vocation as well as his commitment to community activism. His specific role models were teacher-coaches Philip Claxton and Asa Small, and math teacher Anna Fessenden, who treated students equally and at the same time encouraged them to find their own ability levels.

After graduation, Colin acquired a BA at Yale and a baccalaureate degree in sacred theology from the Divinity School at Harvard. He later earned a doctorate of ministry from the Episcopal Divinity School. Along the way, he was awarded Rockefeller and Danforth fellowships, was elected to the Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars, and served as a Lt.(jg.) in the U.S. Navy. Following several years as assistant minister at Trinity Episcopal Church in Concord, he was appointed chaplain at Northeastern in 1967. Colin considers the ministry more a privilege than a career.

Both Graceys are community activists, and they observe that "Colin's work has enabled us to participate in many of our generation's crucial and controversial social issues: civil rights, the women's movement, the Viet Nam War protests, and most recently the revolution in biotechnology." Sue's concern for children, which began in her teen years when she volunteered at the Walker Home for Physically Handicapped Children, translated into the Graceys' being foster parents to five children in crisis. Of all their humanitarian and civic work, they are most proud of the nonprofit Hospitality Program, which they helped to start in 1983. Hospitality has provided 47,000 nights of accommodations to out-of-town families of patients in Boston hospitals. One of over 100 host families, the Graceys have provided sanctuary to about 500 families over the past thirteen years.

The Graceys came away from Needham High School with similar ideas and ideals, and out of their common beliefs created mutually supportive careers and a life together.