Barbara Joyce Fornasero Grimes

_passionate for those considered "least important" (1 Corinthians 12:14-27, NLT)_

**Born:** 19 August 1930; San Diego, California  
**Died:** 1 March 2014; Tahlequah, Oklahoma (on her 62nd wedding anniversary), of a stroke.

Her father's people (Italian) are said to have "discovered" America. Her mother's people (Cherokee) were already there to meet the boat. Barbara herself was a registered citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma (#013555). Her heritage became of growing importance over the years as she researched her own background.

Her father, John B. Fornasero (a native speaker of Piemontese) was well known in aviation circles, among other things as Chief of Flight Test for Boeing during "the golden years" of aviation. Raised as an Italian Catholic, he was a bit disconcerted when his two daughters started attending West Side Presbyterian Church in Seattle, WA. Eventually Barbara went on to become a Greek major at Wheaton College in Illinois, and became a missiologist and Bible translator. Her sister Janet Burton became a Christian writer, Bible teacher, and pastor's wife.

At Wheaton, Barbara met Joe Grimes, the son of evangelist and well known Christian songwriter Homer W. Grimes, who had been a popular speaker at her church camps. Joe and Barbara attended SIL summer schools at the University of Oklahoma in 1950 and 1951. Joe preceded her to Mexico. When she joined him there after graduating from Wheaton they were married in Mexico City on 28 Feb 1952 (civil ceremony) and 1 March 1952 (church ceremony—the one they celebrated every year).

Barbara was a member of SIL International and also Wycliffe Bible Translators from 1951-present.

Joe and Barbara lived and worked among the Huichol Indians in the remote mountains of west central Mexico until they were chased out by bandits in 1963. Barbara had publications in anthropology and literacy, as well as translating Old Testament portions. During the rainy seasons Joe & Barbara went north to teach at several SIL summer schools, mostly at the University of Oklahoma (see list below). The Huichol New Testament, _Cacaïyari Ninquiyya_, was published in 1967. It has since undergone four reprintings due to continuing demand and regular use. Several dozen indigenous Huichol-led congregations have grown up around the translated scriptures. In her later years Barbara also had a supporting role in the ongoing translation of the Huichol Old Testament initiated at the request of Huichol Christians.

In 1987 Joe & Barbara became involved in the Hawai‘i Pidgin project after Joe had been a visiting professor at the University of Hawai‘i. The New Testament, _Da Jesus Book_, was published in 2000, and has since sold over 85,000 copies and been on the State of Hawai‘i bestseller lists 17 times. In gearing up for continuing with the Old Testament, Barbara began studying Hebrew on her 74th birthday (at the same time she was diagnosed with breast cancer, which was later treated successfully with surgery and chemotherapy). _Da Befo Jesus Book_ (Hawai‘i Pidgin Old Testament) is nearing completion, with only around 30 chapters remaining to be completed in three more books, out of 929 chapters total.

In 1953, Richard Pittman asked Barbara to assist him in compiling a list cataloging what languages were known to exist where, which ones already had translation begun, and which ones still needed work to be started. The original purpose was to inform people so they could pray. In 1967 Barbara was
made Assistant Editor of the *Ethnologue: languages of the world*. She was named Editor in 1971 and remained in that role until 2000. Under her stewardship the *Ethnologue* came out regularly in a new edition every four years and grew to become the world's premier inventory of the world's languages for linguists, anthropologists, students, researchers and missiologists. When the website was developed ([www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)) it quickly won awards as the "go-to" website for anyone doing language related research from anywhere in the world. (See also: [http://www.ethnologue.com/about/history-ethnologue](http://www.ethnologue.com/about/history-ethnologue).)

While the *Ethnologue* was SIL's #1 academic best-seller, it also became a kind of battleground within the organization for clarifying ideas about "what is a language?" versus "what is a dialect?", "what constitutes a translation need?", what categories of information should or should not be included, making sense of widely varying approaches to language classification in different parts of the world, and many related issues. In trying to bring sense and reason to topics that many people felt passionately about, Barbara finetuned both her thinking and issues in sociolinguistics and dialectology by writing discussion papers, strategy papers, conference papers and professional publications. In the midst of all these battles, she never lost sight of the *Ethnologue*'s initial reason-for-being—as a resource to foster prayer.

Because of her careful work on the *Ethnologue*, well-known missiologists such as Ralph Winter and Patrick Johnstone regularly conferred with her about their own work, and occasionally asked her to contribute a publication or speak at a conference, including a chapter in Winter's widely used *Perspectives* textbook. Campus Crusade conferred with her several times so they could use their limited resources to be strategic as to which languages to dub the *Jesus Film* into in the early stages of that project. Wycliffe USA's *Bibleless People's Prayer Project* was another spin-off in which Barbara was heavily involved, and this has mobilized hundreds of people to committed prayer.

The SIL board also tasked Barbara with finding languages that were "falling through the cracks" in their traditional organizational structures. In that mode, Barbara helped initiate research and eventual translation in Plautdietsch (now has a full Bible), Pennsylvania Dutch (now has a full Bible), and Bibles for the deaf (communicating through dozens of different sign languages around the world). Expanding from her work trying to understand how Hawai'i Pidgin relates to Standard English both structurally and socially, she also did a lot of research on understanding pidgins and creoles around the world. There are now translations completed or in process in a number of creole languages around the world, partly due to the clarity and understanding that Barbara brought into the conversation.

As a result of her work on the *Ethnologue* and related publications, in 1993 Wheaton College awarded her an honorary doctorate. Rev. Billy Graham was present when president Dick Chase conferred the degree.

While Joe was alternating years as a professor of linguistics at Cornell University, and running discourse workshops for SIL in Brazil, New Guinea, Philippines, Nepal, Nigeria, Ghana, and other places, Barbara kept busy systematically refining the information in the Ethnologue for those and other countries around the world—much of it before the age of email. She also co-lectured at workshops on sociolinguistic surveys in Colombia 1982, Philippines 1984, Indonesia 1985, Malaysia 1985, and Kenya 1987.

Her three children were born and raised in Mexico, and Barbara home schooled each of them at various stages of their education. Joe & Barbara's quiet passion for Bible translation and marginalized
minorities is reflected in their children. Marilyn Grimes Thrasher worked with Wycliffe Bible Translators to recruit and train Koreans in South Korea in the 1980s. Marilyn died in 2000 from breast cancer. Charles (Chuck) Grimes and his anthropologist wife Barbara Dix Grimes (the “other Barbara Grimes”) continue to work with Wycliffe in eastern Indonesia, East Timor, and northern Australia. They have published 3 New Testaments (Kupang, Dhae, Tetun), and have only one book remaining to check in a fourth language (Amarasi). Barbara Dix Grimes is also Director of AuSIL, overseeing the linguistic, literacy and translation work in Australia, East Timor, and one province of Indonesia. Keith Grimes follows Joe's interests in computing, working in the IT industry in Australia. Joe and Barbara also have 7 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren living in three countries.

People describe Barbara with words like: meticulous, tenacious, faithful, loyal, humble, amazing, and big picture visionary.

She was also a beautiful woman. When Barbara turned 60, a former student at Wheaton who was also a Wycliffe colleague commented, “She has hardly aged at all. She still looks as beautiful as she did at Wheaton.”

Following her death from a stroke, several emails to Joe and Chuck painted the picture of Barbara entering heaven with crowds of forgotten, marginalized and disadvantaged minorities lining the streets to cheer her home.

*Chuck & Joe Grimes*
5 March 2014, Tahlequah, Oklahoma

**Work Experience**

SIL International and Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc.

- Member 1951-2014
- Field investigator, Hawaii Pidgin language project, 1987-2014
- Instructor in Linguistics, Summer Institute of Linguistics (summers)
  - University of North Dakota 1956, 1974, 1976
  - University of Texas, Arlington 1988-1992
- Assistant Editor 1967-71
- Editorial Assistant 1953, 1965

**Education:**

- B. A., Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois (Greek, Clarence B. Hale), 1952
- West Seattle High School, Seattle, Washington, 1948
- SIL, University of Oklahoma, summers 1950, 1951, 1979
- Linguistic Institute of the Linguistic Society of America, University of Indiana, summer 1953
- Member, Scholastic Honor Society, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois
Courses taught & Workshops conducted:

Introductory Phonology, SIL 1958, 1960-1964, 1982
Introductory Spanish, SIL 1971
Sociolinguistic Surveys, SIL 1984-1992
Cultural Anthropology, International College, Honolulu, HI 1994

Lectured on sociolinguistic surveys for SIL.
- Latin America Area Consultants' Seminar, Guatemala City, Guatemala, September 1983
- Horsley's Green, England (at least twice)
- Asia Area Sociolinguistics Seminar, Manila, Philippines, March 1984

Publications (anthropology):


Publications (sociolinguistics):


'Language skills required of a disciple.' *Notes on Scripture in Use* 9.19-23, 1986.


'How bilingual is bilingual?' *Notes on Linguistics* 40.3-23, 1987.


'Special considerations for creole surveys.' *Notes on Linguistics* 47:41-63, 1989.


The English Bible and Hawaii Creole English. Submitted to The Bible Translator.


Publications (Huichol):

'tquisica esarica (recipes in Huichol and Spanish), 1953.
Nepitiiteriva (primers 1-3 in Huichol), with Joseph E. Grimes, 1952.
Scripture calendar, in Huichol 1953.
Synopsis of the Pentateuch, in Huichol, 1963.
Scripture selections on the family, in Huichol 1979.
Reading Primer in Huichol 1979.
Four Things God Wants You to Know, in Huichol 1979.
Joe Grimes Update March 2014
March 7, 2014

Den I hear one voice from da sky tell, "Write dis: From now, erybody dat trus da Boss Up Dea, dey goin stay good inside wen dey mahke."
God's Spirit tell, "Yeah! Dey goin res from all dea hard work, an erybody goin know da good stuff dey wen do."

Wat Jesus Show John 14:13 in Hawai`i Pidgin

On our 62nd wedding anniversary, March 1, God called Barbara home. The second stroke that overloaded her weary system was merciful; within minutes the most important person in my life was gone.

The head nurse called me immediately. I could see the relief remaining on Barbara's face, after over nine months of suffering and frustration from her first stroke last May.

Barbara was a lovely person and a trooper. Mother of three, with seven grandchildren and ten great grandchildren. Heavily involved in the translation of the Bible into the Huichol language of Mexico and the Hawaii Pidgin language. Shaper of the Ethnologue, the first large scale register of languages of the world, into a reference work known to virtually every linguist in the world. Author of technical articles on language survey topics and more. Twice around the world with me, Europe and Africa on her own, with me in workshops for linguists all over the place. Teacher of phonetics, phonology, grammar, and anthropology. Lover of truth, of Jesus, of me, of lots of other people.

Two days later our son Chuck flew in from Australia. We plan a memorial service for her in the chapel of Go Ye Village at 10 AM Central Daylight Time on Thursday, March 13. We are hoping we can set up a streaming transmission either at that time or soon after the service. The latest information on the broadcast can be found by clicking on https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/6448607/BarbaraFGrimesMemorial.txt.

--In Christ, Joe Grimes, Wycliffe Bible Translators

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joe_grimes@sil.org
http://www.pidginbible.org

http://www.ethnologue.com
http://www.wordcorr.org

http://www.hantla.com/huichol
http://www.baibala.org