

E L D E R B E R R I E S



Unitarian Universalist
Retired Ministers and Partners Association



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UU RAINBOW HISTORY PROJECT Underway!

By PHYLLIS HUBBELL, 2019 Conference Program Planner

UURMaPA is a primary holder of memories from recent UUA history. But we are humbly reminded how many of those memories are fading with each passing year. The *UU Rainbow History Project* is inspired by that reality, stirred by the fact that it will soon be *50 years since the 1969 Stonewall Uprising*.

Monumental changes have occurred since then—in our Unitarian Universalist guidelines, in our congregational welcome of ministers, staff and members, and in our commitment to justice for LGBTQIA individuals. But already many ministers and their partners are gone and unable to share their stories. We need to gather the memories of those still with us, to most effectively document this transformation.



For more info about the **UU Rainbow History Project** (which is supported in part by a grant from the UU Funding Program and individual donations), see accompanying article on **Page 5** and/or go to uurmapa.org/activities/.

IN 2019

Next year, as part of this *Project*, we are holding two conferences at which we will gather, share and record historical perspectives for those who follow us. The first UU Rainbow History conference will be held at John Newcombe Tennis Ranch in New Braunfels, Texas (NE of San Antonio), on **February 17-20 (begins at 3:00 pm on Sunday and ends after lunch on Wednesday)**. Our usual western winter conference center, La Casa de Maria at Santa Barbara, is undergoing extensive rebuilding after last year's mudslides and is not available. But many of us know the Newcombe Center from interim minister trainings held there. It's a lovely facility with a swimming pool, plus condo units that each offer two spacious bedrooms, a common living room, fireplace, kitchen and deck. *CONTINUED! See more on Page 4...*



**Gathered throng,
Fall 2018 UURMaPA
Conference, Attleboro, MA.**

(See more pix from and a summary of our recent gathering in the centerfold, Pages 8-9.)



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Contact info for all the folks above can be found in the most current online Directory under **Publications** at www.uurmapa.org (password: WISDOM).

EDITORIAL NOTES — *Out of the Depths*

Really Ripe Elderberries (as in: archived on the website)

by **DUANE H. FICKEISEN**, *Webmaster*

Did you know that **MAX KAPP** (1904-1979), Dean at the Theological School of St. Lawrence University in the 1950s and 60s, published a journal called *The Elder Churchman* from 1969-1977? (Copies are available at Andover-Harvard Theological Library, bMS 1195, Box 7.) It was underwritten by the UUA's Council on Church Staff Finances and distributed as part of the regular mailing to fellowshiped ministers. **Kapp** is also credited with helping to set in motion the next iteration of a journal for retired UU clergy, i.e., *Elderberries*. (See *Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*: uudb.org/articles/maxkapp.html).

A complete archive of *Elderberries*—from the first issue in 1985 to the most recent—is now available for browsing on the Publications tab at uurmapa.org, and is entirely funded by your voluntary dues. I found it fascinating to glance at the past as I scanned the back issues in order to post them.

The first issue actually pre-dated the establishment of UURMaPA and was a call to organize what was initially named the *UU Retired Ministers Association*. Although partners were welcome in the organization, they were not explicitly included in the name until some years later (as the “aP” in UURMaPA).

The typical published content has not changed all that much: notices and news of conferences and gatherings, organizational business, practical advice on finances and other matters of interest as we age, editors' columns, and news of members, along with bad jokes and short quips. The newsletter was printed in black and white until the first use of color appeared in 2005. (Currently mailed copies are in black and white, but color versions are posted on the website—and worth a look!)

There was an ongoing debate about publishing death notices, with one early editor commenting that he was avoiding doing so after many members complained that it was “too morbid.” Later, simple lists of names and death dates were printed, sometimes with the names of surviving partners. Happily, at least from my perspective, we now honor the memories of deceased partners and ministers with brief published obituaries in *Elderberries*, which are also posted on the website (often in more complete versions).

A special thanks to **SUE NICHOLS** and **DOE LOCKWOOD**, both of whom responded to the call for missing back issues of *Elderberries* and sent copies from their files, which filled out the set. The original paper copies are now archived at the Andover Harvard Library. There were a couple of times when apparently no issue was published, due to accidental injury, illness, or death of family members of the editors. I believe the archive now includes copies of all of the published issues.



BARBARA CHILD, MARNI HARMONY, DAVE HUNTER, GINGER LUKE,
DIANE MILLER, ART & CATHIE SEVERANCE, JACO B TEN HOVE, JUDY WELLES

This *Elderberries* collection provides a window on the history of our organization, with sometimes stirring glimpses at the lives and interests of colleagues and partners both departed and still among us. Take a gander and enjoy the memories.

Montage created by
DUANE FICKEISEN

President's Column

“Are We Ready?”

Right after the Collegial Conversation that Diane Miller and I facilitated at Ministry Days last summer, something very important happened.

Cheryl M. Walker, the current President of the UUMA, approached me and asked, “How many ministers of color are there in UURMaPA?” I told her I didn’t know, but I suspected it was quite low, reminding her that UURMaPA reflects what our ministry used to look like ten or twenty years ago.

“Well, are you ready for us?” she continued. “Because we’re coming!”

I took this conversation very seriously, and have been considering it ever since. Is UURMaPA ready for more of our colleagues of color as they move into retirement? What would “ready” even look like? How would we know if we were ready?

I suggested to the Board that we spend a portion of every monthly meeting considering Cheryl’s question by reading and discussing a chapter from *Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity and Power in Ministry*, published by Skinner House and edited by our colleague Mitra Rahnema.

Our conversations, which began last summer, are led by a different Board member in turn, and barely scratch the surface of all that we need to learn to be truly welcoming, but they are still helpful and meaningful. The essays in this significant book have been written by our colleagues—people who will hopefully be joining the ranks of the retired at some point in the future.

Reflecting on the courageous and often heartbreaking stories they tell—about having their abilities questioned, about knowing they were asked to take on a responsibility so that a “diversity” box could be checked, about always feeling “other” in the midst of the normal human need to belong—this has been a sad and important task. I have known for a long time that Unitarian Universalism is a predominantly

white denomination, but until reading this book I didn’t grasp the burden that our sisters and brothers of color have carried to help us white people feel better about ourselves.

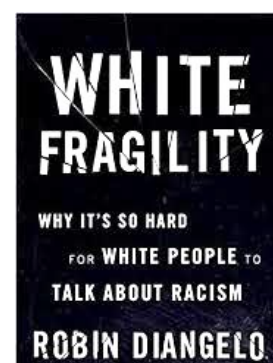
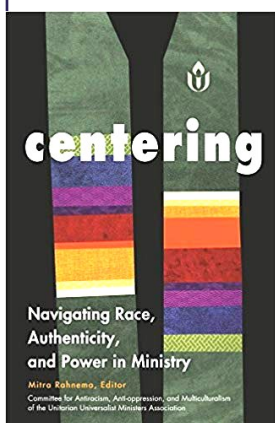
Maybe a next step will be to read Robin DiAngelo’s book, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. In a recent NPR interview, DiAngelo spoke of white progressives who think of themselves as “woke,” and who therefore won’t engage in the conversation about racism because they don’t see themselves as part of the problem. I suspect this applies to lots of us within Unitarian Universalism, retired or not, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that some of us have that some of us have worked on AR/AO/MC issues for years.

In February the Board will have an opportunity to meet in person for parts of three days. We think we’d like to spend a chunk of that time considering in more depth the question of how we can be most welcoming to the ministers and partners of color who will soon be joining the ranks of the retired (as well as the ones already retired). We’re also sending out feelers to some highly recommended anti-racism trainers, in the hope that someone might be able to come to Texas to help us explore this issue more deeply.

But one thing has already become clear to me, even in the short period of time that the Board has engaged with this issue: we aren’t going to be “ready” to welcome more colleagues of color until we comprehend more deeply the realities that they face every day, and the ways that well-meaning white people have been shaped by the forces of racism that are embedded and infused in our culture. We may be retired, but we still have a lot to learn.



JUDY WELLES





UU RAINBOW HISTORY GATHERINGS AHEAD!



BY PHYLLIS HUBBELL — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Save the Dates!

TWO conferences sponsored by UURMaPA in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall uprising:

February 17-20, 2019

Newcombe Tennis Ranch, New Braunfels, TX
Odyssey: **THERESA NOVAK** (Fellowship 2007)

October 7-10, 2019

Wisdom House, Litchfield, CT
Odyssey: **MARK BELLETINI** (Fellowship 1977)

SEARCHING FOR STORIES

Help us find more UUs—both LGBTQIA folks and allies—who can share firsthand experiences of Rainbow History years, such as:

- the early years when ministerial fellowship was withheld from LGBTQIA UUs;*
- when same gender marriage was hardly a dream;*
- when congregations would not consider calling someone who identified as lesbian or gay, let alone bisexual, transgender or any of the other identities or orientations that we are still only beginning to recognize;*
- the AIDS years, when some of our groups were in a constant state of mourning;*
- and more recently when our groups became Welcoming Congregations and many marched and testified on behalf of equality for all.*

We are seeking to draw on the broadest possible range of experiences; we're especially interested in stories from people of color, those with disabilities, from the BTQIA community, and from various class or geographic locations.

Have stories or memories to share at a 2019 event? Contact **PHYLLIS HUBBELL**, Conference Program Planner: 410-916-6680 or phubbell@uuma.org.

Have stories, sermons, or memorabilia you would like to contribute to the UU History Project? Contact **DOROTHY EMERSON**, Project Coordinator: 339-206-0829 or revemerson@uurainbowhistory.net.

We enticed **KEITH KRON** to be our keynote speaker at Newcombe Ranch in February at least in small part because of the promise of winter tennis, but he, too, has been committed to this project since the first time we spoke about it a year ago. Keith will also be keynoter at the Fall 2019 gathering, though all the other presenters will be different.

We'll have two panels at each conference. In February for the ministers panel we are fortunate to have **BARBARA PESCAN**, **GRETCHEN WOODS**, **MEG RILEY** and **JAY DEACON** coming to Texas. Barbara, Jay and Gretchen have retired from long careers in UU ministry and can share some stories from the early days. Meg is still working, but has been in ministry a long time, including several years as the first full-time Director of the UUA Office of Bi-sexual, Gay & Lesbian Concerns.

Our second panel in February will be made up of partners, to portray the stories of **ANN TYNDALL** (both a UU minister and **BARBARA PESCAN**'s partner), **JUDY FINDHOLM** (partner of **GRETCHEN WOODS**), and **ANN SPATOLA** (partner of **THERESA NOVAK**). In addition, a videographer will be on hand (for both 2019 conferences) to film stories from any who would like to be part of this historical record, whether they are ministers or partners.

We plan a very special pair of "In Memoriam" services that will include our more traditional service honoring those who have died in the past year, along with a time of remembering deceased LGBTQIA ministers over the years. Of course, there will also be programs on different topics on the second full day, and we are planning (for the first time, that I know of) a "Very Wide" Variety show.

REGISTRATION

for each of the 2019 conferences is open to ALL ministers and partners of retirement age, *UURMaPA members or not*.

You can pull up and print a registration form at this link:

uurmapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Registration-for-TX-REV.pdf.

For questions regarding accessibility issues, or to express interest in shared shuttle arrangements from San Antonio

International Airport, contact

LOIS WESENER, Registrar, at 414-963-9590 (landline) or loisw99@hotmail.com.

By DOROTHY EMERSON
*UU Rainbow History
Project Coordinator*



*With support of the UU Funding Program, UURMaPA has hired retired minister, author and historian **DOROTHY EMERSON** on a part-time basis to help collect and publish material about the UU transformation toward LGBTQIA rights.*

She will draw from both the 2019 conferences and from members of UURMaPA and others. Dorothy has created and directed several similar projects, including the UU Women's Heritage Society and the Margaret Fuller Bicentennial.

Her goal then and now is to cast a wide net and find ways for everyone to contribute from their interests and resources.

Graphic designer **Daniel Quasar** has added a five-colored chevron to the **LGBT Rainbow Flag** www.dezeen.com/tag/lgbt/ This places a greater emphasis on "inclusion and progression." The flag includes black and brown stripes to represent marginalized LGBT communities of color, along with the colors pink, light blue and white, which are used on the Transgender Pride Flag.



UU RAINBOW HISTORY IS YOU

Do you think of yourself as part of history? Especially if you are a minister or partner, you witnessed an amazing cultural shift over the past 50 years. What was your role? These are questions the newly created *Unitarian Universalist Rainbow History Project* wants you to contemplate. What was your role in the movement towards greater acceptance, inclusion, and celebration of LGBTQIA folk in our UU faith communities?

Thanks to UURMaPA, the UU Funding Program, and private donations, we now have a mechanism to share our memories and reflect on the remarkable transformation of the UUA into a welcoming and affirming faith for people of all relationship choices and gender expressions. What we discern and discover as we remember our roles in this cultural shift and share our stories can now become part of the *UU Rainbow History Project*.

If we don't tell our own stories, our voices will be missing from the historical record. So please don't be invisible. You are already part of this history. Now your part in this history can be remembered as well.

Beginning with a website—www.uurainbowhistory.net (currently under development)—and two conferences, the *UU Rainbow History Project* will collect and share stories, memorabilia, and historical artifacts from those who lived this history—either as LGBTQIA folk or as allies. What we collect will become a book and eventually be held in the UURMaPA archives at the Andover-Harvard Library.

Please take time to consider your role on this long road to equality. Look around and see if you have sermons, press releases, articles, flyers, conference materials, photos, and other things that might help us document this important time in our shared history. If you are willing to be recorded, a professional videographer will be available at the 2019 conferences, or you can make your own video using a smart phone. You may also write reflections on how you became involved in the struggle for LGBTQIA rights and inclusion and your role in moving this process forward.

I've agreed to take on the role of Coordinator of this project, but it will only be successful if many of you share your stories and contribute what you discover. If some of you could volunteer to help, we will accomplish even

more. Please contact me—revemerson@uurainbowhistory.net or 339-206-0829—and let me know what you would like to contribute to this remarkable story of how we became leaders in the movement for LGBTQIA rights and how we changed ourselves in the process.

WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY?

Writing as a Spiritual Discipline

by GAIL COLLINS-RANADIVE

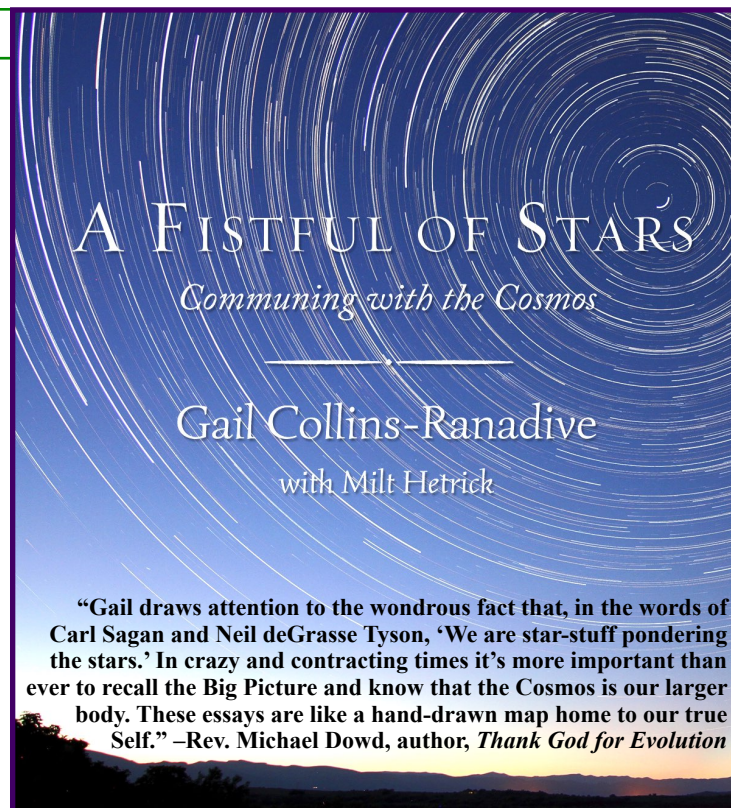
In the tradition of our Transcendentalist forebears, writing is my spiritual discipline. Setting pen to paper is how I make sense of both inner and outer worlds, to help integrate and clarify insights and experiences. Then sometimes, after a long period of incubation, this process produces a product. And a publishable book comes forth.

My books usually include writing exercises for reader reflection. For instance, *Finding the Voice Inside, Writing as a Spiritual Quest for Women* grew out of writing exercises I created for women in my home congregation as part of my M.F.A. internship project, for which I processed women's studies coursework materials and integrated my own personal life experiences. The resultant "product" was published with the proceeds from the UU Women's Federation Feminist Theology Award back in 1991. Picked up by Skinner House Books in 1993, it enjoyed a twenty-five year run on their list.

Meanwhile, I attended Starr King School and began a career mostly in interim ministry. In each congregation, I offered a writing workshop I called Seminarium (which draws on the root of "seminary" that means "seed-plot, garden, nursery," and reflects growing one's life work from inside out). One group of congregants has been meeting weekly and writing together since 2001! As soon as I retired in 2009, I pulled these exercises together and self-published *Light Year, A Seasonal Primer for Spiritual Focus*.

Next, my relationship with the Las Vegas landscape found its voice and form in *Chewing Sand, An Eco-Spiritual Taste of the Mojave Desert*. A small press, Homebound Publications, published it in 2014.

In 2016 the same press published *Nature's Calling, the Grace of Place*, in which I try to share what each of my interim ministry locations (NV, VT, CO, AZ, SC, ME)



taught me and my nature-based spirit. It includes writing exercises for reflection on taking nature as spiritual text.

Along the way, in 2005 I self-published *Inner Canyon, Where Deep Time Meets Sacred Space*, an account of my part-time sabbatical on the south rim of the Grand Canyon.

Now it is with graced amazement that I mention my newest book, *A Fistful of Stars, Communing with the Cosmos*. Composed in consultation with my “rocket scientist” partner Milt Hetrick, it grew out of nearly twenty years studying the emerging new Universe Story and sharing insights with various congregations via sermons and workshops. It also has writing exercises for reader participation as an addendum.

Meanwhile, I write a twice-yearly environmental column in *The Wayfarer*, a literary journal put out by Homebound Publications. Now on the Homebound board, I will co-sponsor The Prism Prize for Climate Literature, to be launched on my 75th birthday (Feb. 2019). *Heads up, all you climate activists out there: pull out your pens and write your story for us.*

My own current writing process/project is also about the climate crisis, and it's projected to appear in 2020. Yes, I suspect there are still more books incubating in my psyche.



Buckle Your Seatbelts!

(Upcoming Bylaw Changes)

By JUDY WELLES, President

In an attempt to stay current, your UURMaPA Board has been reviewing our Bylaws, and has **TWO** changes to recommend. In order to give our members time to review the language, the Board will make a final decision at its first meeting in 2019 (January 16). Comments and corrections may be sent to the Board Secretary, BARBARA CHILD, at secretary@uurmapa.org before that date.



The process for amending the Bylaws:

ARTICLE VI—AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of the Board in the following manner: the Board proposes an amendment; it is circulated to the membership so that members can send comments and/or corrections to the Secretary; an official Board vote will be taken on the amendment no sooner than 30 days after it is published.

- 1) Although there is a section on Membership, there is no provision in our Bylaws for removal of a member. That seems like an oversight, and it would be good practice for us to take care of that omission. The relevant sections of the Bylaws follow, with the proposed changes in **bold**:

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

All ministers in fellowship with the UUA classified by the Association as retired who have formally announced their intention to retire, their life partners, and the life partners of deceased Unitarian Universalist ministers, as well as all ministers granted life membership by the UUMA and their life partners, shall be members of this organization. Other persons may become members by application to, and approval by, a majority of the Board.

The Board, at its discretion, may remove from membership a minister whose ministerial fellowship has been terminated by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, a minister who voluntarily resigns from ministerial fellowship during a Fellowship Review, or a minister removed from membership in the UU Ministers Association. A minister under consideration for removal from membership will be given notice and the opportunity to respond. The removal of a minister under this provision shall not affect the membership status of that minister's partner.

- 2) Our Nominating Committee (**DICK GILBERT**, Chair) has requested that that committee be expanded from three members to five, to provide broader knowledge of our constituency and of the possibilities for service from retired colleagues. Further, in current practice if someone drops off the committee or is unable to attend a meeting, it is left with only two members. The proposed Bylaws change reads as follows:

ARTICLE V - ELECTIONS, SECTION 1

*The officers, three Members-at-large, and a Nominating Committee, consisting of a chair and ~~two~~ **four** others, shall be elected by the members. The President, the Vice President, the Connections Network Chair, two Members-at large, ~~and~~ the Chair of the Nominating Committee, **and one member of the Nominating Committee** shall be elected in odd-numbered years. The Secretary, the Treasurer, the Newsletter Editor, one Member-at-large, and ~~two~~ **three** members of the Nominating Committee, shall be elected in even-numbered years.*

We welcome your thoughts and comments about these proposed changes.

Final wording will be published in the Winter, 2019, *Elderberries*, out in February.

UURMaPA CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP FORMING

Based on the success of workshops at the 2017 and 2018 Fall conferences, SYLVIA HOWE has offered to convene a UURMaPA Caregiver Support Group using the online program Zoom. This is a group for both partners and ministers who are caregivers or care partners.

Zoom* groups set their own frequency and schedules based on the participants.

If you would like to take part, contact SYLVIA at sylhowe42@gmail.com.

*Zoom is an on-line technology similar to Face Time and Skype, but better. Download the app for free: <https://zoom.us>. It enables the participants to see and hear each other using a tablet, computer, or phone with camera.

FALL RETREAT REPORT

“I’m so glad you’re here! How many years...?”

By **NANCEE CAMPBELL**

This type of greeting, followed by hugs, laughter and occasional tears of joy, was a repeated scene at the 2018 UURMaPA fall retreat in Attleboro, MA, October 1-4. Old friends reconnecting, meeting folks you’d only heard about, hearing stories from new friends you’ll always remember—these were some highlights of this UURMaPA conference (and most others, too), as indicated on more than 50 evaluations. There were also well attended social hours, buzzing with fond conversations, plus plenty of opportunities to take a nap if you wanted to.

The first evening we all gathered for our traditional Service of Remembrance, led by **WAYNE ARNASON**. The sacred aura of the chapel was palpable as names were read aloud of our colleagues who had died in the past year. That tone continued for daily worship services, led by **ART and CATHY SEVERANCE, CAROL HEPOKOSKI and BETH MILLER**.

Our program discussion focused on the book, *What Are Old People For?* by Dr. William Thomas, and all the registrants were sent the book prior to the conference. His colleague Kyrie Carpenter led the conversation about that theme and society’s attitude toward aging. She reminded us that “Ageism hurts people but supports corporations” and “We are more than our memory or our physical limitations.” That evening we were absorbed in an Odyssey shared by **SYLVIA HOWE and PAUL L’HERROU**.

A sub-group went on a guided tour of famous UU sites in Concord, led by **LIZ STRONG**. (See more next page.) There was also a fascinating session on transitioning from ministry into retirement. Both ministers and partners offered their experiences, and we were enriched by hearing from **CARL SCOVEL, DON CHERY, BARBARA CHILD and KATHLEEN HUNTER**.

We heard about the Targeted Ministry Program* and activities at the UUMA. There were small group learning opportunities, moments to catch up with seminary buddies, take a walk, dance, share story-telling, and did I mention time to nap? Who could ask for anything more?



Odysseyants **SYLVIA HOWE and PAUL L’HERROU**

Attendance at our UURMaPA conferences is increasing, and the next one is near San Antonio, Texas, February 17-20. (See more elsewhere in this issue of *Elderberries*.) During 2019 we will be honoring the 50th anniversary of Stonewall, and both conferences will feature the UUA’s journey toward LGBTQ+ rights. *Hope to see you there!*

Gratitude to **ELEANOR RICHARDSON and KERRY MUELLER** for their photos from Attleboro!

*Targeted Ministry Program UPDATE

There’s still time and a few spots left for interested ministers to join the Targeted Ministry Program when it unfolds just ahead of the February UURMaPA gathering in Texas. This one-day training will look at how retired ministers can serve our congregations for short-term periods in times of need and crises. For an application or more info, email transitions@uua.org soon.

From the Attleboro Conference, a group of intrepid UURMaPAns sojourned up to **Concord, MA**, to visit various historic sites, such as Emerson's family plot (right) and the **Old Manse**, pictured below, which features:

EMERSON & HAWTHORNE'S STUDY

In 1834, after the death of his first wife, Ellen, and his return from a healing trip to Europe, **Ralph Waldo Emerson** stayed with his aging step-grandfather and other family members at the **Old Manse** (which had been built by



Emerson's grandfather in 1774). In a **green writing chair (below, left)**, Emerson wrote in his journal and composed his first book, *Nature*, published in 1836. (The chair pictured is a reproduction of the original, which is in the Concord Museum.)

In 1842, **Nathaniel Hawthorne** and his bride, Sophia Peabody, rented the Old Manse for three years (at \$100/year) as he started *his* writing career **at this desk (below, right)** in the same study. While there Hawthorne wrote a tribute to the homestead called *Mosses from an Old Manse*. One can view affectionate poems etched by the newlyweds into the room's windowpanes using her diamond. Imagine the creative energy in that one room! *Thanks to Art Severance*



for contributing to the text and providing the study photos.



Emerson's uncarved gravestone, on Authors' Ridge in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Concord, MA

"Being a man of comfortable means, Emerson could afford a large freestanding marker. But rather than using a conventional tombstone, he marked the spot with a giant boulder, identified as his grave by a small bronze plaque affixed to the rock. Needless to say, it is a surprising sight—and not an entirely harmonious one... Still, whether one finds Emerson's tombstone beautiful, arrogant, self-indulgent, ridiculous, or merely strange, one cannot deny that it makes a striking statement.

"But there is one significant complication in the statement—or rather, one element in the picture that, when we notice it, subtly complicates the overall effect. Emerson's grand and scruffy self-representation is flanked by two much smaller tombstones marking the graves of his wife Lidia and daughter Ellen. The two stones are identical in size, symmetrically placed, absolutely conventional in their shapes and engravings."

Read more, if you dare, in a long article that discusses the stones' relationship in light of an historical "constrained individuality":

www.firstthings.com/article/1998/05/mr-emersons-tombstone. —Ed.

More pix from our Fall 2018 UURMaPA Conference



ART SEVERANCE, leading worship



First Timers at a UURMaPA Conference: **HELEN Z, TOM W, DIANE M, WAYNE A, MARCEL D, ELLIE D, KATE R, DAVID C**



JANET TILLMAN, enjoying the "Pinch Pot" workshop

From the UUA Office of Church Staff Finances

As You Prepare Your 2018 Taxes

By RICHARD NUGENT, Director

Much was written last spring about the sweeping changes made by the 2017 "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act." As you prepare your 2018 taxes, please be sure to review these changes to ensure you file an accurate tax return. A thorough summary of the tax law changes isn't possible here, but a few highlights are noted below.

• **Tax Brackets are Lowered**

Previously, taxpayers fell into one of seven brackets, depending on their **taxable income**: 10%, 15%, 25%, 28%, 33%, 35% or 39.6% (although few at the upper ranges actually paid those percentages). Under the new tax law, these are 10%, 12%, 22%, 24%, 32%, 35%, and 37%. *Most retirees fall within the first two brackets.* Some may see their taxes actually rise, while others will see a slight drop in taxes owed depending on their Adjusted Gross Income.

• **Standard Deduction vs. Caps on State and Local Taxation**

The standard deduction nearly doubled to \$12,000 for singles (\$24,000 for married couples filing jointly). Taxpayers 65 and up can claim an extra standard deduction of \$1,600 for single filers and \$2,600 for married couples who are both at least 65 and filing jointly.

While this is great for those who do not itemize, the news isn't so great for those who do, particularly those residing in high cost-of-living locations. Taxpayers will discover a new combined cap of \$10,000 for local income taxes, sales taxes, and property taxes, which were all fully deductible under the old tax law.

There are also limits on how much interest homeowners can deduct on new mortgages. Only interest on the first \$750K of mortgage debt is deductible. See more: *Is Now the Time to Pay Down Your Mortgage?*:

www.aarp.org/money/investing/info-2018/tax-law-pay-down-mortgage.html



• **Personal Exemptions**

The Personal Exemption deduction (\$4,050 in 2017) was eliminated by the new tax law.

• **Medical Expenses**

The new tax law restores the deduction for unreimbursed medical expenses—if you continue to itemize—to 7.5% of Adjusted Gross Income (from 10.0%). This is particularly helpful for individuals/couples with large out-of-pocket medical expenses, including expenses associated with nursing home care.

• **Clergy Housing Exclusion**

Retired clergy should remember that under current clergy-tax-treatment regulations, the qualifying amount you place on Form 1040, line 16b, "Pensions and Annuities" (and which you need to be prepared to substantiate, if questioned by the IRS) directly reduces your taxable income. The amount that can be excluded remains the LOWER of actual expenses or the Fair Rental Value of your residence plus utilities and furnishings. For those newly retired in 2017, you'll find that the Office of Church Staff Finances sends a letter out in January to all retired ministers (who took distributions from the UU Organizations Retirement Plan during the year) explaining what can be excluded.

• **Housing Allowance Lawsuit UPDATE**

Not much new since my article on this important subject in the Summer *Elderberries*. A three-judge panel of the Federal 7th Circuit heard oral arguments on October 24 on the appeal of the District Court decision declaring the Clergy Housing Exclusion unconstitutional. A decision by the Federal Appellate Court is expected in early 2019 with an appeal likely to the U.S. Supreme Court. If the lower court decision is eventually upheld, retired ministers will have to start paying taxes on distributions from their UU Organizations Retirement account. It is impossible to predict the outcome of this litigation.

As you endeavor to calculate your 2018 federal income tax, please take the time to understand the changes outlined here and other changes. In addition to your own tax advisors, organizations like AARP will be providing resources to help retirees complete their 2018 taxes. IRS Publication 554, "Tax Guide for Seniors," is also an excellent resource.

NOTE: Federal law mandates that UU Retirement Plan participants begin to receive a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) no later than the **April 1 following the calendar year after becoming 70½ or retiring**, whichever is **later**. The amount of a participant's RMD is available from TIAA. Participants please call TIAA at 800-842-2829 to request information or to initiate the RMD or Recurring RMD.

—From Linda Rose, Director, UU Organizations Retirement Plan

BECAUSE YOUR SERVICE IS VALUED

A Notable Funding Opportunity!

From **KIRK LOADMAN-COPELAND**

In just over one year, the **Ryder Fund** of the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Conference has provided grants in excess of \$40,000. Ministers and/or their partners can submit a grant for financial support, as outlined below.

William Henry Ryder, a leading 19th century Universalist minister and philanthropist, knew the challenges of ministry, especially when ministers retire and face financial hurdles. So he created a bequest, now administered by the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Conference, to provide grants to ministers and their partners in times of need.

Examples of grant purposes include:

Hearing aids	Medical expenses
Rent assistance	Utility or food subsidy
Funeral expenses	Personal care assistance

Grants can be used to reimburse expenses recently incurred or to fund pending expenditures. They are, however, limited to discrete, one-time requests, not ongoing support. Grants will be made based on need. Individuals can expect a decision on their application within 4 to 6 weeks. Please know that all grant requests are confidential.

To apply, send an email with the following information to RyderFund@gmail.com or mail to:

The Ryder Fund, c/o MidAmerica Region
2355 Fairview Ave. N., #312, Roseville, MN 55113.

- ★ Applicant's name (If not a minister, the minister's name to whom you are related) Name of person submitting application if not the applicant
- ★ Address, telephone # and email address
- ★ Date of birth
- ★ List of congregations/organizations served, including location and dates
- ★ An explanation of the use of the grant
- ★ The amount being requested
- ★ A quote or a bill to support that amount
- ★ An explanation of when money is needed and any other fund sources being requested
- ★ Any other relevant information that will support your application

Grant awards vary based on the availability of funds, with typical ones ranging between \$500 and \$2,000. Some have exceeded \$3,000. If a grant cannot fund the total request, a smaller amount can be distributed to help fund the total need.

*"A grant from the **Ryder Fund** helped me get hearing aids, which have improved the quality of my relationships, especially with my grandchildren; increased my enjoyment of sounds in nature; and improved my ability to serve as a Transitions Coach to congregations. The application was easy, the decision was made quickly, and a check soon followed. I'm very grateful!"*

—DUANE FICKEISEN

IMMORTALITY

Seek ye immortality? Live life then as if...
 as if love and the good were its own reward
 as if there were no heaven or hell
 as if we mattered to the world
 as if it was up to you to help others
 as if the universe depended on you
 as if you would die tomorrow,
 And your life will be so full
 that those who you have loved
 who have loved you
 will be your immortality,
 And you will live on long past
 The tomorrow of death.
 Seek ye immortality?
 Love life and life will love you.
 Live life then as if...
 as if you would never die.

—A. SEVERANCE



Next Nominations for UURMaPA Board

From **DICK GILBERT**, Nominating Committee Chair
585-244-7403; 585-738-8229 or Rsgilbert@uuma.org

Members: **BARBARA WELLS TEN HOVE & WAYNE ARNASON**

Your Nominating Committee is soliciting names for election to the UURMaPA Board. The Committee will recommend names for open positions, seeking to keep a balance (ministers/partners; gender) and to maintain geographic and other kinds of diversity.

All nominations are for two-year terms, limited to two terms in any one position. (No person may serve on the Board for more than six consecutive years.) Some current members of the Board are eligible for re-election.

The slate of nominees will be posted on UURMaPA-Announce, our e-mail list for official business, and in the Winter *Elderberries*. If no other nominations are submitted to the Nominating Committee Chair for any position by April 1, the slate is considered elected and begins serving on July 1, 2019.

Positions to be filled are President, Vice-President, Connections Network Chair, plus two Members-at-Large and Chair of the Nominating Committee. See a list of the current members of the Board early in this issue of *Elderberries* and on the UURMaPA website under "Governance" (uurmapa.org/governance), plus Board job descriptions (under Governance, click on Operating Procedures, then

DIRECTORY UPDATES NEEDED!

Please send any changes in your address, phone or e-mail to: **Richard Speck—**
membership@uurmapa.org or
 4721 Mermaid Blvd., Wilmington, DE 19808-1803.

If you learn of the death of a minister or partner, please let us know at **board@uurmapa.org**. (We especially need word of partner deaths, since the UUA does not track and send death notices about partners as they do ministers.)

Longer versions of all obituaries can eventually be found on the UURMaPA web site at **https://uurmapa.org/obituaries/**. (No password is necessary to access this page.)

Many thanks to **JAY ATKINSON & ROGER ROCHESTER** for their careful researching and writing of ministers and partners obituaries, respectively.

IN MEMORIAM**JULIE DENNY-HUGHES (1946 – 2016)**

The Reverend Julie Denny-Hughes, parish minister, steady advocate for social justice, lover of humor and music, died on 14 October 2016 at the age of 70.

Julie Ann Denny was born on 4 April 1946 to Helen Pentzer Denny and Morris Duane Denny and grew up in Bedford, Indiana. Music was central in Julie's childhood as she joined her older siblings in backyard musical productions, showing the creativity and free-spirited independence that guided her throughout life. Later, at Bedford High School, performance with the Madrigal Singers was her favorite among numerous clubs and activities. After earning a B.A. in American literature from the University of Illinois in 1972, she worked for twenty years in the computer software industry as a technical writer, trainer, and independent consultant.

Julie found Unitarian Universalism in 1978 at the UU Congregation of Princeton (NJ), where she became an active member and led the congregation's first "Cakes for the Queen of Heaven" course. Eventually the call to ministry led her to Meadville Lombard Theological School where she received her M.Div. in 1995, earning the school's faculty award for Excellence in Religious Leadership.

Julie was first called to the UU Community Church of Glen Allen (VA), where the membership more than doubled during her four-year ministry (1995-99). This was followed by parish service to the UU Fellowship of Raleigh (NC), Countryside Church UU, Palatine (IL), and the UU Church of Halifax (NS).

Julie is survived by her daughter Suzannah Wilson Overholt, son Phillip Earl Wilson Jr., five grandchildren, brother Marc Denny, sister Marian "Susie" Rumsey, and several nieces and nephews. A memorial service was held on 22 October 2016 at the First Christian Church in Bedford, Indiana.

**SAMUEL A. WRIGHT (1919 – 2016)**

The Reverend Sam Wright, whose love of wilderness and lifelong interest in the ecology of plants and people led him to a life of study and activism in northern Alaska, died on 24 July 2016 at the age of 97.

Samuel Anthony Wright, Jr., was born on 13 June 1919 in a mining camp in Hurley, New Mexico. He studied biology at the University of New Mexico while concurrently working on the Manhattan Project and teaching genetics at University of El Paso (TX). In 1948 he moved with his spouse Jean and three young children to Cloverdale, California, where he served a weekend ministry at the First Congregational Church and spent weekdays in Berkeley for ministerial study at Starr King School.

In 1950 Mr. Wright received his B.D., accepted a call to the Unitarian Church of Stockton (CA), and was ordained there the same year. He left that pulpit in 1952 to direct the American Unitarian Association's youth program, during which time he wrote the hymn text, "We Would Be One." Called back to parish ministry in 1954 at the Marin Fellowship of Unitarians in San Rafael (CA), he served there until 1961 and then joined the core faculty at Starr King. Sam spent a 1968 sabbatical hiking in Alaska and soon resigned his position at Starr King for a move to wild Alaska.

He helped establish UU fellowships in Anchorage and Fairbanks, and served interim ministries in San Antonio, Long Beach, Tulsa, Palo Alto, Fresno, Auburn (CA), Reno (NV). After a return to the Marin Fellowship, he was named minister emeritus there in 1989. But summers always meant retreat to his Alaska cabin for reconnection and renewal.

Sam Wright is survived by his third spouse, Donna Lee, four children, Patricia, Chip, Roberta, and Bill, plus stepchildren, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.



HOLLIS HUSTON (1947 – 2018)

IN MEMORIAM

Hollis Huston, spouse of the Reverend Carol Huston, died peacefully at home in his Manhattan (NY) apartment on 2 August 2018. With him during his last days were spouse Carol, daughters Vanessa & Linnea, and Linnea's fiancé Scott Will. He is also survived by his mother, Annie Laura Cotten, sisters Becca and Laura, and nephew and nieces.

He was born on 10 April 1947, in Durham, North Carolina, but his family relocated frequently during his youth. After attending Loomis School in Windsor, Connecticut, he attended Oberlin College (OH) and graduated with honors in June 1968. He then earned a Master's Degree in Theatre from Tufts University (MA) and a Ph.D. from Ohio State University.

Hollis and Carol were married in 1968. Carol pursued careers as a teacher and a Unitarian Universalist minister. Hollis taught acting and theater courses at several universities, and was also active as a producer, director, and performer.

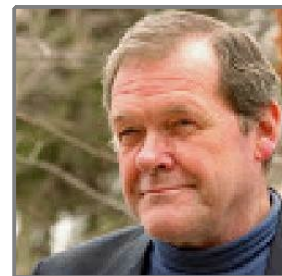
In St. Louis, he founded the Holy Roman Repertory Company. (*"Not holy, not Roman, just damn good radio."*) In collaboration with others, he produced radio programs featuring performances of historical writings and music. The programs were recorded live and then broadcast on National Public Radio.

After moving to metro New York, where Carol served as minister of Community Unitarian Church in White Plains, Hollis followed his own call. He earned a Masters of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary (NY) in 2006, and even before graduation he began work as a hospice chaplain. He is fondly remembered for his 13 years of chaplaincy through early April 2018. He also preached at local UU churches and maintained a blog entitled, "The Next Circle"—nextcircle.blogspot.com/.

Hollis had been treated for prostate cancer in 2007, but his symptoms reappeared in 2015. He was able to keep working, reading and writing, but the disease worsened in 2018. He fractured his hip at the end of May, which led to hospitalization and rehab. In late July, he returned home for hospice care.

Memorial donations are encouraged to the Living Legacy Scholarship Fund, which supports participation of people with limited funds in a Pilgrimage to Civil Rights Movement sites. Send contributions to John W. Harris, Treasurer, 9050 Fathers Legacy Unit 253, Ellicott City, MD 21042-5195.

Notes of condolence can be sent to Carol Huston, revcarol@earthlink.net or 940 St. Nicholas Ave SE, New York, NY 10032.



JOHN S. GILBERT (1931 – 2016)

The Reverend Dr. John Gilbert, parish minister, gardener, storyteller, and lover of poetry, died on 28 June 2016 at the age of 84.

Friends and colleagues remember John for his love of words, books, cooking, and for growing vegetables (garlic, tomatoes, potatoes) and flowers (hollyhocks, sunflowers amaryllis). He was a war objector, conscientious (Korea) and otherwise. Other enthusiasms included calligraphy, drawing, origami, string figures, computer correspondences, drawing, word puzzles, trekking, pole-walking, biking, and baking bread.

John Stout Gilbert was born on 10 December 1931 to John Wendell Gilbert and Lula Mae Gilbert on a small family farm in Russiaville, Indiana. From Quaker beginnings, John found the Unitarian church in the late 1950s when he and spouse Nancy sought religious community for their young family. He became an active lay leader, earned a B.S. at UWisc-Milwaukee (WI), worked as a teacher and employment counselor, and eventually answered a call to ministry, completing work for a D.Min. from Meadville Lombard Theological School in 1977.

Mr. Gilbert was ordained in 1976 by the Unitarian Church West of Brookfield (WI) and was settled in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for ten years. A series of shorter ministries took him to Toronto (Ontario), Charlotte (NC), and the First UU Church of Rochester (MN), where he was elected Minister Emeritus upon his departure in 1992. Afterward he continued parish service with the UU Church of Meadville (PA) from 1992 to 1996.

John is survived by siblings Jane Hendrickson, Marge Lake Baurley, and Joe Gilbert, children Victoria, Bart, and Sarah, and four grandchildren.

Memorial donations are encouraged to Friends of the Library, Multnomah County, 919 SW Taylor Street, Suite 220, Portland, OR 97205, or via the following link: www.friends-library.org/donate/#!/form/Donate.

Notes of condolences may be sent to his daughter, Victoria Gilbert, 2832 SE Salmon St., Portland, OR 97214.



IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM CLINTON SAUNDERS (1945 – 2018)



The Reverend Dr. Will Saunders, parish minister and college instructor, died on 26 June 2018 at the age of 73 after living with cancer for several years. He is remembered for his sparkling wit and wide-ranging scholarship.

Will spent much of his retirement traveling the world, enjoying art, theater, music, hiking, canoeing, and bicycling. Not one to withdraw from living or ministry as his cancer became more serious, Will wrote a series of extraordinarily candid “health updates,” detailing the course of his disease and treatments as well as his and his spouse Julie’s playful efforts to “Keep Cancer Fun.”

William Clinton Saunders was born on 18 March 1945 in Morristown (NJ) to Byron Winthrop and Miriam (Wise) Saunders and grew up as a Unitarian in Ithaca, New York. He was graduated from Oberlin College (OH) in 1967 with an A.B. in religion and earned his B.D. from Union Theological Seminary (NY) in 1970. During graduate work, Will was a student minister at Manhattan’s Community Church (1968-71) and then a lecturer in religious studies at Hunter College (1974-75). In 1978 he completed work for a Ph.D. in American religious thought at Columbia University (NY).

Ordained in 1972 by his childhood church, the Rev’d Mr. Saunders served called ministries at UU churches in Brunswick, Maine (1976-85) and in Urbana, Illinois (1985-95). After interim ministries in Harvard and Haverhill (MA), he was called as co-minister with then spouse Marta Flanagan to South Church, Portsmouth (NH) in 1997, and they were named emeritus/a on early retirement in 2005.

Will is survived by his second spouse, Julie Draper Saunders, sons Brynn and Peter, Julie’s sons Nicholas and Zachary Draper, sisters Martha Nabatian and Carolyn Munger, three grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was conducted by the Rev’d Dan Hotchkiss on 2 July 2018. Memorial gifts are encouraged to Planned Parenthood of Northern New England: www.ppnne.org/annualfund.



ANN CAROL SHELLEY (1930 – 2015)

Carol Shelley, widow of Reverend Harold K. Shelley, died peacefully 8 November 2015, age 84. She was born 11 December 1930 in Teaneck, New Jersey, where she was a leader in Girl Scouts, an officer in the PTA, a teacher in Sunday school and a full-time housewife.

After her first husband, Stanley U. Britten, died she moved to Haverhill Corner, New Hampshire in 1967. The next year she married Rev. Harold K. Shelley, who was minister of the nearby Keene Unitarian Universalist Church.

Carol attended Keene State College, graduating in 1973 with a bachelor’s degree in science and in 1983 with a master’s degree in education. She was the first in her family to graduate college. She was a special education teacher for 13 years at the Marlborough Elementary School, and then went on to be the special education coordinator for the Monadnock Regional School District (all NH).

Carol was active in the Keene UU Church, the Keene Senior Center, Friends of the Thorne Art Gallery, American Association of University Women, Cheshire Retired Teachers Association, NH Retired Educators Association and a member of National Organization of Women (NOW).

When Harold left Keene and began serving interim ministries in Florida, she was still employed and remained in Marlborough where she became a member of the Friends of the Frost Free Library, voter checklist supervisor and voter registrar.

Survivors include daughter Denise P. Hood (spouse Steven), son John S. Shelley (spouse Linda), sister Ellen Knatz, stepson Greg Shelley (spouse Cathy), seven grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

For those who wish, the family requests that donations be made to Patient Care Needs of Hospice, in care of Home Healthcare Hospice and Community Services, P.O. Box 564, Keene, NH 03431-0564.



IN MEMORIAM

VIRGINIA GROSS (1949 – 2018)

Ginny (Virginia) Gross, spouse of the Reverend Fritz Hudson, died 26 May 2018, age 68, at her home in Lincoln, Nebraska.



Ginny championed schooling, sports, and cultural exchange for all children. She was a passionate cook, gardener, art lover, and Chicago Cubs fan. She volunteered as an active church member, a leader at Lincoln's Fresh Start Home for Women, and a language tutor for Iraqi refugees.

She was born on 15 June 1949 to Dale and Ruby Lindquist and raised on their farm east of Cambridge, Illinois. After high school, Ginny attend Augustana College and earned her journalism degree at Northern Illinois University, where she met and married Peter Gross, a fellow student.

The couple later moved to Iowa City, Iowa, to pursue graduate studies. Ginny earned a master's degree in comparative education from the University of Iowa while directing their foreign student admissions. Her work took her to Romania, Germany, Korea, and Malaysia.

Ginny and Peter's son, Eric, was born in 1978. Their marriage ended in 1981. In 1987,

Ginny married Fritz Hudson, minister of the UU Society (Iowa City), and gave birth to their daughter, Sally, the following year.

In 1991, ministry took the family to Phoenix, Arizona, where Ginny became volunteer coordinator at John C. Lincoln Hospital. She delighted in southwestern history, culture, and terrain.

In 1998, the family returned to the Midwest, as Fritz was called to serve the Unitarian Church of Lincoln (NE). Ginny worked as director of graduate admissions at the University of Nebraska, then as women's services director of the YWCA, and training coordinator of Lincoln Literacy. She retired in 2013.

Ginny is survived by Fritz, Sally, Eric (spouse Amanda), and two grandchildren. Condolences may be sent to Fritz Hudson, 7901 Lake Street, Lincoln, NE 68506. Memorial donations are invited to Planned Parenthood of the Heartland: 5631 S. 48th St., Suite 100, Lincoln, NE 68516.



SPENCER LAVAN (1937 – 2016)

The Rev. Dr. Spencer Lavan—parish minister, scholar, seminary president, and wise, friendly, generous mentor—died on 29 September 2016 in Brunswick, Maine, at age 78, after a long decline from Parkinson's disease.

Dr. Lavan's full and varied career led him to service in the parish, the academy, community ministry, and public agencies. Students and faculty at Meadville Lombard School during his presidency there recall how Spencer and his wife Susan "took a personal interest in each of their students, creating a hospitality that drew the entire...community together" (Lee Barker).

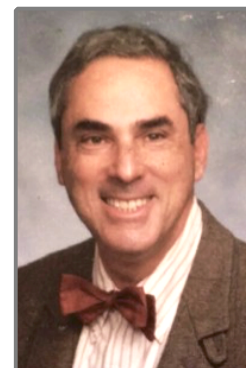
Spencer Lavan was born on 31 December 1937 to Fay and Peter Lavan in New York City. He earned a B.A. in English from Tufts University in 1959, a B.D. from Harvard Divinity School in 1962, and from McGill University (Montréal) an M.A. in Islamic studies in 1965 and a Ph.D. in comparative religions in 1970.

Ordained in 1962, Spencer served parish ministries in Charleston (SC) and Montréal, and as campus minister at McGill University during his graduate studies there. Soon thereafter he turned to academic work, first at Northeastern University (MA) for two years and then Tufts University (MA) for a decade. He organized and chaired the Department of Medical Humanities at the University of New England, Maine (1982-88) and then served Meadville Lombard Theological School as president and dean for eight years (1988-96).

Dr. Lavan received three honorary degrees and authored two scholarly books. He had a passion for teaching, enjoyed traveling, classical music, sailing, and playing the piano.

Spencer is survived by his spouse of 55 years, Susan Lavan, children Jonathan, Daniel, Timothy, and Joanna, six grandchildren, and a brother, Lawrence.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations are encouraged to Meadville Lombard Theological School: www.meadville.edu/donate/. Notes of condolence may be sent to Susan Lavan at 11 Cascos Way, Harpswell, ME 04079.





Unitarian Universalist

Retired Ministers and Partners Association

c/o Richard Speck

4721 Mermaid Blvd

Wilmington, DE 19808-1803

