



Micheala Paasche Grudin

March 11, 1941 - January 12, 2026

Michaela “Micha” Paasche Grudin passed away peacefully in her Menlo Park home surrounded with love by family and friends on January 12, 2026. She was 84 years old, and lived a life full of adventure, learning, and love.

Micha was born March 11, 1941 in Tokyo, Japan, where her family had sought refuge from Germany during World War II. She lived there until 1948, when her family made passage to San Francisco on a cargo ship. She was the third of four siblings - Joan, Gottfried and Vergilia - born to Maria Therese Von Hammerstein Paasche and Jochen “John” Paasche.

Micha was a force in the lives of those she touched - family, friends, students, colleagues - with an energy that extended from her love of hiking in the Santa Cruz mountains and ocean swimming at her favorite Keawakapu Beach in Maui, to throwing pottery in her Oregon backyard, to unearthing new meaning in Renaissance literature and imparting those insights to her students and readers. She was an English professor, despite English being her third language after German and Japanese. She was a mother to three boys – Anthony, Nick and Ted – who she raised with a strong and warm embrace in Eugene, Oregon. She was a friend and mentor whose passion and care extended to the countless college students she taught.

Micha’s early childhood in Japan during World War II was full of memories she

vividly recalled until her last days, but were also mixed with trauma. She talked about childhood walks in Japan with her older brother to get ice cream, meeting friendly American soldiers they got to know on a nearby U.S. military base, but also sheltering under her bed during air raid bombings. Her family originally emigrated to Japan to escape persecution in Germany, where her mother, Maria Von Hammerstein Paasche, had been an anti-Nazi activist who helped transport Jews out of Germany in the early years of Hitler's regime; Micha's uncles later participated in the Resistance to Hitler and the 20th of July Plot in 1944 (Operation Valkyrie). Her mother, Maria, once gave her advice that echoed throughout her life: "You should memorize poetry, because you never know when you're going to need it," as a reminder that studying literature could transcend wartime hardship.

After arriving in San Francisco, Micha's family later settled in Menlo Park, where she attended The Peninsula School and Menlo-Atherton High School. During those years, her parents struggled to make ends meet. Micha was taken in by Josephine Duveneck, founder of the Peninsula School, who invited her to live on the Duveneck family farm in Los Altos Hills, Hidden Villa Ranch, where Micha learned to ride horseback on the same trails that she would decades later help her sons and grandchildren to navigate. Micha then attended Antioch College, in Ohio, where she developed her literary expertise, which would become her professional calling. She subsequently attended UC Berkeley for her PhD in English Literature, and where she met her husband, Robert.

As a professor, Micha taught at University of Oregon, and finished her career at Lewis & Clark College, where she was tenured and named professor emerita upon retirement. She published two books and many academic papers. Her books were *Chaucer and the Politics of Discourse* (1996) , and *Boccaccio's Decameron and the Ciceronian Renaissance* (2012), the latter of which she co-authored with Robert. When she researched the

Renaissance and Boccaccio, she learned Italian to study the original texts, and traveled to Italy several times, including starting a study abroad program in Siena, Italy with Lewis & Clark College.

Micha and Robert were married for more than 57 years. They shared a love of literature, history, and natural beauty, and spent chapters of their life together in the communities of Eugene, Oregon; Berkeley, Carmel Valley, and Menlo Park, California; and Kihei, Hawaii; and traveled extensively in Europe. Throughout their marriage, they would spend mornings and evenings discussing, debating, and collaborating on their literary explorations.

In retirement, Micha filled her days with reading and hiking with her friends and her sons (and their dogs), and doting on her six grandchildren, from whom she cherished visits and updates, observing every new photo and inch of growth, and always inquiring to hear any and all new experiences.

She is survived by her husband, Robert, and her three sons, Anthony, Nick and Ted; six grandchildren: Max, Michaela, and Mateo in California, and Jasmine, Daphne, and Clio in Vermont; her brother Gottfried and sister Vergilia; her many nieces and nephews and an international diaspora of cousins she remained close to throughout her life.

If you would like to make a contribution in Micha's honor in lieu of flowers, please contribute to one of her favorite places in the world, Hidden Villa (<https://www.hiddenvilla.org/ways-to-give/donate-now/>) in Los Altos Hills, CA.

Tribute Wall

KW

“ I did not know Micheala, but I have profited greatly from her published work on Chaucer.

Karl G. Wilcox - March 20 at 02:49 PM



“ Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of Micheala Paasche Grudin.



January 14 at 04:50 PM

RC

“ I teach American lit at Lewis & Clark. Prof. Grudin left the year before I arrived, so I didn't get the chance to be her colleague, but she did interview me when I came to campus as a candidate. I was terrified. She was sharp, frank, and somehow managed to make me feel much more at ease. That single hour confirmed for me that if offered the job, I should take it, because I would be happy here. I am grateful to her, and so sorry for your loss.

Rachel Cole - January 14 at 03:13 PM