

## **VIII. Memoirs**

### **Pat Perruccio Section Editor**

#### **Austin Herrick Armitstead**

**December 30, 1924 to February 20, 2009**

Austin Herrick Armitstead died February 20, 2009 at home in Suffolk, Virginia. Austin was born Dec. 30, 1924 in Nashua, New Hampshire, the son of the Rev. Johnson N. Armitstead and his wife Olive (Sullivan) Armitstead, and spent his youth in New England and Pennsylvania.

Austin saw combat as an infantryman during World War II along the Rhine River until taken prisoner of war in early 1945. His closest buddy, Anderson Russell, was killed in action during the engagement in which Austin was taken prisoner. Andy had made it plain to Austin that he felt called to serve the Lord and planned on entering the ministry following the war. Austin had planned on becoming a journalist, but his desire to honor Andy's memory and life, coupled with love and respect for his father, himself a Methodist minister, contributed greatly to his decision to dedicate his post-war life to the Lord.

After liberation in April 1945, he returned to the United States and civilian life. He graduated from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1948 and worked with migrant workers from Florida to New York before enrolling in Union Theological Seminary in New York City, where he was awarded a Master's of Divinity in 1952. He married Bianca Audrey Potz-Nielsen on Oct. 27, 1951 in Queens, New York.

Austin was ordained an Elder in the New York Conference in 1953. He served churches in Center Moriches, Commack and Hauppauge on Long Island, Bay Ridge in Brooklyn and Faith on Staten Island before his final posting to Community United Methodist Church in Jackson Heights, New York. At Community UMC, he established a four-language church, bringing a diverse community together in service to God.

Austin was a leader and advocate for social change and justice throughout his life. He advocated for migrant workers on Long Island in the 1950s, drove for integration and affordable housing in Bay Ridge in the 1960s, and worked tirelessly in the cause of ecumenical spirit and social responsibility upon the part of the church. Austin arrived in Jackson Heights as that community was in the midst of ethnic change that was pushing people apart. He quickly became a positive force for change and adaptability and through love and respect was a major unifying influence in the community.

Austin loved New York City and expressed this love through involvement with agencies and boards designed to care for New York residents. He held board positions with the Salvation Army, Queens Chapter of the American Red Cross, Staten Island Council of Churches, Brooklyn United Methodist Church Home and the Jackson Heights Community Development Corporation. He also was an active member of the United Methodist City Society and was an honorary board member there until his death. After retiring from active ministry, Austin served as Community Relations and Roving Photographer for the "Western Queens Gazette".

If Bianca was the love of his life, and the church and community his calling, his passion was baseball in general and The New York Mets in particular. He was an avid fan, organized church and community outings and was an honorary lifetime member of the Baseball Hall of Fame. He was a very good bowler and a pretty fair pinochle player but when all was said and done, it was the Mets that brought him the most joy.

In addition to Bianca, his wife and best friend for over 57 years, Austin is survived by a daughter, Nancy Armitstead of Jackson Heights; and two sons, Alan Jackson Armitstead and his wife Petra Armitstead of Suffolk, Virginia and John Auman Armitstead and his wife Ima Armitstead of Lexington, Kentucky; five grandchildren (Christian, Jaclyn, Michael, Steven and Jonathan) and two brothers, Donald M. Armitstead of Seattle, Washington and Dr. Paul T. Armitstead of Waco, TX.

The Rev Bob Weeks, of Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Chesapeake, Virginia celebrated a memorial service and officiated at the internment ceremony in the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery, also in Suffolk, Virginia. The Rev Dr. Ron Tompkins hosted a memorial service at Community United Methodist Church on March 2, 2009 attended by hundreds of friends and community leaders from New York.

### **Ethelyn Bennett** **January 6, 2009**

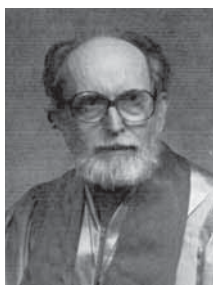
Reverend Ethelyn Bennett. Ethelyn, a deacon in full connection, served at Calvary United Methodist Church in the Bronx. She passed away on January 6, 2009 in the Bronx, NY.

Deacon Bennett is survived by two sons, Jeffrey and Asa Bennett.

The funeral arrangements were Tuesday, January 13, 2009 at Calvary United Methodist Church, Bronx, NY. Her burial was on January 14, 2009 at Fairlawn Cemetery in Fairlawn, NJ



### **Rev. Dr. Clarence S. Bigler** **February 14, 1924 to November 13, 2008**



Clarence Seaver Bigler was a native of Indianapolis, Indiana, born on February 14, 1924. His father, Charles Vernon Bigler, was from Kansas. He married Jessie Seaver of Massachusetts. To this marriage were born two boys and two girls. Charles Vernon and his son, Vernon, were graduates of Boston School of Theology. Rev. Charles Vernon was a pastor who served fifty years in the Northwest Indiana Conference and retired from there. Brother Vernon and Clarence also served in the Northwest Indiana Conference.

Clarence received a Bachelor of Arts degree from DePauw University in Greencastle, IN., in 1946. He received a Master of Divinity from Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO. in 1959. His Doctor of Divinity was obtained from Eden Seminary in 1986.

Clarence married Josephine Wildcat of Oklahoma on September 20, 1950, at Pickett Chapel Methodist Church in Sapulpa, Oklahoma. They were married by her uncle, Rev. Joseph Wildcat. They were married fifty-eight years. Three sons were born to this union: Clarence Seaver (Parcharney), Michael David (Yarcharney), and Gregory Kevin (Hodagwaha). Clarence and Josephine were grandparents to nine children, and great grandparents to three beautiful little girls. Clarence loved his family, his church, his cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments, and various other community organizations where he served. While serving the Cypress Hills United Methodist Church in Brooklyn, NY, he received a citation for Community Service from the City of New York in 1987.

Clarence served multiple parishes in NW Indiana Conf., Central 111, Wisconsin, New York, and Connecticut. After his retirement in 1990, he moved to Oklahoma where he served OIMC churches as he was needed.

In the years 2006 and 2007, Clarence was diagnosed and treated for prostate cancer. During the month of December 2007, the doctor declared him free of cancer. However, there were other complications and his death was due to a congested heart condition. He died at St. Johns hospital on Thursday, November 13, 2008. Rev. William Foote, Sr. conducted the memorial service. Clarence's ashes will be buried with wife Josephine when the final day arrives. The cemetery is in a Sapulpa country setting which contains her great grandmother who traversed the Trail of Tears.

Today, our family recalls the beauty, richness, and colorful parsonage life we enjoyed with you. God bless you in the Spirit World!

*Josephine and Family*

**Rev. Herbert W. Detweiler**  
**December 2, 1925 to May 2, 2009**



We recall with thanksgiving the life of Rev. Herbert W. Detweiler, retired member of the New York Conference, who finished his course in faith on May 2, 2009. Rev. Detweiler served in the Marine Corp during World War II and Korea. He was a dairy farmer and worked for GLF(Agway) for seven years, prior to entering the ministry.

Herb returned to school and received his AA from Orange County Community College in Middletown, N.Y., and his Bachelor of Arts at the College of Liberal Arts, Drew University in 1968 and his Master of Divinity from the same University in 1970. He has served under appointment in Ridgebury/Slate Hill from 1962-1966, Memorial United in Modena, N.Y. 1966-1971, Epworth Parish, Queens, N.Y., 1971-

1983 and Pleasant Valley/ Bangall, N.Y. 1983-1988 and after retiring served Delaware Water Gap and Poplar Valley churches in Eastern Pennsylvania.

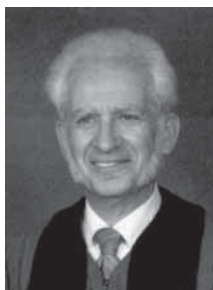
Herb continued to use his strong organization ability after retirement. He organized a Christian Awareness Ministries program through the United Methodist church in Mountainhome, Pa. and also was the primary force in developing The Shepherds in Monroe County, an organization that has built affordable housing for seniors in Barrett Township in the Poconos. Both organizations are alive and well and functioning.

Herb is survived by his wife of 61 years Alma, a daughter Susan Lo Verso who lives in Clintondale, N.Y and has four daughters, Rebecca, Elizabeth, Deborah and Jessica, and a son Ross who lives in Lititz, Pa. with his wife Mary, daughter Kathleen and son Ian, and also three sisters, Phyllis Davis of Groton, VT, Lucile Bonnell of Lakewood, CO, Salome Kievit of Mahwah, NJ, and nieces and nephews.

Memorial Service was held on May 16th at the Mountainhome United Methodist Church.

*Alma Detweiler & Susan LoVerso*

### **Rev. Robert Kenton Fell** **July 6, 1922 to November 19, 2009**



Bob was an active person with many facets to his life, too many to report within the allotted space. As a child he was known as "busy Bobby." He was born with a pen and pencil in his hand and wrote his sermons devotedly every Saturday evening until his retirement in 1989.

The Rev. Robert Kenton Fell, 86, of Middletown, CT, passed away Wednesday, November 19, at Middlesex Hospital Hospice in Middletown. Born July 6, 1922, in Rochelle, Illinois he was the son of the late Edgar Andrew Fell and Helen (Cobb) Fell.

He married Shirley (Graichen) Fell on July 6, 1968 in Bridgeport, CT. He is survived by his children, Daniel Cobb Fell and wife, Nancy Monter, of Carmel, Ind.; Martha Jolkovski and husband, Michael, of Falls Church, Va.; a stepson, Kenneth Cilley and his fiance, Julie Collura, of Middletown; Peter Chamberlin Fell and wife, Laurie Pratte, of Middletown; and stepson, Kevin Cilley of West Haven; nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Besides his parents, he was predeceased by his first wife, Kathryn Chamberlin Fell, and his brother, David A. Fell, M.D.

The Rev. Mr. Fell received a B.A. from Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa, class of '43; a B.D. and an M.A. from Yale Divinity School class of '47. He was an elected member of Delta of Iowa Phi Beta Kappa.

In 1947, the Rev. Mr. Fell was ordained to the ministry of the United Methodist Church, and was a member of the New York Annual Conference. He served pastorates in Rhinebeck and Milan, N.Y., Sutherlin and Wilbur, Ore.; San Jose, 111; Hamden and Clinton, CT and in The United Churches of Durham, a

Congregational-Methodist Federation. In 1989, he entered the retired relationship in the United Methodist Church. Upon his retirement, after an incumbency of 24 years, The United Churches conferred upon him the status of pastor emeritus.

At Durham, the Rev. Mr. Fell founded the Crackerbox Theater for the youth of the community, and managed it for almost 20 years. He wrote a series of biblical dramas for the Good Friday evening services and directed their production, along with secular works.

He will be remembered for his ministry, his wit, love of poetry, classical music, dogs and fine woodworking. He built several speaker cabinets; a stand-up desk; large folding dining room table; created the stage for the plays, with windows and doors; renovated uninsulated rooms in the parsonage; created toolboxes for his handsaws and had a wide variety of woodworking tools, none of which were electric.

He was a silver star member of Durham Grange No. 57 in Durham, a 50 year member of the Masonic Lodge, San Jose, 111./ chaplain of the Durham Volunteer Fire Department and member and past president of Greater Middletown Visiting Nurse Association.

A memorial from the Grange reads: "A well liked and congenial Granger, Brother Bob never allowed his education or training in Ministry or accomplishments in public service to interfere with his ability to connect with ordinary people; well done good and faithful servant."

The Rev. Jim Swain said in his eulogy, "For Bob had become more than a pastor. He was a friend and companion who felt his own and others' need for study, prayer and fellowship; in fact, it was his sensitivity to these same needs in the parish of Durham Federated Church that largely supplied him with a good lay teacher and an exemplary Bible study program for the nursing home!"

A family graveside service conducted by the Rev. Mark Chatterton from the First United Methodist Church was held December 6, 2008 at the Mica Hill Cemetery, Durham where his ashes are interred.

A memorial service was held Sunday, Dec. 7, 2008 at the First United Methodist Church, 24 Old Church St., Middletown. Conducted by the Rev. Dr. Mark Chatterton, Pastor of the First United Methodist Church, the Rev. James Swain and the Rev. Marston Speight.

### **Reese Edwards Griffin** **April 29, 1924 to July 11, 2008**

There was excitement at the Methodist parsonage in Moultrie, Georgia, when Reese Edwards Griffin was born on April 29, 1924. He was the son of Reverend Reese and Elizabeth Copeland Griffin. Before that event, five daughters had been born.

Reese spent his teen years in Macon, where his father served a church before being appointed Executive Secretary of the Board of Education of the South Georgia Conference.



The call to ministry came early- Reese received the Bachelor of Arts degree at Emory University, followed by Emory's Candler School of Theology for the divinity degree. During his middle year of Theology School, Reese studied at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

In 1947, while taking summer courses at Candler, Reese met Ella V. Goudelock, who was studying Christian Education. They were married in December of that year. Reese completed the Divinity Degree at Candler. In his last year, his field work assignment was to canvass North Decatur Road to determine whether there was enough interest to establish a Methodist church in the area. In June, 1948, serving as the first pastor of the North Decatur Methodist Church, Reese received 74 charter members.

Inspired by outstanding professors, Reese felt called to the teaching ministry. His first teaching experience was a part-time position at Emory-at-Valdosta while he served two charges in the South Georgia Conference.

In 1953, Reese earned the Master of Arts degree in Philosophy from the Emory University Graduate School and accepted a position to teach at Emory-at-Oxford, filling in for a professor on a two-year leave. He went on to teach at Wofford College in Spartanburg, S. C., where he was Associate Professor of Religion and Director of Religious Life.

Reese returned to New York to work on a doctorate at Union and was given a student appointment to Monroe in the New York Annual Conference. Indeed, God work in mysterious ways: the church and its congregation grew, and Reese became committed to the pastoral ministry. His conference membership was moved from South Georgia to the New York Annual Conference in 1962.

By this time, Reese and Ella V. had welcomed three sons to the family: Reese Edwards, Jr; James Goudelock; and William Stevenson, all of whom had been born in Georgia.

Reese's next appointment, in Bayside, Queens, called for another building expansion. In addition, the church owned a camp in upstate New York which provided summer activities for adults and youth. The three young Griffin sons often participated in the camping and canoe trips led by their father.

Other pastorates included Plainville, Connecticut, Winsted, Connecticut and New Milford, Connecticut. He was appointed Coordinator of the Upper Catskill Larger Parish, living in Margaretville, New York until he retired in 1988.

The Griffins bought a home near Oneonta, New York, where Reese devoted his retirement ministry to Habitat for Humanity. He founded the Otsego County, New York, affiliate and assisted in organizing affiliates in three neighboring counties. He was a master gardener and accomplished builder. He built a cabin in the Catskills, which his family enjoyed for 15 years. He also did major renovations and additions to his retirement home. In his spare time, he did some genealogical research and writing.

Reese and Ella V. moved to Tryon, NC in 1997. There they found a wonderful United Methodist Church and church family. Reese died on July 11, 2008. A memorial service was held at Tryon United Methodist Church, attended by many friends and relatives. The church's Pastor, Rev. J. O'Neil Haynes, officiated. He is survived by

his wife and sons James and Steve, daughter-in-law Kathleen Griffin, six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He was predeceased by his parents, six sisters, his son Reese Edwards, Jr. and daughter-in-law Susan Griffin (Jim).

In the biography of his father, Reese quoted from the 39<sup>th</sup> Psalm. This memoir ends with that passage:

“For I am thy passing guest, a sojourner, like my fathers.”

*Written by Ella V. Griffin*

### **Rev. Roger Don Riley** **April 5, 1922 to February 5, 2009**

The Rev, Roger D. Riley was the youngest of three sons born to Don Pedro and Bessie Hill Riley in Harrod, Ohio. As a farm boy, he grew up loving the rural country and the church. He attended grade school in Harrod and graduated High School from Jackson Center, Ohio. He began his pursuit of higher education at Ohio Northern University but that was interrupted by World War II. Roger enlisted in the Army in August of 1942, served with the 414<sup>th</sup> Ordnance Evacuation Company in the European theater and was honorably discharged in March of 1946.

For his service, Roger was awarded the American Theater Medal, European Africa Middle Eastern Theater Medal [with 1 bronze star], the Good Conduct Medal and the World War II Victory Medal.

After returning from the service, Roger started farming again and earned an Associate Degree in Agriculture from The Ohio State University in 1947. God tapped on Roger's heart in 1948 and said “I need you to be my voice”. He found he could no longer satisfy his call to serve the Lord by just supply ministering so he returned to school to become a full time, fully ordained Pastoral Minister. His calling was to the small, rural church. Thus began a lifelong career of ministry. He received his local preacher's license in 1948 and served as a supply minister in the West Ohio Conference, Lima District until 1951. At that time, Roger was assigned to the Alger Fairview Methodist Churches. He was ordained as deacon and served the Lafayette circuit in Ohio from 1952 to 1954. During this time Roger returned to Ohio Northern University where he earned his BA in history in 1954.

His next assignment came from the New York Conference where he was assigned to the Long Eddy Parish which consisted of five churches [Goulds, Rock Valley, Long Eddy, Pea Brook and French Woods Methodist Churches]. While at Long Eddy, Roger attended seminary at the Theological School of Drew University receiving a Master of Divinity degree. He was ordained as an Elder by the West Ohio Conference at Lakeside, Ohio and officially transferred to the New York Conference as a full time Elder. This was the beginning of 30 years of service at five more charges in the New York Conference. At Jefferson, he served the North Blenheim, Blenheim Hill, East Jefferson, Jefferson and North Harpersfield Methodist churches. One of his most significant accomplishments while in Jefferson was to



have the church moved to a permanent foundation with a full basement for classrooms, kitchen and restrooms. He worked to get a Sunday School addition added to the Blenheim Hill church and a basement for the North Harpersfield church.

Roger moved on to the Windham, Ashland and North Settlement circuit in 1960. He served on the Board of Missions and appointed Chairman of the Town and Country Commission for the New York Conference and N.E. jurisdiction. He continued in this position until his retirement in 1984. During his tenure here, the Ashland church was destroyed by fire and he worked endlessly until it was rebuilt. In 1969 he went to the Rockland Area Ministry. This was an interdenominational charge served by two pastors. The churches included Livingston Manor, Lew Beach, Beaverkill, Parksville, Roscoe United Church of Christ, Roscoe Presbyterian and the Roscoe Methodist church. At Livingston Manor a Sunday School addition was added to the church. Roger's involvement in the interdenominational ministry was so successful that it was later incorporated into the Margreetsville Area among others in the conference.

The next stop was the Methodist church in Franklin, NY in 1976. While at Franklin, he was instrumental in establishing special community services with the Franklin Baptists and the Franklin Catholic Church. He completed his full time ministry in 1984 at the Kenoza Lake Parish, Kenoza Lake, Fosterdale, Cochocton Center and Narrowsburg Methodist churches. While there he served as the hospital chaplain at Honesdale, Pa. Roger and Adelia especially enjoyed working with the youth in all of the churches they served. He supported the conference camps and each year served as counselor and supporter.

Despite the harried life of a pastor serving multiple churches, Roger and Adelia found time to raise four wonderful children. Roger married Adelia Delores Lotz while on furlough, September 3, 1944 at the Jackson Center Methodist Church in Jackson Center, Ohio. They traveled to Mississippi, Texas and Aberdeen, MD for Roger's special training in tank and tank transporter maintenance. They were blessed with three girls (Lois Elaine (Derrick), Evelyn Lucille [Lane], Linda Jean (Dodge) and one son James Alan. They have 10 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

Roger's other interests and hobbies were many. He was active in Grange and American Legion. He was a master mechanic, loved to fish, bowl, hunt, roller skate and pitch horseshoes. He thoroughly enjoyed family travel and made a camping excursion from New York to Seattle, Washington to visit the World's Fair He loved singing and performed with the Catskill Glee Club and the Yankee Male Chorus at many venues in the New England area and even performed at the New York World's Fair in 1964. He enjoyed reading and wrote his own poetry.

I wish that I could sing a song  
 So sweet to fit on angel tongues,  
 My Jesus and my God to praise  
 And tell about their love.  
 I wish that I could sing a song  
 In tongues all men could hear and understand  
 To tell of love — my Savior's love

Upon the cross.  
 I wish that I could sing a song  
 So plain and clear that even babes  
 And all could hear and know it was for them  
 He died so long ago.  
 I wish that I could sing a song  
 So you, my friends would come,  
 And take my Jesus, too, to be  
 Your friend, your life, for all eternity.

-RDR-

Roger remained very active in his ministry as a supply minister in and around his home in Jackson Center as well as his winter residence in Florida. He also preached at churches near his daughter's home in Kentucky. Roger continued to preach until his health began to fail in 2008. Roger (86) went to be with his Lord at the Baptist Regional Medical Center in Corbin, Ky. A memorial service was held at the Corinth Baptist Church in Corbin, officiated by the Rev. Lenny Skrunk. A memorial to his life was later held in his hometown of Jackson Center, presided over by Rev. Sylvia Hull and attended by many friends and family. Roger was a mentor to several parishioners in the churches he served who, in turn, received the call to the ministry. Family and friends willingly gave tribute to Roger's life.

We are indeed richer and the world is indeed brighter for Roger's walk through it.

*Submitted by: Mrs. Adelia Riley and family*

### **Michael Lawrence Snow** **October 31, 1931 to March 5, 2009**



From the majestic mountains of Vermont to the sandy shores of Cape Cod Bay, Larry Snow's life spanned 77 years as a loving husband, devoted father, loyal friend, understanding pastor, and one of God's most faithful and trusted servants.

Larry was born in Poultney, Vermont on October 31, 1931 the first child of Lila (Holroyd) and the Rev. H. Lawrence Snow who came to the United States in 1929 from Yorkshire, England to serve churches in the Troy Conference (N.Y. and Vermont) and later the New York Conference. Larry's younger brother, Keith, who also entered the Methodist ministry is now retired

and lives with his wife, Janet, in Tumwater, WA.

The Snow parsonages were the gathering places for the youth of their churches, especially in Lake Placid, N.Y. where Larry graduated from high school in 1948. In 1951, Larry enrolled at Drew University, N.J. His desire to become a medical missionary was set aside when he entered Drew Theological Seminary in 1955.

Larry received his undergraduate and divinity degrees from Drew University in 1953 and 1956 both magna cum laude and his doctorate of Philosophy from Columbia University, N.Y. in 1969. He was awarded the Ezra S. Tipple Traveling

Fellowship which enabled him to continue studies at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossy, Switzerland. Larry also attended Yale Graduate School and Oxford University for graduate studies and post-doctoral research at Trinity College Library, Cambridge University.

Larry received his Deacon's Orders at the Troy Annual Conference in 1954, his Elders Orders in 1956 and became a Full Member of the N.Y. Conference in 1957.

Larry's devotion to his work and his thoroughness made others put their very best into their work. And their efforts were evident in the growth of the churches he served. While he was in his last year of the Seminary, Larry served as part-time Student Pastor of the Darien Methodist Church, CT. It was there he met Eleanor Caspersen. Ellie had recently graduated from Teacher's College of CT., New Britain (now CCSU) and was teaching in Greenwich, CT. Ellie attended several of Larry's services and after one service accepted Larry's offer to be Chairman of the Education Committee. This led to their engagement in February 1957, Larry's dad performing their marriage ceremony on July 13, 1957 and a marriage and friendship that lasted 51 years.

Larry was senior pastor of the First United Methodist Church, Greenwich, CT. 1959-1969; Community Methodist Church, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 1969-1980; First United Methodist Church, Stamford, CT. 1980-1990; Simsbury United Methodist Church, CT. 1990-2002; and when he and Ellie retired to Cape Cod he was serving part-time at the Wellfleet United Methodist Church, MA.

Larry was a leader in Ecumenical Lectionary groups, as Spiritual Director of Tres Dias, as founder of the Poughkeepsie Counseling Center, as Resettlement Coordinator in Dutchess County, N.Y.; Darien CT.; Stamford, CT.; and Simsbury, CT. as pastoral Care Coordinator for Hospice, Inc. Stamford, CT. and Farmington Valley VNA Hospice, Simsbury, CT. as President, Board of Directors, Council of Churches and Synagogues of Southwestern Fairfield County. Also serving on the Building Committee and Board of Directors for HUD-funded 24 unites affordable housing for elderly. Crossroad Residences, Stamford, CT. and on the Stamford Hospital Institutional Review Committee, Medical Research Protocols; served as Chairman, Board of Ordained Ministry.

Among Larry's publications are: Confirmation and the Methodist church (Order of St. Luke, 1963); Tres Dias Guide for Spiritual Directors, 1985; Tres Dias Liturgy of the Eucharist, 1987; chief writer for "A Service of Christian Marriage" in the United Methodist Hymnal, 1989; in the United Methodist Book of Worship, 1992; Conyers Middleton Polemic Historian 1683-1750, 1970.

As Ken White shared at Larry's Memorial Service in Simsbury:

*"Larry was more awake to the world around him than almost anyone I knew. He was awake to those things that matter the most: compassion, forgiveness, caring, love, understanding, acceptance, healing and friendship."*

Larry drew all these qualities from his religious beliefs, me many books, newspapers and periodicals he read, from the Bible and from the people he shared with in discussion groups. And also from his family: Katrina (Queensbury, N.Y.), Chris and Wife Kathy (Fort Myers, FL.), Karen Householter and husband, David

(Manhattan Beach, CA.), Stephen and wife Kathleen (Hingham, MA), Peter and his wife Christine (Newport News, VA.) and his 14 loving grandchildren.

Larry literally lived for his churches and insisted on serving communion to his Wellfleet congregation Sunday morning, later entering Cape Cod Hospital for tests. He had not been feeling well for a long time and died unexpectedly early Thursday morning from a massive heart attack.

A memorial service was held at the Wellfleet United Methodist Church on March 13, 2009 with Rev. Gary L. Shaw, District Superintendent presiding. A memorial service was also held at the Simsbury United Methodist Church on May 2, 2009 with Rev. Woody Eddins presiding.

Larry's ashes are interred in Pine Grove Cemetery, Brewster, MA. with this inscription on his gravestone:

*"Well done good and faithful servant. Enter in the joy of the Lord. "*

*Submitted by his loving family*

### **The Reverend Arthur Thomas Tedcastle**

**July 28, 1907 to November 10, 2007**

*Previously Unpublished in "Journal", Memoir*

The opening words of one of the newer All Saints hymns in the United Methodist Hymnal are these:

*I sing a song of the saints of God patient and brave and true who toiled and fought and lived and died for the Lord they loved and knew.*

The hymn continues with a list: one was a doctor, one was a queen, one was a soldier and one was a shepherdess on the green. And the first stanza ends: "and I mean, God helping, to be one too."

Indeed Arthur Thomas Tedcastle, God helping, was for over one hundred years one of the saints on earth.

On November 10, 2007, Arthur joined the saints above who form that great cloud of witnesses of whom the author of Hebrews speaks. Family, colleagues in ministry and former parishioners gathered to celebrate his life on November 15, 2007 at the Stratford United Methodist Church in a memorial service presided over by the Reverend Fredric O. Jackson and Dr. Donald H. Kirkham, and at a second memorial service on November 17, 2007, at the North Barnstead Congregational Church, Barnstead, New Hampshire, presided over by the pastor the Reverend Gayle Wittemore and Dr. Donald H. Kirkham. Interment took place at the Riverview Cemetery, Center Barnstead, New Hampshire, prior to the second memorial service.

Born in Bristol, England, on July 28, 1907, to Esther Turner and Thomas Dixon Tedcastle, Arthur spent his early childhood in England, coming to the United States in May 1914 as a seven-year-old lad with his mother and brother to join this father who had immigrated earlier. The family settled in New Haven where they attended the Summerfield Methodist Episcopal Church. It was to be a formative influence in Arthur's life.

From the time he was young Arthur knew his life would be one of service. The only question was, which field — medicine or the church? While at Wesleyan University, working on a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry, he was challenged by Yale Divinity School Professor, Hal Luccock, to choose the church and heed God's call to ministry. Responding to that call Arthur enrolled in Yale Divinity School completing his Bachelor of Divinity (M.Div.) degree in 1932 and Master of Arts degree in 1933. The New York East Annual Conference elected him to Deacon's orders in 1933 and Elder's orders in 1935.

With Ethel Coe, his high school sweetheart from Summerfield Church, whom he married on June 6 1931, at his side, he began his long ministry of service in his first appointment, student pastor, Southington, CT, in 1932. Other parishes followed, including Bayport, 1935-1941, Norwalk: East Avenue, 1941-1948, (also Saugatuck 1943-1945 and Conference Treasurer, 1945-1951), Torrington, CT 1948-1952, Bristol, 1952-1956, and Stratford, 1963-1973, from where he retired. In each he was a beloved, effective pastor and was active in the community.

For six years, 1957 to 1963, Arthur served as Superintendent of the New Haven (now Connecticut) District, providing pastoral oversight for its sixty-five parishes and pastors. Genuine appreciation and affection for him remains throughout the District. One of the lasting contributions of his Superintendency was his opening the way for the Methodist Homes to locate in Shelton.

The Book of Discipline urges those who examine candidates for ordained ministry to look for their gifts and grace and promise of future usefulness in ministry. In Arthur gifts and grace and usefulness for ministry were in abundance.

Arthur had a wonderful gift for reaching out to people and making them feel valued. When you were in his presence you felt that you were, at that moment, the most important person - and, indeed, you were. He wasn't thinking about the next appointment or his next sermon or the next thing he was going to say or ask. He gave you his full attention. The Stratford laity in a farewell message to him on his retirement highlighted this gift: *"We will remember you best for your love of people... for your interest in each one of us."*

It's no wonder that people responded to him and loved him and gave of their best to him. For the ability to challenge and inspire people was also one of Arthur's gifts. The Stratford church buildings are witness. The chapel, nursery school and sanctuary were all built during Arthur's tenure as pastor. Again, a quotation from the farewell message from the Stratford congregation; *"Without your guidance, patience and courage it is unlikely that the building program would have been successful."*

Young people were a delight to Arthur and Arthur was a delight to them. His interest in ministry to youth was there from the start and it remained a life long concern. At Bayport, his second appointment, he and Ethel started the first boy and girl scout troops in the village and he became director of youth work in the Brooklyn South District. Later he was involved in the Conference camping program at Shelter Island. While he was at Bristol he was instrumental in securing Sessions Woods for Conference camping. Even into his eighties he was active in leading church youth groups; breaking an arm while playing soccer with one group.

From his time at Yale Arthur acquired an early love for preaching. As you would expect of a graduate of Wesleyan and Yale his sermons were always carefully crafted. Biblically centered and intellectually sound. "I was taught one good thing in college and seminary," he once wrote, "and that was how to think". That gift he passed on to others in his preaching.

In Arthur administrative gifts were plentiful and the church was quick to recognize and utilize them. For a number of years he was treasurer of the New York East Annual Conference, chair of several Conference Boards, Dean of the Conference's Summer Youth Institutes, Dean of the Bishop's cabinet, and Follow-up Director of the Pension Crusade. He was twice (1960 & 1964) a delegate to Jurisdictional Conference and a delegate to General Conference in 1964

There's only one area in his ministry where Arthur failed. And that is retirement. His gifts of energy and commitment wouldn't let him quit. The Conference Journal lists his post retirement appointments from 1978 to 1992: Vail's Gate, Rowayton, and Bloomville. Not included in that list are interim positions at Wesley Church, New Haven, Christ Church, NYC, the United Ministry of Gilmanston, NH, his service as associate pastor at Golden Hill, Bridgeport, and his ten year summer ministry at the North Barnstead Congregational Church. Even when he and his beloved second wife, Jean, whom he married June 25, 1994, moved up to Crosby Commons in the United Methodist Homes, his ministry continued. Every week he taught three classes and preached.

Arthur was fun to be around. He had the gift of a great sense of humor and enjoyed poking fun at himself. In a letter requesting some biographical information for the Stratford church records, Arthur wrote:

*"The best place to begin is with my birth. In general I don't remember much before that! Biologists might describe that as a dark mystery. I was born in Bristol, England, on July 28, 1907. I am certain of that for two good reasons: — one being that I was there at the time, and two, I have a birth certificate which testifies [to it]."*

When asked in these last few years how he was doing he loved to sing, referring to himself: "The old gray mare she ain't what she used to be". Five or six years ago he was invited to address the clergy session of the New York Annual Conference. He bounded up to the pulpit and began to sing those words and continued, "but she still has a good bit of life in her". He then proceeded to talk about his ministry in a way that brought laughter to our lips and tears to our eyes, all the time challenging us to a stronger commitment to our calling.

Who can doubt that Arthur lived "as one prepared to die" and "died as one who went forth to live". He has joined that "great company of all those who have finished their course in faith and now rest from their labors." He has heard the Lord's words: Well done, Arthur, good and faithful servant.

Arthur is survived by his son, Douglas C. (Ted) Tedcastle, a grandson Brian D. Tedcastle and his wife, Jennifer, and a great grandson, Christopher Thomas Tedcastle, all of Center Barnstead, New Hampshire. He was predeceased by his first wife, Ethel Coe (June 12 1972); his second wife, Jean Johnson (March 20, 2001); and his son Thomas George Tedcastle, (October 20, 2003).

*Rev. Donald H. Kirkham*