



Joseph N. Kickasola

March 27, 1940 - September 20, 2025

Joseph Nello Kickasola, Ph.D.

Joseph Nello Kickasola entered the eternal rest of his Savior, September 20, 2025.

Born in New York City, March 27, 1940, to Louis and Jean Kickasola, Joseph spent most of his childhood in southern New Jersey, where his family maintained an active chicken farm. On January 28, 1957, at the age of 16, Joseph acknowledged Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. His attraction to the Christian faith had many dimensions, but two stood prominent. The first was the dramatic character change he witnessed in his father, Louis Kickasola, after his own Christian conversion. Second, the Scriptural command to "honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy" revealed to the over-worked young farmer that he needed a regular day of rest and worship. In recounting his testimony, he once said, "any God who forbids us to enslave ourselves is a God I wanted to serve."

Joseph attended Houghton College, where he studied the Bible, history, and Greek, and also discovered his extraordinary ability to grasp human linguistic systems. There, he also met his future wife, the pianist Myrenna Moore. They were married August 10, 1963, and remained committed to each other for more than 59 years, until Myrenna's passing in early 2023.

The young couple soon moved to Philadelphia, where Joseph studied at Westminster Seminary. Upon completion of his seminary degree, ordination to the pastorate, and a time of ministry in Millville, New Jersey, the couple moved to the Boston area, where Joseph attended Brandeis University and attained his M.A. in Mediterranean Studies (ancient languages, history, and culture), as well as a Ph.D. in Egyptology (Egyptian hieroglyphics and Coptic).

In 1971, they moved to Ashland, Ohio, where Joseph took a position at Ashland Theological Seminary, teaching Old Testament, Hebrew, Greek, and theology. Their three children were born during their years in Ashland. In 1985, the family moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia, where Joseph was awarded a unique, tri-partite appointment in three departments at Regent University: Biblical Studies, the School of Public Policy (later named the School of Government), and the School of Law. His position eventually settled under the title Professor of International Affairs. Joseph's interest and expertise in Biblical and Judeo-Christian legal theory drove his teaching there, as well as other ancient ideas, including Islamic law, which his linguistic facility and academic training particularly enabled him to understand.

His ability to read the Qur'an in Arabic proved very important after the attacks of September 11, 2001. His later career at Regent was defined by research, speaking, consulting on Islam in the context of international relations (including several lectures at the Pentagon, in Washington, D.C.), as well as earnest engagement with scholars from the Islamic community in America. He often said, "it is better to win the man than win the argument." By this motto, he gained many friends from other traditions and walks of life, as they together sought for ways to establish peace and champion human rights around the world. Joseph was always known as a scholar with a love of learning, a love of others, and a passion for the Christian faith. He was never without a book and a pencil, honing his unique mind, filling it with facts,

systematizing them, and discerning ways to make complex systems of thought comprehensible. He was an extraordinarily gifted teacher, as his many students throughout his career still testify. He also shared these gifts with every church he attended, faithfully teaching Christian education classes most Sundays throughout his life.

Joseph retired from Regent in 2013, and in 2021 he and Myrenna moved to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, where they lived happily as a part of the Chateau Girardeau community. He is survived by his son Joseph G. Kickasola (Linnea), daughter Martha Rusten (Mark), son Matthew Kickasola (Erin), and grandchildren Bronwyn and Matteo Kickasola, Jack and Henry Rusten, and Andrew and Micah Kickasola.

The family will hold a private memorial, later this Autumn.

In lieu of flowers, please direct donations to Covenant College (where all his children, their spouses, and two grandchildren have attended), Wycliffe Bible Translators (a ministry with whom he volunteered and supported all his life), or the Chateau Girardeau Christmas Fund (for the caretakers who kindly and faithfully cared for him and Myrenna in their final years).

Dr. Kickasola would often sign his correspondence with the phrase "In the Good Yoke," a reference to Jesus's words, recorded in the Gospel of Matthew (11:28-29):

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Joseph's life was a testimony to that good yoke, and now he enjoys the fruit of his labor and the eternal, joyful rest of his Savior.

Online condolences may be made at www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com

Ford & Sons Funeral Home in Cape Girardeau is in charge of arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Cape County Memorial Park

2315 Highway 61 N
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

Tribute Wall



“ We just learned about my Dear Friend and Professor of many years going to be with the Lord on September 20th - although we were aware of Joe's illness, I am still grieving over the loss, but encouraged by knowing I will see Him again in Glory. His memory will always be cherished in my heart. Daniel Mann

Daniel Mann - February 04 at 10:38 AM



“ Daniel M. planted a grove of 5 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph N. Kickasola.

Daniel M. - February 04 at 10:31 AM



“ David Longfritz planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Joseph N. Kickasola.

David Longfritz - November 20, 2025 at 02:45 PM



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Joseph N. Kickasola.



November 20, 2025 at 02:45 PM

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“ Your going home is a sad day for your students, me, and this world. I know now you are asking Jesus all those 10,000 questions you had and all about the hundreds of "rabbit trails" you wondered about. I often think of you and ALL the things I learned from you. I TRULY praise out Lord and Savior for you. You were always in my prayers. You were by far the most influential teacher I ever had. I finally began to get my life straighten out. Would you believe it, it was the want and need of a Classical education that was always driving me. Now I am pursuing that. Here's a surprise for you. I am running for the Rittman school board. I wrote a paper discussing Classical education Vs. today's drive to cut the kid's education with vocationalism and all the "woke" stuff of today. It created a real "FIRE STORM". I've even had Democrats threaten me. May God bless you RICHLY. I own you so VERY much. God bless,
Don Truex

Donald Truex - October 22, 2025 at 11:02 AM

RN

Dr. Kick was my favorite professor at Regent U, 1996-98. I'd drive him every Monday from the RU campus to Washington, DC during fall of '98, when he taught an offsite class there. We had many wonderful and insightful discussions together, and I enjoyed the stories he shared, which were many. I am very grateful he was a friend as well as a mentor during my 2 years there and was one of the humblest persons I've ever known.

Rich N - November 03, 2025 at 12:56 PM