

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MINISTERS ASSOCIATION
Charlotte, North Carolina
June 22, 2011

Introduction of Dick Gilbert

by Nancy Doughty

I feel honored that Dick invited me to introduce him to you, our colleagues. I think the major reason for being selected is that I'm old enough to have known him when we each had darker hair and were free from wrinkles.

Our first meeting was summer 1957 when Dick and I were in a Universalist Service Committee group off to Germany for a memorable work camp experience. I remember Dick's determination trying to teach German boys to use their hands to catch a baseball, when soccer training said to use your foot. Only one year elapsed before we found ourselves together again in the entering class at St. Lawrence Theological School. From the start all theological school students knew Dick was to excel beyond any of us because he worked harder, was more committed, thought and spoke clearly, and did not have a mean bone in his body. While at the Theological School, Dick and I also served two summers on the program staff at Universalist Unirondack Camp in NY, so it's not too exaggerated to claim we studied or worked together most days from 1958-1961 until we graduated. Then he married Joyce, started his 49-year ministerial career that took them to Cleveland, Ithaca, Rochester (his primary pastorate) and finally Golden, Colorado. In his ministry he has not strayed far geographically from his roots in a small Universalist church in Bristol, New York, south of Rochester, but he has enlarged upon his Universalist heritage and brought others along in his journey.

Do you remember when you first knew Dick? Was it using his *Building Your Own Theology* material in your local congregation? Or at one of the hundreds of workshops he has led on social justice? Perhaps you read and acted upon *How Much Do We Deserve? An Inquiry in Distributive Justice*, one of the books he authored. Or have you used meditations from his book, *In the Holy Quiet of this Hour*, in your worship? If you were fortunate, you had Dick as a teacher in a class at Crozer Divinity School, at Starr King, or at Meadville Lombard.

Throughout his preaching, writing, workshop leadership ... all facets of his ministry, Dick took to heart Angus MacLean's message that Angus laid before us and upon us when we were students at St. Lawrence: that to be a teacher-learner is a great gift to others, as it is to one's self.

I trust you are as eager as I am to hear Richard Gilbert.