

# The Legacy of John Holt: A Man Who Genuinely Understood, Trusted, and Respected Children

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HoltGWS publishes a new collection of remembrances about John Holt, a school reform advocate and bestselling author who became a founder of the homeschooling movement.**

*The Legacy of John Holt: A Man Who Genuinely Understood, Trusted, and Respected Children* contains sixteen essays by friends, colleagues, and children (now adults) who personally knew and were influenced by Holt. A deep appreciation for Holt's wide-ranging intellect, humor, and his ever-growing ability to work *with*, not *on*, children emerge from these portraits. People who knew Holt when he was young write about his personal journey from conventional school teacher to unschooler, while pioneer homeschoolers write about the school, social, court room, and legislative battles Holt helped them negotiate at a time when the right to homeschool was often challenged.

Holt was far ahead of his time with his ideas about teaching and optimal environments for learning. Kirsten Olson, author of *Wounded by School*, notes in her introduction, "Holt's observations and thoughts on the importance of pleasure while learning, how teaching can interfere with learning, and the psychosocial means through which teacher beliefs about pupils predict and create performance, are truths about human cognition now being proven in learning labs around the world."

John Holt gained fame in the 1960s as an insightful school critic with his books *How Children Fail* and *How Children Learn*, both of which are still in print and combined have sold nearly 2 million copies. Frustrated by the slow pace of change in schools, Holt became one of the founders of the homeschooling movement in 1977, when he published the first magazine about learning outside school, *Growing Without Schooling*.

## ABOUT THE EDITORS

Patrick Farenga worked with John Holt and continued publishing *Growing Without Schooling* after Holt died in 1985 until 2001, when it ceased publication. He is the co-author of *Teach Your Own: The John Holt Book of Homeschooling*.

Carlo Ricci is a professor of education and currently teaches in the Graduate Program at the Schulich School of Education, Nipissing University. He edits and founded the *Journal of Unschooling and Alternative Learning* and has written and edited a number of books on education topics.

## ABOUT THE BOOK

*The Legacy of John Holt: A Man Who Genuinely Understood, Respected, and Trusted Children*

Published by HoltGWS LLC, Medford, MA Website: [www.johnholtgws.com](http://www.johnholtgws.com)

Publication Date: June 1, 2013

ISBN: 978-1483905488

## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

**Thomas Armstrong** is an author and speaker with over one million copies of his books in print on issues related to learning and human development. His latest book is *Neurodiversity in the Classroom: Strength-Based Strategies to Help Students with Special Needs Achieve Success in School and Life*.

**Peter Bergson** is co-founder of Open Connections, a resource center for self-directed learners in suburban Philadelphia, PA ([www.openconnections.org](http://www.openconnections.org)).

**Alexander W. Clowes, M.D.** is a recipient of a MERIT award from the National Institute of Health. He was also involved in building Seattle's first symphony hall.

**Aaron Falbel** considers himself extremely fortunate to have known both John Holt and Ivan Illich personally, as these men have greatly influenced his outlook on learning and society. Aaron's writings

have been published in *Growing Without Schooling*, *Peacework*, *Plain*, and *Mothering* magazines, and elsewhere.

**Patrick Farenga** began work with John Holt in 1981 and became publisher of *Growing Without Schooling* magazine in 1985, when Holt died, until it stopped publishing in 2001. Farenga continues to write books and articles about homeschooling, unschooling, and Holt's ideas.

**Theo and Anita Giesy** homeschooled her children and remains active in causes such as climate change and food safety, particularly GMO labeling and regulation. Her daughter Anita adds to her mother's reflections about John Holt.

**Peggy Hughes's** life includes working for the Army Medical Corps during WW2, moving to Maine as a dairy farmer, and spending four years in Denmark where she taught in a free school.

**Susan and Larry Kaseman** have four longtime homeschooled children and several grandchildren. They lead Wisconsin Parents Association (WPA), a statewide, inclusive, grassroots homeschooling organization they helped found in 1984.

**Merloyd Lawrence** was John Holt's longtime editor. *Learning All the Time*, *Never Too Late* and the second editions of *How Children Fail* and *How Children Learn* are published under her imprint at Da Capo Press.

**Roland Meighan** is Special Professor of Education, University of Nottingham, UK.

**Jerry Mintz** is the founder of the Alternative Education Resource Organization (AERO) and has been a leading voice in the alternative school movement for over thirty years.

**Berrien Moore III** is Vice President of Weather & Climate Programs and Dean at the College of Atmospheric & Geographic Science at the University of Oklahoma, and Director of the National Weather Center.

**Kirsten Olson** is the author of *Wounded By School: Recapturing the Joy in Learning and Standing Up To Old School Culture*; *Schools As Colonizers*; and the forthcoming *Mindfulness for School Leaders*.

**Wendy Priesnitz** has been a book author, journalist, editor, and unschooling advocate for close to forty years. Her latest book is *Beyond School: Living As If School Doesn't Exist*.

**Susannah Sheffer** edited *Growing Without Schooling* magazine and the book collection of John Holt's letters, *A Life Worth Living*, and she has written other books and articles about homeschooling, teaching, and learning. Her latest book is *Fighting for Their Lives: Inside the Experience of Capital Defense Attorneys*.

**Kirk Talbott** is a Visiting Scholar at the Environmental Law Institute and has worked in environment, human rights, and development for his career.

**Nelson "Bud" Talbott** is a WW II veteran (lieutenant in the Navy), worked in business and investment banking, and is active on a range of boards.

**Strobe Talbott** assumed the presidency of the Brookings Institution in July 2002 after a career in journalism, government, and academe.

**Vita Wallace** lives in New York City and is a member of the early-music ensembles Anima, ARTEK, the Dryden Ensemble, the Lyra Consort, and Foundling, as well as the new-music group Praxis.

**Jenny Wright** is interested in subsistence living, traditional crafts, and nature study. She and her family live in New Hampshire with seasonal orchard workers and homesteaders.