



Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D.

February 23, 2025

Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D. mother, wife, sister, grandmother, teacher, historian, civil rights champion, LGBTQ+ pioneer and documentarian of the lives of West Hartford's enslaved people, died at 70 after living with melanoma since 2016.

Born in 1954, the daughter of Bill and Mac Wilson grew up in Granby with her three brothers, riding their bikes, playing tennis at the Granby Tennis Club, swimming in Huggins Gorge and skiing on winter weekends.

She earned her BA and MA in History from Trinity College, and her Ph.D. from Brown in History. She played squash, tennis and lacrosse at Trinity.

After college, a 10-week summer program in Africa solidified lifelong interest in social justice after she visited Senegal, a major embarkation center for centuries of the slave trade.

She was passionate about teaching history to students in West Hartford for 38 years, 36 at Conard. Twenty years ago, she developed a Local History and African American History class still offered today. She wore red and grey every Friday to school, showing her Conard spirit. She commuted to Conard each day by bicycle.

Tracey was a leader in promoting open access to Advanced Placement (AP) History classes for all high school students. Summers were spent at St. Johnsbury Academy teaching AP History teachers. She was proud of her work at Conard with students outside the classroom too including: Empty Bowls (addressing hunger), coaching, the Gay Straight Alliance, and retiring the school's stereotyped mascot. She helped win equal pay for women's coaches. Later in her career she helped initiate both the middle school Gay Straight Alliance and an LGBTQ+ teacher alliance after facing discrimination in her teaching role. She led human rights exchange trips to South Africa bringing students to Robben Island and other human rights sites.

She became West Hartford's town historian in 2004, and wrote a monthly column on local history for 15 years for West Hartford Life. Her columns were compiled into a book, *Life in West Hartford*, in 2018 (<https://lifeinwesthartford.org>). After her retirement, Tracey turned to researching and teaching about the legacy of slavery in West Hartford. She and her colleagues, Liz Devine and Denise DeMello, worked with hundreds of students on Witness Stones and Hidden History, chronicling the lives of 95 enslaved people.

Her research and work with students and community members led to changes in the West Hartford landscape, including: adding Prut's name to the War Memorial, renaming Dinah Road, the Blue Back Civil Rights Mural, Unity Green, a Lemeul Haynes memorial, and placing witness stones for more than 60 enslaved residents in the Town Center cemetery. She was a key participant with WHAASCO in naming Bristow Middle School for an enslaved resident who bought his freedom.

In the last weeks of her life, she was still planning classes stressing the humanity, ingenuity and contributions of the enslaved residents for students. She also attended meetings to plan the town's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, working to incorporate the perspectives of all

who lived here in 1776 into that commemoration.

She knit sweaters and hats for family and friends over several decades, finishing her last sweater for a nephew last month. She loved the outdoors, the mountains and the seashore, especially Provincetown. She and Beth loved bringing family and friends together, and hosted many joy filled celebrations. She wholeheartedly cheered on UCONN Women's Basketball for three decades.

Tracey was active at the Universalist Church of West Hartford, serving as a member of its governing board and as moderator. The church community helped sustain her through a long and challenging illness. The family is ever grateful for UCONN Health Center and Dr. Hegde, Dr. Tannenbaum, and countless nurses and aides who cared for Tracey over the last 8 years. NIH sent her home in 2017 predicting 8-12 months to live, but Tracey and her UCONN team had other plans. Her family and friends' love and support also played a key role.

She leaves her wife, Beth Bye; children Peter Wilson, of Chicago; and Adam Brown (Alexa), of West Hartford; Caroline Bye (Joshua Silver), of Washington, D.C.; and Brittany Bye (Kevin Apodaca), of Brooklyn; brothers Michael Wilson, and his wife, Cindy, of Duxbury, MA; David Wilson of Mahopac, NY; and Matthew Wilson, of Medford, MA; 11 nieces; 12 nephews; 15 cousins, and granddaughter, Ivy Morgan Brown. She and her wife Beth were very proud to be the first gay couple married in Connecticut.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools, 50 South Main St. #420, West Hartford, CT 06107 <https://fwhps.org/page/donate-now> for teacher grants in Tracey's name.

Tracey's funeral will be held on March 6th at the Meeting House of First Church of West Hartford, 12 S. Main St. at 11:00 AM, followed by a reception in her honor at the West Hartford Town Hall Auditorium, 50 S. Main St. West Hartford.

Live-Stream Funeral Service (11:00 AM): <https://www.youtube.com/@whfirstchurch/streams>

Live-Stream Town Hall Celebration of Life (12:30 PM): <https://youtube.com/live/S9DNXSEXh54>

Previous Events

Funeral Service

MAR 6. 11:00 AM (ET)

First Church West Hartford
12 S Main St
West Hartford, CT 06107
(860) 233-9605

Tribute Wall



“ A grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

March 11, 2025 at 10:27 AM



“ Joan Hartley purchased the Red Double Knock Out Rose for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



Joan Hartley - March 09, 2025 at 08:29 PM



“ My sympathies and admiration go out to the extended family of Beth Bye and Tracey Wilson. I knew Tracey through the Universalist Church, and even served on the Board when melanoma first had her embattled. What I saw there was another part of her legacy. She met the medical challenges and dire prognoses with calm courage and fortitude, while continuing her good work for the Church and Town. Even in that chapter she had more victories than defeats. Her skills and insight as a speaker were evident on a Sunday in church back then. I remember in particular our Youth Sunday. Tracey spoke to those prospective members of the Principles of Universalism, not just listing and explicating them. Her message was that embracing these principles will make a difference in your life, and for the world around you. Hers was a productive, positive life, and a spirited example of how one may fully engage with life. The memorial and funeral service sang of a life well-lived, and well-remembered.

Jim Gregory - March 07, 2025 at 10:51 AM

FO

“ *Family O. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..*

Family O. - March 06, 2025 at 09:43 PM

BV

“ *Barbara V. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..*

Barbara V. - March 05, 2025 at 06:52 PM

RY

“ When I reflect on my life so far, so much of what I have now can be traced back to Dr. Wilson. I joined the GSA at Conard as a queer-girl-in-denial in the often-hostile 2010s, and Dr. Wilson became my first gay role model. She later taught me AP US History and Human Rights, and I worked closely with her to change Conard's stereotyped mascot. Our organizing work on the mascot nurtured my passion for social justice, which altered my entire life trajectory: it informed where I went to college and the radical politics I chose to study, which in turn led to me deciding to become a social worker and meeting my fiancé. Now, 10 years after Dr. Wilson was my teacher, the values that she exemplified and instilled in me continue to guide my life and my work.

Dr. Wilson was deeply kind, compassionate, and thoughtful. She was always ready to listen, provide sage advice, and offer a steadying hand when my 17-year-old zealotry and anger nearly got the best of me. She saw, understood, and mentored the parts of me that sought to rage against the injustices that I and others endured. It's because of her compassion, her love for her students, her impactful teaching, and her belief in what this community can be that my life has turned out as beautiful as it has. I will always be proud to tell people I knew her.

Rachel Yousman - March 05, 2025 at 04:09 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

March 05, 2025 at 11:04 AM



“ Sweet Tranquility Basket was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



March 05, 2025 at 11:04 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



March 05, 2025 at 09:11 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

March 05, 2025 at 09:11 AM



“ Kathleen M. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

Kathleen M. - March 04, 2025 at 07:18 PM

SP

“ Stephen and David Palmtag purchased the *Sentiments of Serenity Spray* for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



Stephen and David Palmtag - March 04, 2025 at 10:12 AM

SP

“ Stephen and David Palmtag planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

Stephen and David Palmtag - March 04, 2025 at 10:12 AM



“ *Beautiful Heart Bouquet* was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



March 03, 2025 at 09:50 PM



“ *Gracious Lavender Basket* was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



March 03, 2025 at 08:30 PM

SG

“ Dear Beth and Wilson Family, we are all heartbroken with the news of Tracey's passing. Her Bio and history is incredibly beautiful, just like her heart and soul. If only we could have found a cure and then elected her to heal and run this very challenged planet we all live on. So sorry for your loss, she will live on in all of our hearts and her great deeds will live on forever! Rest in Peace and Power Tracey! xoxo!

Sheldon R Gifford - March 03, 2025 at 03:59 PM

SR

“ Sheldon R. planted a grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

Sheldon R. - March 03, 2025 at 03:52 PM

LI

“ Condolences to Beth, Peter ,Adam and the whole Wilson-Bye family.
Tracey was a special teacher and friend, who will be remembered fondly.
Libby Swietek and family.

Libby - March 03, 2025 at 03:47 PM

LF

“ Love, The Brinker Family planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

Love, The Brinker Family - March 03, 2025 at 03:29 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..*



March 03, 2025 at 12:33 PM



“ *From Jerry He and Manyi Luo purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..*



From Jerry He and Manyi Luo - March 02, 2025 at 11:43 AM



“ *Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..*



February 28, 2025 at 10:39 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..*

February 28, 2025 at 10:39 PM

MC

“ *Marlborough School College Counselors purchased the Sweet & Savory Snacks Gift Basket for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..*



Marlborough School College Counselors - February 28, 2025 at 06:45 PM

MC

“ *Marlborough School College Counselors planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..*

Marlborough School College Counselors - February 28, 2025 at 06:45 PM

JM

“ *Dear Beth and family: please know what a pleasure to have met Tracey through you many years ago. Please know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. JD and Abby Moore*

john moore - February 28, 2025 at 12:19 PM

CW

“ *Dearest Beth and Family,
Tracy's legacy of love for her family and her community is eternal. She was, quite simply, the best in all that she did. She gained the admiration and respect of all who ever came into her world. Sending love to all. Carol Waxman*

Carol Waxman - February 28, 2025 at 09:13 AM



“ Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



February 28, 2025 at 09:03 AM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

February 28, 2025 at 09:03 AM



“ Dear Beth and family. Sincerest condolences to all.

Mark Davis - February 28, 2025 at 08:22 AM



“ From Dr. Jack Jia (WLSA) planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

From Dr. Jack Jia (WLSA) - February 27, 2025 at 09:43 AM



“ From Dr. Jack Jia (WLSA) purchased the Sentiments of Serenity Spray for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



From Dr. Jack Jia (WLSA) - February 27, 2025 at 09:43 AM

BG

“ *Brian and Wenisa Gu purchased the Treasured Lilies Spray for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..*



Brian and Wenisa Gu - February 27, 2025 at 02:21 AM

BG

“ *Brian and Wenisa Gu planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..*

Brian and Wenisa Gu - February 27, 2025 at 02:21 AM

HM

“ *Beth,
We were so sorry to hear that your wife had passed. We are holding you and your family in our thoughts and in our hearts.
Warmly,
Heidi Maderia and CT-AIMH*

Heidi Maderia - February 26, 2025 at 10:50 PM



“ 6 files added to the album Dave



David Wilson - February 26, 2025 at 02:29 PM



“ We watched our kids grow up together in our church, shared rituals and weekends at Beckett. I'll never forget your happiness when you met Beth and welcoming her into our church family. I feel like I've known Peter so well during his childhood years. Beth has become a friend and supporter of various causes in the Middlesex area where I live. You will a.ways be loved and missed, my dear.

Cheryl Duey - February 25, 2025 at 10:04 PM

JP

“ Tracey was always looking to talk local history, it was one of my favorite things about her -- our shared love of West Hartford and local CT history. I learned so much from her about digging deeper than just the primary sources for the stories within the stories, and finding a voice for the voiceless in history. I particularly loved going on the "walking field trip of West Hartford," to the center and back. We would chat about all of the research that she had recently done, and how it related to this property, or this location. She would talk about combing through archives that had been overlooked or glanced over, and the stories she was preparing to share with the community she loved through the West Hartford Historical Society.

I laugh that as a student at Conard in the 90s, I never had Dr. Wilson (as I knew her then), but I knew how smart she was and found her intimidating. It was my shock when she was one of the first parents I met at parent teacher conferences in the fall of 2003 at King Philip Middle School, and discovered she was one of the nicest people I'd ever met. The first 2/3 of my career would be working together as parent/teacher partners when I had Adam in class, and as a track athlete, and then as colleagues when I moved to teach Social Studies at Conard. I relished teaching her course Local History, and am grateful to have had the opportunity to talk about something we both loved so dearly. I am thankful to have known Tracey well, as a colleague and friend, and to have learned as much as I have about what is important -- both in history, and today in society, especially for our students.

John Provencher - February 25, 2025 at 09:43 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

February 25, 2025 at 09:07 PM

BL

“ Bob Liljenquist planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

Bob Liljenquist - February 25, 2025 at 06:03 PM

BL

“ Bob Liljenquist purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



Bob Liljenquist - February 25, 2025 at 06:03 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

February 25, 2025 at 05:40 PM



“ Fairest of All was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



February 25, 2025 at 05:40 PM

LB

“ Love, Waide and Becca purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



Love, Waide and Becca - February 25, 2025 at 05:14 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

February 25, 2025 at 04:48 PM



“ Treasured Lilies Spray was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



February 25, 2025 at 04:48 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



February 25, 2025 at 04:01 PM

IM

“ Heartfelt condolences to Beth and the rest of Tracey's Family. We shared Trinity College, the Universalist Church, and a deep involvement in different Boards and Committees. Tracey was always thoughtful and kind and had a way with words to get the message across. I'll miss her.
-- Iradj M.

Iradj Mehrmanesh - February 25, 2025 at 03:20 PM

NF

“ I am so sad for the loss of an amazing woman. Taking AP history with her in high school was the best class I had all 4 years, and where my love for history and aspirations for a teaching career began. May she rest in eternal peace. Thank you Dr. Wilson for the amazing impact you had on us at Conard high school.

Natalie F. - February 25, 2025 at 02:55 PM

RB

“ I'm so sorry for your loss Beth. My heart goes out to you and your family during this difficult time. Wishing you peace, comfort, and strength as you navigate through your grief. Please know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. ❤️

Ruth-Ann Bucknor - February 25, 2025 at 01:37 PM

AM

“ Tracey made an extraordinary impact on all of us. She profoundly influenced me as a student at Conard and later as an educator. One of my earliest memories is of her thoughtfully reviewing history textbooks, using her keen sense of social justice to examine how Native Americans, enslaved persons, and women were represented—or overlooked. She taught me to think critically about the stories we tell, who we include, and who is left out. A true educator, she shaped countless lives. Sending love to Beth, the children, and all of Tracey’s family.

Anne McK - February 25, 2025 at 01:25 PM



“ A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

February 25, 2025 at 01:19 PM



“ Lavender Reflections Spray was purchased for the family of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..



February 25, 2025 at 01:19 PM

AM

“ Anne M. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Tracey Morgan Wilson, Ph.D..

Anne M. - February 25, 2025 at 01:10 PM

ME

“ *What a beautiful life dedicated to family, friends, and service. Thinking of you all and wishing you peace and comfort.*

Meredith - February 25, 2025 at 10:18 AM

TB

“ *Sharing my condolences, I knew her my entire life growing up in Granby our families were close. She babysat for us and no matter how hard she tried to teach me to eat broccoli it did not work. When she started her family she reschedule out and I babysat for Peter and Adam. Later when I had my son Peter babysat him. I will miss her caring. God Bless. Tracey Bissell*

Tracey Bissell - February 25, 2025 at 09:53 AM