



Targeted Ministry Program, Relunched!

By Keith Kron, Director of UUA Transitions Office (for almost 12 years now)

I am grateful to past UURMaPA leadership for proposing and working with the Transitions Office on what evolved into the **Targeted Ministry Program (TMP)**. This may be one of the best things to happen during my tenure in this role. I've seen congregations enjoy ministry again and I've seen the same for colleagues. I even heard a lay leader say that a TMP minister restored their faith in ministry.

It's been for simple things—like a group needing staff supervision while they had no minister on site—to more complicated situations, such as when an experienced minister comes in following a volatile negotiated ending to a difficult ministry, as well as so many moments in between. Retired colleagues have stepped up, served, and found ways to contribute significantly to our faith.

The Targeted Ministry Program was designed for congregations to be served by retired ministers for short periods of time, perhaps two or three months, full-time. Or it might be part-time, and for longer. It could be helpful when ministers go on sabbatical or take medical leave, or following endings such as negotiations, disability, or death. We are also open to creative options and needs.

The twice-a-year settlement cycle has not worked well for all groups and we are seeing a significant number of settings without ministry. Right now I have 21 congregations that are or will be looking for some kind of short-term help, whereas normally in October we have three or four.

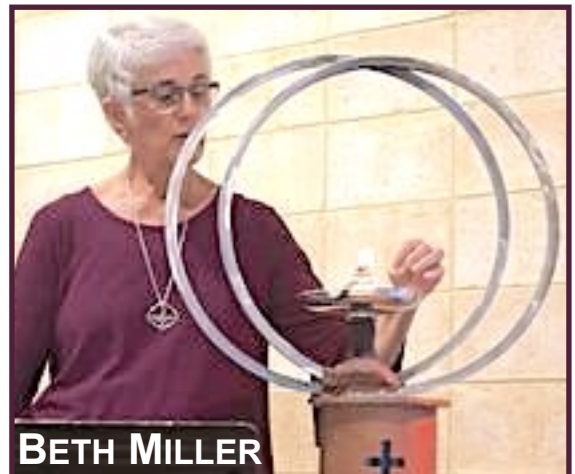
A few years back, and thanks to the UU Funding Panel, we got together a group to discuss what was possible, recruit ministers and do a two-year trial of the concept. Then the pandemic took over our lives. We got creative, as the world and its needs changed. I suspect all of this will shift again as we move forward. But demand for good ministry will remain.

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So the Transitions Office is relaunching the TMP, no longer calling it a pilot program; it has now even been included in the Transitional Ministry Handbook. *I am hereby asking again (of retirees) to let us know about your interest in serving in the TMP—even if you have offered before, and even if you're not quite ready yet.*

ALSO FEATURED INSIDE THIS ELDERBERRIES:

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BETH MILLER

Semi-retired and Embedded

One of the first participants in the Targeted Ministry Program (TMP), **BETH MILLER** has retired twice (2012 and 2017) but each time, "It turns out I still wasn't ready to be retired."

So she's done a quarter-time consulting ministry, then two of the early TMP positions (full-time in large congregations for six months each), and now she is on contract for a 3–5 year term (non-TMP) as half-time associate minister for another large church (in Sarasota FL, which Beth calls home).

For each of these placements, she moved and was "embedded" in the congregation—in contrast to the other profile in this feature, **SUE REDFERN-CAMPBELL**, who has done both her recent TMP gigs virtually (see page 5).

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President's Ponderings

Living in the mid-Atlantic area, I get to be part of what many consider to be a traditional change of seasons. While not as spectacular as the New England version, we enjoy a marked change in temperature, light, and especially color. As I write, leaves haven't really taken on their autumnal hues here, but I know winter will arrive on cue.

There are rituals that come with these seasonal changes that I look forward to, like swapping out the shorts, sleeveless t-shirts and sandals for sweaters, heavy socks and boots. My guess is that no matter where you live, the seasons of our lives also ask us to change things up from time to time.

But the stress of this transition and reordering seems exhausting, beyond what's expected. We've been swimming in "change" for so long now. As we slowly move out of total pandemic lockdown mode (in some areas), I sense more changes are just around the corner. We've been asked to adjust and readjust how we do things, over and over again—where we go, whom we see, masked or not—for so many months now. And we're not done with these changes, some of which might be more permanent than we originally thought.

That's why all those messages to "be gentle with yourself" that you may have seen floating around the internet (and if you haven't, you're hearing it here) are so important. When going through difficult times, stressed by so many things, it's easy to forget to take care of ourselves, especially as we try to be there for others.

Perhaps we've struggled with disappointment when we've been thrown a curve ball, or despair when tragically suffering loss or loneliness. Try to be compassionate with yourself; it's been a really tough time. When there's stress, anger or impatience, remember it's not just you. Keep in mind that you're not alone and in one way or another, we're all in this mess. Treat yourself with kindness, spend time doing activities you enjoy, rejoining the wider world as conditions permit.

These months haven't been ideal, and it's not what we planned. Yet we've made it this far, and in some ways we're stronger than before. As we know all too well, this is life's usual way, always inviting us to change and grow, season after season.

So as we make our way into winter—whatever that looks like for you where you live—I hope UURMaPA can be part of those warm connections that sustain you.

~Susan

- Contact info for most of the folks above can be found on the UURMaPA website www.uurmapa.org under **Governance**.
- (Directory password is WISDOM.)

EDITOR'S NOTE TO ONLINE READERS: You'll see some lines in **bold, red type**, which indicates they contain web links. I avoid familiar underlinings, since they don't translate live into a print medium and the added line can be distracting for readers. -JTH

Our Fall Conference—A Brief Review

October 18-20, 2021 By **ROSEMARIE SMURZYNSKI**

It is high praise to deem something “pitch perfect.” This Fall’s UURMaPA conference, held in the Land of Zoom, brings such praise. To create a close community on screens, which this gathering did, is remarkable. From welcoming greetings to goodbye sequence (nine programming sessions), the event succeeded.

The Fall 2021 conference drew well on shared wisdom of UU retired ministers and partners. A strong planning team selected the presenters, who left open spaces for participants to insert their own stories. In small groups and in large group responses we shared with one another, family, friends, and the world.

WE GIVE THANKS TO...

- ...Keynoter **BRUCE MARSHALL** for repeating a provocative mantra: “The New Normal: Adjusting to a New World” as he explored many consequences of that theme.
- ...**LESLIE WESTBROOK** and **ROGER FRITTS** for their tender Service of Remembrance, telling about the lives of those recently deceased by carefully crafting individual obituaries.
- ...Two Odyssey presenters, **CHARLES STEPHENS** and **KATHLEEN HUNTER**, who told their life stories in the dynamic context of the culture they lived in.
- ...Small groups facilitators (21) and participants (157), and to the topic leaders of special interest groups.
- ...UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray, for updates about how we are living in demanding times, in a new era of ministry.
- ...The UUMA Executive Team and UURMaPA Board, for offering insights on the challenges in serving us through their positions.
- ...A dedicated tech crew in the near background, peddling hard to keep the venue vehicle running smoothly amid small glitches.

As well as seeking a rich program, ministers and partners came to connect and feel the presence of one another. In that we found reassuring comfort and community. To all of us, I deem that this gathering earned the praise, “pitch perfect.” ☆ ☆

Look to the next issue of *Elderberries* for a more complete report on this event.

HAVE YOU BEEN CONSIDERING THE UUMA INSTITUTE?

January 31–February 4, 2022

A reminder from **WAYNE ARNASON**, UURMaPA Board Liaison to the UUMA

BREAKING NEWS:

— THE INSTITUTE WILL FAVOR VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING —

The UUMA Institute, held every three years but postponed from early 2021, has always been planned to include the option of attending virtually. However, the UUMA recently decided that pandemic-related concerns have made it necessary to favor virtual programming. While there will still be hundreds of colleagues attending in person in San Diego, they will participate in all programs on-line or on large screens along with the virtual participants and will enjoy each other’s company in various ways outside the formal programs.

RETIRED MINISTERS often find the programs at the Institute meaningful even if they are no longer working for congregations or institutions.

There are seminars that you can follow through the entire duration of the Institute. Some that might be of interest to you include:

Grief, Gratitude and the Ministry: Have You Made Art About it Yet? *Mourning the Earth: Creating Rituals in Community* *From Burden to Blessing: Trauma and Resilience.* On Tuesday, Feb. 1 is a half-day seminar—*Deepening in Faith: Spiritual Development for UUs.*

Registration fee (until December 15) is \$450. See uuma.org for info. *Check it out!*

(Another option is a “half-registration” at \$225, which gives you access to the keynote presentations and worship services, but not the seminars.)



Because we never tire of one another’s presence, virtual or otherwise...

...LET’S LOOK AHEAD TO THE LATEST

UURMaPA Winter/Spring Conference

February 28–March 2, 2022

“Picking Up the Pieces...Or Not!”

What pieces of your life were dropped during the Pandemic? How are you picking them up, or deciding not to?

How has retirement allowed you to embrace or “pick up” any earlier pieces of your life?

What unexpected challenges have forced you to let go of important pieces of your life? What new pieces have you found?

These are just some of the questions upon which we’ll be reflecting together.

We will once again gather via Zoom in order to ensure safety for all.

Plan ahead; stay tuned for more information!



Continued, from Page 1...

Targeted Ministry Program, Relunched!

By Keith Kron

I am hereby asking again (of retirees) to let us know about your interest in serving in the TMP—even if you have offered before, and even if you’re not quite ready yet.

If you’d like to apply, or have questions, email transitions@uua.org. I will help design the best fit and parameters for your work. It may be for as much or as little as you like in terms of time, energy, geography, and difficulty. It can be virtual, in-person, or both. You can be offered an opportunity and decline and then be asked again—as long as you say, “Please, ask again.”

Congregations are required to fill out an application and, if accepted, will provide salary at the recommended geo-index midpoint, plus retirement contribution, and ideally help in finding housing, if needed. (Congregations—and ministers—are often unaware of housing costs on the rise. But it can be unwise to take a room in someone’s home. Possibilities include a reduced rental, a mother-in-law apartment, or an extended hotel stay.)

That said, the market is also swinging toward virtual ministry. Even interims are spending less and less time on site. I saw one request for virtual-only sabbatical coverage and they got the most applicants. The biggest thing is to provide stability for a congregation, because there is a lot of anxiety out there. It is predicted that 30% of ministers are expected to leave ministry in the near future, for one reason or another. This is going to be an interesting landscape for the next decade.

Let me end by expressing my gratitude to those of you colleagues who’ve been a part of the pilot in any way. Thank you for your support of ministry, congregational life, and Unitarian Universalism! You have made a difference. ☆ ☆

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BETH MILLER: Semi-retired and Embedded

Keith’s office worked out all TMP details and negotiations, “which was great,” Beth noted. “It’s been an evolving program, but I believe contract and developmental ministry positions work like a modified search process whereas TMP ministries are more like interim ministries.”

Her initial placement was “following the abrupt departure of the senior minister due to charges of misconduct. My job was to help them get through the crisis, go through the process of selecting an interim minister, and help them get ready for the interim’s arrival.”

In a similar time frame the next year, Beth moved to another site, but under different circumstances. “The senior minister of 30+ years retired, as planned. It was a happy departure, but few members had any experience of being without [that minister] and they were anxious. Same basic agenda: keep things going, begin the grief process, and get ready for an interim senior minister.”

“I enjoyed this work, but living in temporary apartments with no real connections was unsustainable for the long haul. When Sarasota was looking for a half-time contract associate minister for a few years while their minister retired and they went through the transition, it seemed like a good fit.”

Beth described herself as being in the “go-go stage” of retirement—versus “go slow” (still independent, but needing more down time) and then the “no go” stage. After her current contract, she would likely be open to doing a few days a month in another location, but not six months or more. “Too isolating; can’t deepen involvement back home.”

With the advance in remote connectivity, she suspects hybrid technologies could make it a lot easier for folks to fill more distant positions. “I believe in the TMP program; it’s really good, important.”

Her grounding in UUism since 1974 has led to “a richly rewarding journey of intellectual, emotional and spiritual enrichment that I hope continues to grow until the end of my days.” ~JtH



A “Wayside Pulpit”-type reminder found on the website of the UU Church of Sarasota FL.



“Both my TMPs really needed someone with experience—calm, non-anxious—to hold the fort but move them along gently.”

“I like my Zoom ministry.” By SUE REDFERN-CAMPBELL, *Albuquerque, NM*

When I retired from full-time ministry in 2018, my plans were mainly to enjoy this new life with Chuck, my spouse. I left open the possibility, however, of serving in some short-term ministries, and with this in mind I took a training for the **Targeted Ministry Program (TMP)** at the Winter 2019 UURMaPA conference.

The idea that retired ministers would make themselves available to assist congregations in unforeseen or emergency situations was a prospect I found appealing. It seemed a good way to continue to be of service, given my earlier nine years' experience as an interim and developmental minister.

And at the training I was surrounded by others with similar experience. But the message here was notable: “You’re *not* the interim. Instead, you might help a group *get ready* for the interim. Be the kind grandparent.”

It took two years before my first opportunity appeared. Less than a month after the TMP training, Chuck died of the illness he’d lived with for many years. Feeling the need for significant time to mourn, I put the idea of Targeted Ministry on hold. This period was prolonged when COVID hit, almost a year to the day after Chuck died.

Then, in early 2021, I was invited to become the Visiting Minister, via the internet, at the UU Fellowship of Fairbanks, Alaska. This two-month, half-time ministry would allow their minister to take a needed mini-sabbatical. My work was to preach and lead online worship twice a month, work with the Board on questions of governance, offer programs for a Friday night “Ministry of Fun,” and consult with staff, especially the religious education professional.

Working with this group turned out to be a wonderful experience. I was nervous at the beginning, but relaxed after my first service was well received. Between those Sundays I made calls by phone and internet.

Returning to ministry part-time restored in me a sense of aliveness and purpose, a feeling that continued even after my contract expired last April. The Fellowship’s leadership seemed to appreciate our work together, as they invited me to return in September for a month—again, part-time and online—to cover for the same minister during a maternity leave. Once during this month I waited through the bulk of an online Fairbanks school board meeting to testify in favor of declaring an LGBTQ History Month in public schools.

Meanwhile, I accepted a longer TMP post in Michigan, at a congregation in search that did not settle anyone and could not procure an interim. I’m on tap from October through next June, unless they’re able to hire a longer-term contract minister before then.

It was helpful for me to lead three online services for this group *before* the TMP contract began, to ramp up. (I got regular visiting minister rates.) However, I was still engaged with the Fairbanksers, so I had to very carefully navigate time zones, living in New Mexico and serving in both Alaska and Michigan!

All this is virtual ministry, and I hope to visit these groups in person sometime, maybe Alaska next summer. I imagine the demand for this type of TMP service will continue, but I’m not thinking in terms of taking any posts with residency. I’d prefer to stay home without moving or being uprooted. I like my Zoom ministry.

Perhaps the biggest plus is how wonderful it’s been to keep my mind active. I was in the doldrums after Chuck died, but the TMP made me feel joyful to be alive and of service. ☆ ☆



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MARK WARD retired on July 1 after 17 years as lead minister of the UU Congregation in Asheville NC, where he continues to live with his spouse, Debbie. Before ministry he had a 25-year career as a newspaper journalist in Charleston WV and Milwaukee WI.

BERRIES ON THE VINE

Long hikes in the mountains of Western North Carolina; returning to the potting wheel (as below); adventurous travel... That's pretty much what I had in mind for my first year in retirement. *Not:* listening to beeps and squawks in the tunnel of an MRI machine and several days later waking up from surgery with my left arm in a sling.

Little did I know—when I decided in my first weeks of retirement this summer to check out some long-standing and increasing shoulder pain—that I had a growing tear in my left rotator cuff, and then, it turns out, in my right as well. Talk about slowing down!

I wonder how many others have experienced something like this: greeted at the gateway of the golden years with the body's cry, "When are you going to start taking care of me?" Well, I guess *now*. That's not to say I've done nothing. I have a regular meditation practice, periodically worked out at the Y, and during COVID made a practice of long daily walks.

But in the past year I've also done some vigorous yard work and I'm guessing that's where I did the damage to my arms. Was there an occasional tinge of pain then? I suppose so, but it didn't seem like enough to attend to. As usual, the busyness of my routine took priority.



I've been lucky that for most of my life I've avoided serious medical incidents. I entered retirement at age 68 in what felt like

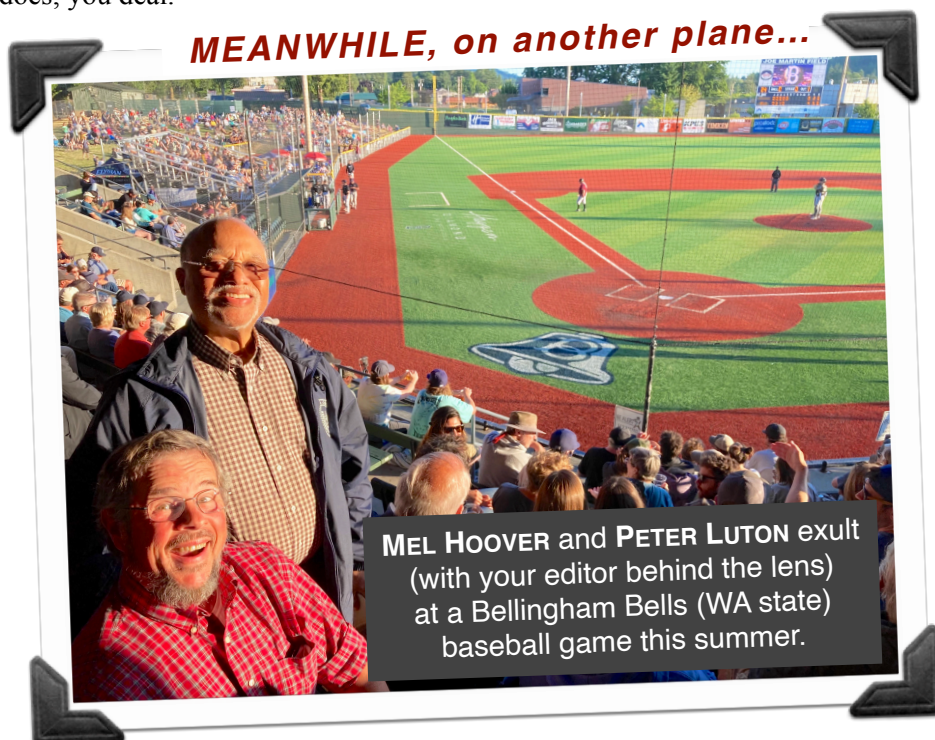
good health, but also a bit inattentive to what it will take to maintain that health. I guess I'll pay a little better attention now. Also, of course, there's only so much of this that I have control over. Stuff happens, and when it does, you deal.



I used to make a point regularly of reminding the congregation I served that "we are fragile, fallible beings." And clearly the older we get, the more frequently and dramatically we are reminded of that. There's nothing like injury to bring on some corrective humility, a reminder of my own limits and a wave of sympathy for others whose circumstances are more strained than my own—not a bad lesson as I enter this privileged space that we call retirement.

I trust that I'll heal from all of this, but I also hope that this widened perspective stays with me. I'll have time, I hope, for the adventures on my agenda, but for now, at least it's a blessing just to be. ☆ ☆

MEANWHILE, on another plane...



MEL HOOVER and PETER LUTON exult (with your editor behind the lens) at a Bellingham Bells (WA state) baseball game this summer.

“It might have been otherwise.”

It is easy to break a bone, and quick. The circumstances can be mundane or dramatic. Healing, on the other hand, is a tough and lengthy slog—at least it has been for me, having broken both my arms this past July.

The story of how it came to pass matters—in both a personal sense and a preventive sense, as a cautionary tale—and I’ve relived those moments over and over. In my case, in two separate new-to-me dog accidents I fractured my left radius (wrist) and subsequently my right humerus (upper arm).

The first is the most common broken bone since we reflexively brace ourselves in a fall. You can do most everything with a broken wrist.

Breaking the other arm put it all into another category. My life was suddenly broken into BF (Before Fractures) and AF (After Fractures). And once x-rays came through, they dictated the tale of what happened next.

Everything changes—a truth we never finish learning. I went from a life of independence and caregiving for family, to profound dependence on the care and skill of others. Thankfully, I was able to get initial care in our local hospital since it was not overwhelmed by Covid-19 cases. Then recovery at home, although because I now live alone that was a challenge. Adaptive technology helped, given that I could use only my fingertips. I got a recliner with a remote control, a TV with a remote control, and a bidet with remote control (all of which I am keeping).

We’ve all heard that in a crisis some people back off and others come forward to help. My former husband, recently moved to town, was the surprise—happy to assist with the myriad things that needed to be done, and stopping by daily. I normally take care of two grandchildren during summer school break, and soon we learned that they could spend the day with me and be my helpers—a win/win for their working parents. Ages 8 and 10, they were cheerful, willing, and able to entertain themselves.

Meals on Wheels brought lunches. Home health aides came to provide showers, housekeeping, food, and to check my vitals. That agency does much well, and I was profoundly grateful to have the option of home care, but they had no policy on vaccination, so I had to screen their workers and send half away. (I was dumfounded that people coming into the homes of vulnerable elders to provide close contact care—people who work in the medical field—would think being unvaccinated was fine.)

If you wonder what happened to my shelter dog, she was adopted by family members here. She didn’t see me for months, then suddenly I reappeared in the flesh. However it may be that dogs might think theologically, I am certain she believes in resurrection of the body.

And I am resurrected to new life. I’ve always appreciated the descriptor “temporarily abled.” This summer I was disabled, but on a temporary basis. In the refrain of Jane Kenyon’s poem, “It might have been otherwise.”

Someday there will be no recovery, no healing, no back-to-(almost)-normal. But for now, I have polished up my dependence and lack of control, my patience and acceptance, my awareness of limits and mortality, my compassion and empathy. It was easy to sort wants from needs. My access to help and medical care and insurance are a privilege, as is having a beautiful home and loving family and friends.

It was a summer of difficult days, simple days, slow days. Now the hard work of regaining motion and strength pushes me in new ways. But my summer school lessons in fragility feel hard-earned and indelible.

☆☆

WHAT’S UP WITH
Diane Miller?



Ordained in 1976, **DIANE MILLER** served in settlements at San Francisco CA, Belmont MA (now emerita there) and Carlisle MA, and in numerous interim ministries, with a stint as UUA Director of Ministry (1993-2001). She retired in 2016, led UURMaPA from 2019-21, and lives in Salina, Kansas.



Celebrating 50 Years in Ministry



A Weaving Among Generations

On Thursday, September 2, amid floods in the east and fires in the west, around 50 folks convened on Zoom to honor and learn from a fine handful of colleagues who were ordained in 1971. Led by UUMA co-directors Melissa Carvill-Ziemer and Janette Lallier, this event was a combination of live interactions and a replay from the original gathering, held during 2021 Ministry Days (on June 22).

For that earlier annual occasion, just prior to the UUA General Assembly, each of this year's featured presenters—**CHRIS SCHRINER, DOUGLAS WILSON, JANE BOYAJIAN, STEVE EDINGTON** and **MEL HOOVER**—got to tell some of their story and offer perspective gained over their five decades of service. (Also part of the 50-year class but not in this video montage were **JOHN YOUNG, RICHARD RUACH, and DOUG GALLAGER**.)

After viewing the recorded presentations (see snapshots of these rich portrayals below), Melissa honored these five “change-makers,” who then had the opportunity to reflect a bit in real time on their own comments, three months later.

Following the videos, notes of appreciation flowed, both between the presenters and from the listeners. “Such a wonderfully diverse group of 50-year colleagues... We are creatures of the time in which we were born,” noted **WAYNE ARNASON**. “Pure gold,” offered **JOHANNA NICHOLS**. “I always want to hear from the 50-year ministers until the day I die.” It was indeed an intriguing and rewarding format.

NOTE: Other recordings from 2021 Ministry Days are also posted, some of which feature UURMaPAns, such as the latest Berry Street Essay, offered by **JANNE** and **ROB ELLER-ISAACS**, moderated by **MARK MORRISON-REED**:

www.uuma.org/page/MD21BSEVideo

Also available is the recording of comments from the 25-year class, ordained in 1996, which includes a few key UURMaPA leaders: recent Board member **BARBARA CHILD**, webmaster **DUANE FICKEISEN**, and president **VERONICA RAK**:

www.uuma.org/page/md2021_2550gathering

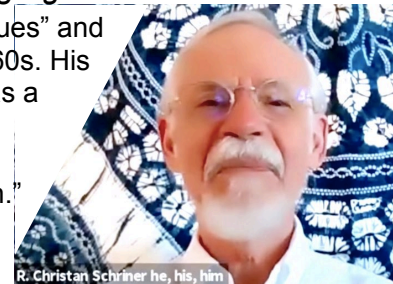
CHRIS SCHRINER — *Author, Minister Emeritus of Mission Peak UU Congregation in Fremont CA*

From childhood on Chris felt a call to “focus on big ideas and on our highest values” and he wanted to become a minister, but he left traditional religion behind in the mid-1960s. His second visit to a UU church was on the day after James Reeb was murdered. “It was a riveting experience to be with UUs at that time.”

“I loved my new church home. I saw that UUism has almost accidentally achieved an amazing breakthrough, a fundamental mutation in the nature of religion.” He expanded: “We have shifted from uniting around some theory of reality... to uniting around core values... a covenant, not a creed... We are the keepers of this amazing flame.”

Chris writes several blogs, especially “Theists & Atheists: Communication & Common Ground.” And in recent years, he has focused on philosophy, speaking at conferences, and publishing papers about consciousness.

“And today we continue to embrace new trends. We are intensely idealistic, and this pushes us forward. And we do not have much grounding in history and tradition to slow us down. In some ways I like that. It's exciting, but it means that we're riding in a bus that has a great big accelerator pedal, and little tiny brakes.”



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DOUGLAS WILSON — *39 years as Director of UU Rowe Camp & Conference Center in Rowe MA*

He was first raised Congregational, but his best school friend growing up in Santa Barbara CA was the son of (UU minister) Lex Crane and Doug sometimes went to UU church with him, which was a positive experience. As a draft-dodger, age 20, he went to Starr King School (“Summerhill for grad students”), including one semester for students to travel the world—an eye-opening experience for “Doug Fir.”

During his first (and only congregational) post as assistant minister in Brooklyn NY he was asked to direct Rowe Junior High Camp, which he did (“I liked teenagers better than their parents”) and soon he started the Conference Center there.

He says he may or may not deserve credit for this observation: “Seminary is where I got my answers; life is where I got my answers questioned.”

“I have never found Unitarian Universalism to be antithetical to what seemed true to me.” Being a minister is “one of the best things someone can do.” He has especially “loved being retired. I get to do whatever I want, whenever I want. This is even better than Starr King.”



Doug Fir Wilson

JANE BOYAJIAN — Lifelong UU, accredited religious education professional, parish minister, theological school faculty member, community minister, public policy ethicist, author

“My life is rooted in our shared ground,” Jane began. She grew up at the Wellesley Hills UU Society (MA), where her ministers embodied social justice. The Sharps smuggled European Jews to safety, and Bill Rice quoted Amos often: *Let justice roll down as waters and righteousness as an ever flowing stream.* “Those words were hardwired into my soul.”

Jane's first worship services were collaboratively created at Unitarian youth retreats on Star Island (NH). Her theological studies began at Crane (Tufts), but “1950 was the dark ages for women in religious studies.” Learning about process theology was a turning point. Her interdisciplinary doctorate was completed (1978) at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

There were career evolutions and “the familiar detours for women.” But when Jane served as Director of Religious Education with Rudy Nemser in Fairfax VA, she had an uplifting tenure. “He saw me as his co-equal. Imagine that in 1964!” Jane was also invited into a leadership role by Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1965, to “coordinate the national mobilization of all religious communities to Montgomery.” Later in the Seattle area, she “forged a 20th-century version of a circuit-riding ministry” that finally led to fellowship and becoming “the first and only ethicist in the WA State legislature chosen by the joint leadership...because they felt I could be fair.”

Since retirement, Jane has a new path. “Same ministry, just more quiet. My call was listening with a pastoral ear to vulnerable people.” Now “explicitly Buddhist” and a Qigong teacher, she is “always filled with gratitude.”



STEVE EDINGTON — Minister Emeritus of the Nashua (NH) UU Church, after serving for 24 years

Steve felt a call at age 13 as a Baptist in southern W. Virginia, and was ordained by American Baptists after seminary in Rochester NY. (The same Colgate Rochester Divinity School where his younger sister Rose would attend two years after him.) “The era from 1967 to 1971 was an amazing time to prepare for the liberal ministry.” Steve shot pool with Jesse Jackson just ahead of the tumultuous time of Dr. King’s assassination. Humbled by a growing racial awareness, he became an active advocate for social justice.

After a few years of campus ministry in the Midwest, he moved beyond liberal Christianity and came to UUism in 1978 in New England. He noted the influence of Leonard Cohen’s song, “Anthem”: *Ring the bells that still can ring, forget your perfect offering. There's a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.* “It was a crack in my consciousness, clear back in my college days, that led me out of my near fundamentalist upbringing” all the way to officiating the first legally recognized same-sex marriage in New Hampshire, very early on January 1, 2010.

“You won't always get it right in your ministries, even though you will more often than not... Bring your imperfect selves to an imperfect world and trust that that will be enough.”



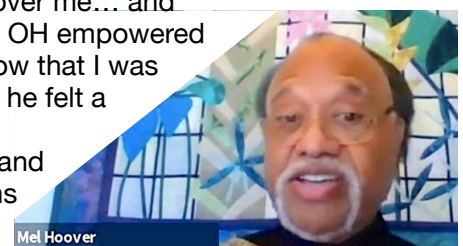
MEL HOOVER — 2013 Distinguished Service Awardee, longtime organizer, and Co-Minister Emeritus of the UUs in Charleston WV (with co-minister and spouse of 50+ years, Rose Edington)

Early on in his life, Mel preached for a youth Sunday. “Something came over me... and said, ‘This is where you belong.’” His family’s Episcopal church in Columbus OH empowered him to “think and ask questions and believe for ourselves. And always to know that I was equal to anyone.” Then, devastated by the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., he felt a commitment that “some of us must live to make a better day.”

He graduated from seminary in Rochester NY, where he met both Steve and Rose Edington, and where he was forcefully active in moving local institutions toward racial parity, including helping to start a new seminary, one “that would serve all of us.” Effective ecumenical and interfaith work ensued.

In 1984 Mel (with Rose) followed Steve’s example by transferring to UUism, where he served to “help broaden ministry,” first as part of the Black Concerns Working Group. That group’s charge was “to eliminate racism within the UUA and beyond...and here’s \$5,000 to do it.” A “holy no” ensued until much more funding was promised. Mel soon joined the UUA staff, and felt support to “trouble the waters,” urging UUism to be more than it was.

“And now we're still at it, we're still widening and deepening the circle... It's all about beloved community.”



MINISTERIAL MULTIPLICITY

By WAYNE ARNASON,
UURMaPA At-Large Board Member

Ministers who have served in New England and in a few other large metropolitan areas are accustomed to having a multiplicity of UU clergy families living in their vicinity. For instance, you may have a cordial professional relationship with the minister of a church one town and six miles away, and a much deeper couples' friendship with a colleague who works for the UUA but lives only a few blocks away in your own town. Friendships with other community-based ministers and retired ministers in your area may abound as well.

Most of the places where UU congregations are located aren't necessarily home to such an abundance of ministers. At least I thought so until one day I decided to count the number of UU ministers *not* serving my local congregation who live within thirty miles of me (in Charlottesville VA). I was amazed that there were **seven**, including me. Admittedly, I live in a college town; but I can never remember a time when there were that many clergy in this greater neighborhood.

I found the diversity of such ministerial multiplicity quite fascinating. Four of the seven of us have previously served the local congregation in different roles, and of those four only two are retired. Of the seven, three of us are retirees who chose to live here for various reasons—family mostly, and/or because we like the area. One of the seven is here for family reasons and between settled ministries. In the last five years, I have shared meals with five of these six colleagues, and four of those occasions were as couples together. The social relationships vary. Some are consistent, others not.

Well, there's no large moral or professional advice as a punch line to this article, other than to share with you how interesting I found this analysis, and how complicated navigating our networks of professional relationships as retirees can be. I hope that my relationships with all these colleagues are such that any opportunities we find to connect, whether serendipitous or intentional, will be cordial and meaningful and respectful of role and the needs of our colleagues who have the local congregation in their care. ☆ ☆



The Cactie



ORBITING SATELLITES

When considering the relationships that retired ministers might have with a local congregation, what comes to mind is this celestial metaphor:

a congregational planet is surrounded by orbiting satellites at different levels in the atmosphere and with different purposes.

- Some retirees are closer in to the congregation, striving for what we might call a geosynchronous orbit. These are satellites that stay in a reliable location above the same spot on the planet's surface and move with the planet as it rotates. They want to be involved and want to be seen as reliable, responsible retired minister members, i.e., responsive when signaled, not hidden. Any settled ministers in the congregation know where they are and can communicate easily with them.
- Another retired minister might have once been closer in but has moved into a higher orbit where the gravity of a smaller nearby congregation has become more attractive.
- Some retired ministers are satellites with cloaking devices for various wise professional reasons, such as recent service there, or a time of personal transition where being visible in congregational life is not appropriate.
- The retired satellites have naturally varying degrees of communication with each other. Some might regularly join in with a Zoom cluster of church professionals, while others orbiting in the area used to participate but don't any more.

And the UURMaPA Universe unfolds dynamically.

Nurturing Anew

By **MILLIE ROCHESTER**, UURMaPA Connections Chair

As appreciative as I've been of UURMaPA since my retirement from settled ministry, I am more aware now than ever of how helpful it is to view issues through a wider, more systemic lens. This is one of the gifts of serving on the Board of UURMaPA—a gift of perspective, as much as anything.

The Connections Network is a case in point. At our last Winter Conference, you may have seen my short video presentation, reviewing the way interpersonal connections have been made and maintained for many years: Our membership is divided according to geographic areas, each one represented by an Area Connector who establishes regular contact with the ministers and partners in their Area.

As I said then, this system has flaws. Because the distribution of our membership is uneven, some Connectors have far more people to contact than others. Recruiting Connectors is a challenge, being limited to geographic areas; some Areas don't have Connectors at all for extended periods of time, so some folks feel forgotten, and in many cases contact information is not updated for the Directories, which makes being in touch even more difficult.

Transitioning to retirement—for both ministers and partners—can feel isolating, especially in these uncertain times of pandemic. Feeling connected with others is more important than ever. But even before the pandemic struck, opportunities for connection had shifted from what they were when the Connections Network was first established. Social networking occurs through Facebook groups, for example. Many of us check in regularly with friends and acquaintances, whether in the ministerial community or not.

So, I return to the value of *perspective*. The system we have now was designed in another era. As circumstances shift, we are called to shift the way we accomplish our goals. The Board is in conversation and discernment about ways of modifying and streamlining our process. Suggestions include dividing the membership according to generally East or West (adding in those of us overseas), with volunteer Connectors irrespective of their specific geographic area; or simply having a “buddy” system, each person checking in with one other person, regardless of where they reside.

The relationships we establish and maintain matter, in whatever stage of life we live, and the Connections Network seeks to nurture those relationships. *Who do you connect with regularly? How can we, as an organization, strengthen those connections?* Please talk to me. ~Millie: connections@uurmapa.org

UURMaPA Peer Groups Update

Your Vice President coordinates “peer groups” for those retirees who would like to enrich their connection with retired colleagues through regular online interactions.

These groups were initially launched by our colleague **JIM ELLER** when he served as Vice President from 2013–15. He was inspired by Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's book, *From Aging to Sageing*, which acknowledged the challenge of shifting our focus from “doing” to “being.” Touching base with peers periodically seemed like a helpful way to facilitate this shift.

UURMaPA peer groups depend upon volunteer facilitators, who offer to convene groups and facilitate virtual meetings. If this is something you could see yourself doing in the coming year, please contact Vice President **NED WIGHT** at vice-president@uurmapa.org. He'll send an e-mail invitation out to new UURMaPAns, asking if they'd like to participate in a collegial peer group. Based on those who say “Yes,” he'll help determine days and times for them to meet and designate two co-conveners for each group. They then become self-governing and self-regulating groups. (Some decide to end after a year; others have been continuing for many years.)

He is also open to your suggestions about virtual support groups with a specific focus. Two such groups already exist: a Caregivers Support Group for members who have particular roles as caregivers within their households, and a Grief Support Group for those recently bereaved. If there are other specific groups that you would like to suggest, please don't hesitate to reach out to Ned at the address above. ☆ ☆

“When I turned two I was really anxious, because I had doubled my age in a year. I thought, “If this keeps up, by the time I'm six, I'll be 90.”

Steven Wright



Longer versions of all obituaries can eventually be found on the UURMaPA web site (no password needed) at uurmapa.org/obituaries/.

If you learn about the death of a minister or partner, PLEASE let us know at board@uurmapa.org.

Continuing gratitude to **JAY ATKINSON** (~JA) for careful researching and composing of obituaries for ministers. **ROGER ROCHESTER** (~RR) does a similarly fine job for partners.

IN MEMORIAM

ELIZABETH M. STRONG (1940 – 2021)



The Reverend Dr. Elizabeth Strong—impassioned religious educator, pastoral counselor, parish minister, and lifelong disciple and scholar of Universalism—died on 20 March 2021, aged 80¾.

In UU circles Liz Strong was widely known for her work in curriculum development, her personal presence with irrepressible energy, and her many awards. Ministerial colleagues Carol Taylor and Carol Haag wrote that with Liz's death "Unitarian Universalism and liberal religious education lost a shining star."

Elizabeth May Strong was born a third generation Universalist to Ashley Walter Strong and Marie Elizabeth Miller Strong on 17 June 1940 in Cooperstown, New York. Their church was central to family life. When Liz was asked—at age eight—what she believed, her answer was quick: "I believe God is love. Jesus is a teacher and friend. People are inherently good. There is truth I know and more that I will know. Service is required of me to live my faith, and in the end all will be well." At age 13 she began teaching church school at the Old Stone Universalist Church in Schuylers Lake NY.

Liz earned a B.A. in liberal arts from Syracuse University (NY) in 1962. In the 1970s both her parents died, her marriage failed, and she underwent extensive back surgery, with a neck-to-hips body cast. Amid these losses and challenges, the indomitable Ms. Strong, now a single working mother of four children, completed her M.S. degree in elementary education and was named Director of Religious Education at Rochester's First Unitarian Church. She was centrally active with others in developing the ordination track by which the UUA acknowledged a Ministry of Religious Education. In October 1983 she was ordained by her Rochester congregation and forthwith called as *Minister* of Religious Education.



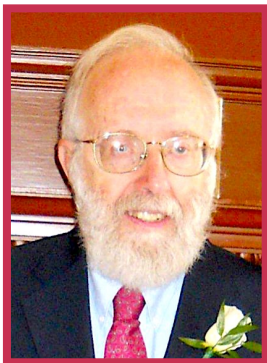
In 1988, the Rev'd Ms. Strong accepted a call to the May Memorial UU Society in Syracuse (NY) as Minister of Religious Education. She completed a D.Min. program at Meadville Lombard in 2000. In 2001 she left May Memorial for a seven-year stint as RE Program Consultant for the Massachusetts Bay District. Liz took formal retirement from full-time work in 2008 but went on to her first and only service in parish ministry (2008–2013) as a part-time consulting minister to the First Parish Church of Ashby UU (MA), where she was named minister emerita in 2013 and continued to preach frequently as a pulpit guest into the final years of her life.



At her death Liz was survived by brother John Strong, sister Barbara Strong Vertucci, sons David and Douglas Taylor, daughters Shari Taylor-Lascano and Kathleen Taylor-Wallen, ten grandchildren, and many cousins, nieces, and nephews.

An online memorial service was held on 8 May 2021. Memorial donations are encouraged to **Planned Parenthood**, or to the **UUA**. Notes of condolence may be sent to: Rev. Douglas Taylor, 19 Hodge Ave, Binghamton NY 13901 or dtaylor@uubinghamton.org. ~JA

IN MEMORIAM

**SAMUEL BERLINER III (1934 – 2020)**

Samuel (Sam) Berliner III, partner of the Reverend **LILIA CUERVO**, died 29 Dec 2020, at age 86. Sam was born 15 February 1934 in Manhattan (NY), where his father was well known as a funeral director. He was educated in Plattsburgh NY at Champlain College and then studied engineering at Mass. Inst. of Tech. He worked 15 years on Long Island NY for Pall Corporation, which made ultra fine fluid filters.

He left that to pursue his interest in ultrasonics, which comprised the biggest part of his life's work. Working independently and with companies in that industry, Sam developed patented processes and devices to apply ultrasonic solutions in a variety of situations. In 2011 he was given an honorary membership by The Ultrasonic Industry Association Board of Directors.

Sam maintained a website that held a great deal of his other interests—language, theology, railroads, model railroads, and more. He described himself as “Technical and Historical Writer, Oral Historian, Popularizer of Science and Technology, Rail, Auto, Air, Ordnance, and Model Enthusiast, Light-weight Linguist, Lay Minister, and Putative Philosopher.” His website confirms and endorses that description.

A great number of people posted tributes on the sites that are established for those purposes. They come from people he encountered working on a group that studies the Long Island Motor Parkway, and from the Boston Chapter National Railway Historical Society, and from some whose lives he had touched in UU congregations. Sam was fully involved in anything that interested him, and as a minister's partner.

Sam is survived by his daughters Nancy Cordes and Elisabeth McKinnon, and grandchildren Natalie and Eric Cordes; and by Lilia, his spouse of over 14 years, her son Xavier Hernandez, her two daughters Nilza Wise and Shani Hernandez, and granddaughter Javale Wise.

The family plans to hold an in-person memorial when it is safe to gather. Lilia can be reached at 6 Apache Trail, Medford MA 02155-1471 and at cuervouu@comcast.net. ~ RR

**MARY MULLARKEY (1943 – 2021)**

Mary Mullarkey, spouse of the Reverend **TOM KORSON**, died 31 March 2021, after a long and very public struggle with multiple sclerosis. Mary was born in New London, Wisconsin, on 28 September 1943. She attended public and parochial schools there, and then St. Norbert College, where she earned a degree in math in 1965. She earned her law degree from Harvard University (MA) in 1968 and then went to work for the US Department of the Interior in its equal opportunity section.

In Washington, she met Thomas E. Korson and they married. In 1973 they decided to move to Denver for two years. However, after a couple years with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Mary was hired to work in the Colorado Attorney General's office, concentrating on appellate practice. Later, she became the state's Solicitor General, and then a legal counsel to Governor Richard Lamm.

In 1987, Governor Roy Romer appointed Mary to the Colorado Supreme Court, only the second woman chosen to serve there. In 1998, her peers elected her to serve as their Chief Justice. She remained in that position until she retired in 2010. Her multiple sclerosis had been diagnosed in 1994, and she required a walker in her later years, but the disease never impacted her mind or kept her from fulfilling her duties. While many of her legal decisions are noteworthy, she is recognized as well for her leadership in changing the way the courts operated, such as providing professional interpreters, and setting up child care for parents who were tied up in the legal system.

She and her piano teacher also played a duet at Tom's ordination by the First Unitarian Church of Denver in 1996.

Mary is survived by Tom Korson, her spouse of nearly 50 years; their son, Dr. Andrew Korson; daughter-in-law Emily Terhune Korson; granddaughters Anika and Avery Korson; four brothers; and numerous nephews, nieces, and cousins.

Memorial contributions may be made to the following: Cure d'Ars Catholic Church, 4701 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Denver CO 80207; Colorado Judicial Institute, Box 118, Broomfield CO 80038; Colorado Lawyers Committee, 401 Lawrence St., Suite 2300, Denver CO 80202; or Multiple Sclerosis Society, Colorado-Wyoming Branch, 900 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Denver CO 80209. ~ RR





WILLIAM E. ALBERTS (1926 – 2021)

IN MEMORIAM

The Reverend Bill Alberts—parish minister, civil rights activist, and prolific political journalist, who moved to UU affiliation after expulsion from United Methodist ministry—died on 22 March 2021 in Canton, Massachusetts, aged 94½.

Mr. Alberts served United Methodist churches in MA and PA from 1949–73, but was always attracted to UU justice commitments and regularly attended meetings of a nearby UUMA chapter.

In 1973, two months after conducting a marriage ceremony for two male members of the Old West Church in Boston, the Rev'd Mr. Alberts was forcibly retired from United Methodist ministry. His ensuing landmark lawsuit, detailed in his booklet, *The Minister Who Could Not Be "Preyed" Away* (1987), was financially supported by the UUA's Ministry Department, under the direction of the Rev'd David Pohl, who recalls Bill as "a warm, energetic, and devoted voice of compassion and courage."

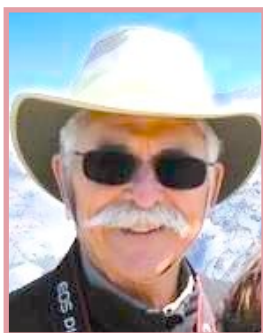
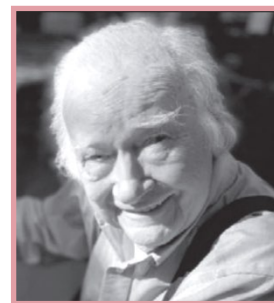
William Edward Alberts was born on 26 October 1926 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, to Ralph Stanford Alberts and Nellie (Marks) Alberts. After US Navy service (1944–46), he was graduated with a B.A. in sociology from Lycoming College PA in 1951, earned his M.Div. from Westminster (now Wesley) Theological Seminary in Washington DC in 1954, and received his Ph.D. in psychology and pastoral counseling from Boston University in 1961.

After the abrupt termination of his Methodist ministry and several years of work in journalism and teaching, the Rev'd Mr. Alberts was lured back to parish ministry with a 1978 call to Boston's Community Church, founded in 1920 as a "peace and justice" congregation by Universalist minister and academic Clarence Skinner. Bill's sermons there are remembered as "gems of lovingly radical rebellious thought translated into action." He received preliminary and final ministerial fellowship with the UUA in 1981 and 1984, respectively.

Leaving his parish call after 13 years, Bill moved to full-time chaplaincy at Boston Medical Center in 1992. His nearly 20-year tenure there inspired his book, *A Hospital Chaplain at the Crossroads of Humanity* (2012).

Bill is survived by his spouse of 45 years, **EVA YOUNG ALBERTS** and their daughter, Amy Warren; three daughters, Susan Cook, Jeanne Paz, and LouAnn Meli, and a son, Jeffrey Alberts from his first marriage to Doris Schmaus.

A memorial service was scheduled at Boston's Arlington St. Church for 23 October 2021. Donations are encouraged to the **Asian American Civic Assoc.** or to **CounterPunch** (an on-line political journal, to which Bill was a regular contributor). Notes of condolence may be sent to Eva Young Alberts, 25 Algonquin Road, Canton MA 02021. ~ JA



GARY WYKE (1941 – 2021)

Gary Leonard Wyke, spouse of the Reverend **ELIZABETH GREENE**, died 10 April 2021, in Boise, Idaho. He was born on 8 July 1941, in Hanford, California, where he spent his childhood.

After high school, he headed east to attend the US Naval Academy in Annapolis MD, where his personal values of integrity, loyalty, and fairness were reinforced. However, he found the curriculum a poor match for his interests and strengths. Gary returned to California, fulfilling his military obligations as a Naval Reservist.

In that period Gary received a B.A. in English from the University of California in Berkeley, then worked six years as a book buyer at Macy's Department store in San Francisco. Concluding that retail was not the path for him, he returned to Cal and got Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Forestry. He retired from work with the Bureau of Land Management in Boise after over 30 years of service.

He and Janet Evans were married in 1964. Sons Andrew and Evan opened for Gary a deep and abiding well of love for family. Indeed, love for family was one of his defining characteristics. His sons grew up, married, and had children of their own, who were absolutely the apples of their "Bumpa's" eye. Amid his deep commitment and joy in family, he also turned outward in a commitment to making the world better. He served as President of his church, the Boise UU Fellowship and was a much-respected tutor at Learning Lab.

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GARY WYKE — *continued from previous page*

IN MEMORIAM

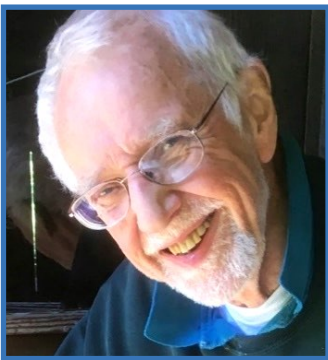
Gary coordinated the Farmers' Market table, where people could receive tokens for fresh vegetables. His quiet, low-key sense of humor delighted all who knew and loved him.

In 2013, Jan and Gary's marriage dissolved, amiably and with a continuing commitment to their kids and grandkids. He found that his 30+ year friendship with Elizabeth Greene had deepened into an excellent foundation for a life together, and they made the happy decision to marry. Gary and Elizabeth traveled many places, laughed a lot, read poetry to each other, spent fun times with family, and thanked their Higher Powers for the late-life gift of each other.

Gary is survived by his spouse, Elizabeth; son Andy (Erin and daughter Dylan); son Evan (Nicole and sons Sullivan, Benson and Oliver); sister Joyce McKern; nieces and nephews. ~ RR



RALPH H. "RON" COOK, JR. (1933 – 2021)



The Reverend Ron Cook—parish minister, beloved teacher, endearing nonconformist, and craftsman extraordinaire—died on 6 July 2021, two months short of his 88th birthday.

Ron's legacy was as a builder. For 27 years he helped build up Starr King School students seeking a religious calling. And starting in 1969, he built his own house on the California Big Sur Coast, where he died in a bed he also built. His spouse **DEBORAH STREETER** and dear neighbors stood by as members of the Mid-Coast Fire Brigade carried his body out along the path to a firetruck for an honor guard departure.

Ralph Hiram Cook, Jr., was born 27 August 1933 in Snohomish WA to Ralph Hiram Cook and Esther A. Cook. He grew up on a pea farm and was the first in his family to go to college, earning his B.A. in art and political science from Whitman College (Walla Walla WA) in 1955.

As a child Ron was a happy Cascades camper and a faithful Episcopalian acolyte, but at Seattle's University Unitarian Church, he was encouraged toward professional ministry by Pastor Aron Gilmartin. He headed off to Starr King School in Berkeley and completed his B.D. in 1960, all the while discovering the San Francisco jazz and art scene and making dear lifelong friends.

Ron would proudly, maybe even gleefully, tell the tale of how the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) turned him down for credentialing, but the UU Church in Ventura CA nevertheless called him in 1961 with a telegram, "Boston be damned! We'll have our own Tea Party," and promptly ordained him. (The following year, the MFC relented.)

Ron resigned his Ventura ministry in 1966 for a year-long trip to Europe and Africa, then returned from Nigeria to work as Associate Director of Young Adult Programs at the UUA (1967–69). Starr King School President Bob Kimball invited Ron to join the faculty in 1969, where he promoted the distinctive Starr King style of education: student-centered and affirming of life experiences. "We teach by who we are—work done, credit given." He taught preaching and worship, weddings and funerals ("Marry 'Em and Bury 'Em"), and UU History, with a special love for Emerson.

Ron retired from teaching in 1996, retreating to his beloved Big Sur home and a life of community service. He built up the local volunteer fire brigade, worked against local logging enterprises, and became a court advocate for foster kids, all the while continuing to make the house more livable year-round. In his last days he was still building, working on a bench just outside the kitchen window where he happily read and wrote. In his spouse Deborah's words: "Ron's organic life is never finished, and he and this house and hill live happily together."

A memorial service on 9 October 2021 was held at the UU Church of the Monterey Peninsula (Carmel CA), conducted by Ron's ministerial colleagues, **BILL** and **BARBARA HAMILTON-HOLWAY**, with tributes from children, a neighbor co-builder, and a former student.

Memorial donations are encouraged to the **Mid-Coast Fire Brigade**, which Ron and Deborah helped to found. Providentially, the Brigade saved their home from destruction in the Soberanes Fire of 2016.

Notes of condolences may be sent to Deborah Streeter at 37755 Palo Colorado Rd, Carmel, CA 93923, or deborahstreeter27@gmail.com. ~ JA



Unitarian Universalist

Retired Ministers and Partners Association

c/o Patt Herdklotz
384 Clinton Street
Ashland, Oregon 97520



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*(Unitarian Universalist Retired
Ministers & Partners Assoc.):*

<https://tinyurl.com/yyzrlam5>



*I've always liked people who were older.
Of course, every year it gets harder to find them.*

—Fran Lebowitz