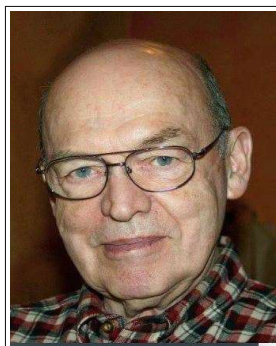


Joe Irvin Conover '58

of Quincy, IL died March 22, 2026, in his home. He was 90.

Mr. Conover was born in Quincy on Nov. 7, 1935, a son of Glenn Argus and Elsie May Bolt Conover. A descendant of pioneer families in southern Hancock and northern Adams Illinois counties, he was raised on the maternal family farm known as Carter Hill, in Hancock County on the Adams-Hancock County line northeast of Lima. He attended elementary schools in Lima and Tioga.



While attending Unity High School in Mendon, Mr. Conover studied piano with William Spenser Johnson. After graduating from Unity in 1953, he was a piano major at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and subsequently graduated from the University of Illinois with a bachelor's degree in journalism.

Mr. Conover worked briefly at a Montana weekly newspaper and then served in the U.S. Army as an enlisted information specialist from October 1958 to February 1962. After honorable discharge in Okinawa, he worked in Tokyo on the copy desk of the Japan Times from February 1962 through August 1965. While living in Tokyo, he taught conversational English at Kyoritsu Women's University and played guitar in a folk group called The Gallihooders. He returned to the United States in September 1965 by traveling from Japan by ship through the Soviet Union, the Soviet airline Aeroflot, the Trans-Siberian Railway including spending several days in Moscow, and on through several Scandinavian countries before returning home.

In 1966, Mr. Conover was employed in The Herald-Whig newsroom where he met his wife, the former Janet Joann Gates, a city reporter and Youth Page editor. The couple was married May 28, 1967, in Vermont Street United Methodist Church, and moved to Washington, D.C., where Mr. Conover edited radio news copy in the Far East Division of the Voice of America, then a part of the U.S. Information Agency. The couple returned to Quincy in May 1968, and Mr. Conover rejoined The Herald-Whig newsroom. He retired May 1, 2001, after 33 years with the newspaper and 18 years as its editor.

During his working years, Mr. Conover served on the boards of

various civic and cultural organizations, including the Quincy Highway Committee, the Quincy Public Library, United Way of Adams County, the Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association, the Quincy Civic Music Association and the Quincy Little Theatre. He was a founding member of the New Philadelphia Association. In 2000-2001, he and Mrs. Conover co-chaired a volunteer group that raised \$400,000 for a new Indian Mounds pool.

He was a member of the Unitarian Church of Quincy.

In retirement, he resumed a youthful interest in visual art by taking up printmaking, collage, and abstract painting in hot and cold wax. He conducted hot wax (encaustic) and cold wax workshops in his work studio, and was a member of Gallery 310, a co-operative gallery in Hannibal, Mo. His work was shown in Quincy and Tri-State area exhibits, and in exhibits in Alabama, Connecticut, Iowa, New Mexico and Sofia, Bulgaria.

The Quincy Art Center honored Joe with a "Joe Conover Retrospective" exhibit during September and October of 2025 that showcased his mixed media and encaustic paintings.

Joe built two Hubbard harpsichords, and recently donated his two-manual harpsichord to the John Wood Community College Foundation. A JWCC Joe Conover Harpsichord/Fine Arts Fund has been established in his honor to provide scholarships for harpsichord students, maintain harpsichords and for recitals and programs.

Joe was a loving husband, son, father, brother and a good friend to everyone. Friends and community members sought him out for his advice and wisdom.

Surviving are his wife, Janet, of 58 years; a son Joseph Gates Conover who recently returned home from San Francisco; and son, Robert Smith Conover and his partner, John Patrick Nord, of Quincy and New York City; two brothers, Leigh Carter Conover and his wife, Jane; Phillip Glenn Conover and his wife, Bonnie, both of Quincy; and a sister, Ruth Ellen Conover Spohr and her husband, Richard, of near Atwater.

Also surviving are nieces Megan Conover Kroeger and husband, Andy, of Mazomanie, Wis; Erin Conover Milosevich and her husband, Steve, of New York City; Anne Conover Alford and her husband, Scott, of Chicago; Beth Spohr Groves and her husband, Kevin, of near Atwater; Julie Spohr van Ommeren and her husband, Brian, of Fredericksburg, VA.; Laura Gerdes Ehrhart and her husband Rick, of Quincy; Elizabeth Forbes Maas and her husband,

Kevin, of Quincy; and Anne Forbes of Quincy; nephews Eric Conover of Quincy; Mark Conover and his wife, Wendy, of Baldwin City, Kan.; and William F Gerdes IV of Denver, CO; great nieces and great-nephews and cousins, and good friends Michael Vera Eastmond, Nick Sorrill and Zach Meyer.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his parents-in-law, Parker and Mildred Gates, a brother-in-law, William F. Gerdes III, and two sisters-in-law, Barbara Gates Gerdes and Mary Gates, and a nephew, Parker "Chip" Gerdes.

Cremation was accorded as Mr. Conover wished, with private inturnment in Greenmount Cemetery.

The family has requested that in lieu flowers, memorials be considered and made to JWCC Foundation (in memo, Joe Conover Harpsichord Fund), Bella Ease, or the Unitarian Church of Quincy.