



Donald R. Rasmussen

October 11, 1939 - March 17, 2019

Donald Raymond Rasmussen, age 79, died in Leesburg, Florida at his winter home after a short illness. He was born in Staten Island New York City to Charles George Rasmussen and Dorothy Eunice (Olson) Rasmussen who raised 3 sons Robert Arthur, Allen Walter, and Donald Raymond. They also raised Charles George, Jr., son of Charles by a previous marriage. All are now deceased. The family left New York City and moved to Richfield Springs in upstate New York. In High School, he was a member of the wrestling team, played intramural basketball, played trumpet in the band, sang in the school choir and starred in the senior play. During his college years, he served as assistant in the Botany lab, sang in the a cappella choir, traveled with a gospel team as song leader and served a small local church as its pastor. In his freshman year at Houghton College, he met Ginny Allen who would become his wife. Following his college graduation and marriage he studied for the Christian ministry at Gordon Divinity School in Massachusetts where he received a Master of Divinity degree. During the summers in seminary Don and Ginny worked as staff members at Sandy Island YMCA camp in New Hampshire. In 1964 he was called to the position of Minister of Education at the Jackson Street Baptist Church in Scranton Pennsylvania where he served for 4 years, was ordained as an American Baptist Churches minister, studied at the University receiving a Master's degree in counseling. Both sons, Stephen (1965) and Robert (1968) were born there.

The family moved to Cranston Rhode Island where Don had been called to be the Associate Pastor of Phillips Memorial Baptist Church and seven years later, its Senior Pastor for the next 21 years. He entered a doctoral program at Andover-Newton Theological School and received a Doctor of Ministry degree specializing in organizational development. During his tenure at Phillips Memorial about a dozen persons entered the ministry and were seminary trained. Hosting elders who enjoyed having a group with which to journey led Don and Ginny to some wonderful experiences in Israel, Europe and Canada as caretakers, book keepers and friends. The Rasmussens hosted exchange students: Lars Asmussen, Denmark, Malin Ask Sweden, Daniel Gortzak, Sweden, and Ingela Stiller, Germany. In 1990 Don was given a 4-month sabbatical in Sweden to explore his Swedish roots and do Swedish language study. His involvements in Cranston included – membership of Cranston Community Action board; election to the Cranston School

Committee; member of the Cranston Clergy Association; member of the Interfaith Leadership of Cranston, and the boards of the Cranston YMCA and Scandinavian Home. other involvements, interests, skills included – leadership in national denominational lab schools, workshops and youth conferences, mentoring/equipping leaders; church growth facilitator/developer. As a volunteer, he tutored in English as a Second Language with Literacy Volunteers of Rhode Island, worked with an after-school program tutoring children in computer use, volunteered at the American Baptist Historical Society in Atlanta, GA. He regularly swam, played tennis, and golf. He resigned from Phillips Memorial on December 1996 to serve his denomination as Regional Executive Minister for Rhode Island and board member on the national benefit and investment boards. The title of Pastor Emeritus on him was bestowed on him shortly after he resigned. He retired December 2006 and purchased a motor home in which he and Ginny traveled many happy miles. During that time, he served as interim Executive Minister for the American Baptist Churches of New York State. They purchased a winter home in Central Florida in April of 2016 where he died March 17, 2019. He is survived by his loving wife of 57 years Virginia (Allen), son Stephen Karl and his wife Deborah Lee (Cole), and their children Nathan Cole and Curtis Matthew Rasmussen, niece Portia Burnette, nephew Paul Burnette; son Robert Allen and his children Tristan Scout, Piper Tess, and Shepard Charles.

A Memorial Service will be held at a later time in Rhode Island.

Memorial gifts may be made to the following:

- Phillips Memorial Baptist Church (music program) 565 Pontiac Ave, Cranston RI 02910
- American Baptist Churches of RI (Camping & Youth Ministries) 54 Exeter Rd, Exeter RI 02822
- Baptist Heritage Center, 54 Exeter Rd, Exeter RI 02822

Comments



“ My condolences to the family of Rev. Dr. Donald R. Rasmussen. May our Lord Jesus comfort you during this time. Rev. Ramona Guadalupe, Vermont



Rev. Ramona Guadalupe - April 26 at 10:14 PM



“ Hi Ginny ,
It was with great sadness that I read the word from ABCORI that Don had entered the Church Triumphant. Don's kind and gentle ways have been a blessing to not only the Phillips congregation but to innumerable folks from many Faith and Ecumenical groups and individuals throughout RI and beyond. Don was the "Role Model" for pastors and denominational executives , reflecting a pastor's heart to all. Lois and I always enjoyed seeing you both at various theater/concert venues as well as Council of Churches events. I was grateful that Don trusted this retired Presbyterian minister enough to invite me to assist in the ministry of the Second Baptist, Roger Williams and Emmanuel Baptist churches...thus introducing me to the new ABCORI "world". In RISCC meetings Don wasn't always the most "talkative" voice in the room , but when he spoke folks listened to inciteful , thoughtful words from a pastor's heart. You two were a "team" in ministry, an example of caring family, devoted spouses and faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. My Lois died six months ago and I take great comfort in the surrounding love of family and friends in RI as well as the facility where I reside. You will also. It is not the same but you will find ongoing opportunities for the love of Christ to shine through you. This Easter the resurrection Victory will have new meaning and assurance for both you and me.
Tom Conboy

Rev. Thomas Conboy Jr. - April 06 at 02:29 PM



“ Neighbor, golf partner, valued friend and trusted mentor... Don introduced our family to beloved Sandy Island. He will be long remembered and forever admired.

Rus & Carole Carlsten - March 25 at 11:50 AM