

Darold Henry Beekmann

January 12, 1935 - January 13, 2021

Rev. Dr. Darold H. Beekmann, On Saturday, October 16, a Celebration of Life will take place for our beloved Darold, who passed away on January 13, 2021. A full obituary appeared at that time and is available online. A Lutheran burial service with interment of ashes was held in January at Edina Community Lutheran Church for the immediate family, and a formal ceremony commemorating Darold's life-long service to the ALC and the ELCA was previously held at United Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where Darold served as President for ten years, Friends and family are invited to attend the upcoming celebration of Darold's life at Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapel in Edina (please wear a mask) or to attend virtually (at 11 am or to view the service any time afterward) by going to the Washburn-McReavy website and going to Darold's obituary. The 11 am service will be preceded by visitation with the family starting at 10 am, and it will be followed by a fellowship hour with light refreshments. Please visit the funeral home's website at:

Washburn-McReavy.com

Edina Chapel 952-920-3996

West 50th St. & Hwy 100

Rev. Dr. Darold H. Beekmann passed away on January 13, one day after his 86th birthday. He was preceded in death by his parents, Jake and Tena

Beekmann, his three older siblings, Elmer, Hazel and George, and by his devoted first wife, Marlene Thews Beekmann. He was the beloved husband and Life Partner of his second wife, Gail Coffler; he doted on and was much loved in return by his daughter, Heidi Weippert (John), and his son, Tim Beekmann (Patrick Durkin), and his grandchildren, Nathaniel Weippert (Sarah) & Allie Weippert. He was much loved also by his step-daughter, Janna Coffler, his step-son, Doug Coffler (Kara) and step-granddaughters, Samantha and Jocie Coffler, and by several nieces and nephews. Reverend Dr. Darold Beekmann was the 11th president of Gettysburg (now United) Lutheran Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, from 1990 to 2000. Rev. Michael Cooper-White, who succeeded Beekmann as president there, recently wrote, "During Darold's tenure, the seminary underwent significant changes, becoming the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA's) center for diaconal ministry and expanding community service, particularly through a growing "Music Gettysburg !" concert program. "Under Beekmann's leadership, the Seminary Ridge Historic Preservation Foundation was formed to preserve the iconic Civil War structures on Seminary Ridge, the site of the famed Battle of Gettysburg. Today's Seminary Ridge Museum traces its roots to the initiatives taken in the Beekmann era." The museum showcases the role played by the Seminary during the Battle, and especially the importance of the Old Dormitory which served as the battlefield hospital for both Union and Confederate wounded. Darold Beekmann, the son of German immigrant tenant farmers, grew up in Pocahontas, Iowa, attended a one-room school house and lived throughout his school years in a house without indoor plumbing or electricity. He was called to the ministry and graduated from Wartburg College and Wartburg Lutheran Seminary, both in Iowa, and did advanced studies at Heidelberg University in Germany and Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He was ordained a Lutheran minister in 1964 and considered himself first and foremost, a pastor. He served congregations in Colorado and Minnesota, was assistant to the bishop in Willmar and then was twice elected bishop of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod. It was in his

second term as bishop that Darold was called to the presidency at Gettysburg Seminary, where he and Marlene lived in the president's house on the battlefield, on Seminary Ridge for ten years. After his retirement in 2000, Darold and Marlene moved to Minneapolis to be near their children and grandchildren. Beekmann's successor, Rev. Cooper-White, went on to say, "It was a privilege to succeed Darold Beekmann at Gettysburg Seminary. Ever the gentleman and churchman extraordinaire, he was uncommonly graceful....Each time I visited him following his retirement, I came away feeling uplifted and enlightened." Darold received an honorary doctorate from Wartburg College where he served on the Board of Trustees. After the death of his first wife, Darold later married Gail Coffler in a small ceremony at ECLC church and together they enjoyed several fulfilling years of international and domestic travel, church programs near and far, and the full cultural life offered by the Twin Cities. They also continued Darold's relationship with the Lutheran Church in El Salvador, which Darold had visited several times, including a harrowing stay during their Civil War when he helped give amnesty to the Lutheran bishop and established a lasting friendship with him. The Presiding Bishop of El Salvador, Medardo Gomez, recently wrote of his special affection for Darold Beekmann "for being one of the people who accompanied my people and my church....His footprints as a servant of God are planted in our history." Condolences have poured in. Mark Hanson, former Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, expressed his "abiding gratitude for Darold--his theological wisdom, his intellectual curiosity, his passion for a just, inclusive world, his listening and his humility." A person of patient, steadfast, diplomatic character, Darold was highly regarded for his skills at conflict resolution. In retirement, he remained active in mentoring younger clergy. "Strong, loving and wise...that was Darold. And he was truly valiant in enduring the health issues of these last years," said his wife, Gail. A private family service has been held. A church service and celebration of Life will be held later in the spring. Memorials could be given in his name to Gettysburg Seminary (now called

United Seminary), to Edina Community Lutheran Church, to the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, or to a charity or project of one's own choice.

Published on January 24, 2021

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT **16**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Edina Chapel
5000 West 50th & Highway 100
Edina, MN 55436
(952) 920-3996
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Chapel Service

OCT **16**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Edina Chapel
5000 West 50th & Highway 100
Edina, MN 55436
(952) 920-3996
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Reception

OCT **16**. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (CT)

Edina Chapel
5000 West 50th & Highway 100
Edina, MN 55436
(952) 920-3996
info@washburn-mcreavy.com

Tribute Wall



“ Washburn-McReavy Funeral Chapels created a Webcast in memory of Darold Henry Beekmann



Washburn-McReavy - October 01, 2021 at 05:37 PM

TB

“ 2 files added to the album Darold Family Album



Tim Beekmann - October 26, 2021 at 06:10 PM

TB

“ 2 files added to the album Memories of Darold



Tim Beekmann - October 26, 2021 at 06:08 PM

HW

“ 2 files added to the album *Darold Family Album*



Heidi L Weippert - October 26, 2021 at 04:16 PM

HW

“ 2 files added to the album *Memories of Darold*



Heidi L Weippert - October 26, 2021 at 04:00 PM

GC

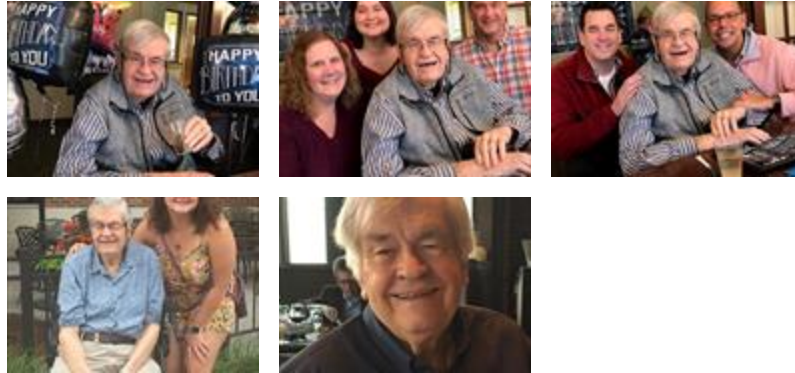
“ 2 files added to the album *Darold Family Album*



gail coffler - October 24, 2021 at 02:30 PM

HW

“ 17 files added to the album Darold Family Album



Heidi Weippert - October 14, 2021 at 10:48 AM

VD

“ Verna M Dixon lit a candle in memory of Darold Henry Beekmann



Verna M Dixon - January 22, 2021 at 08:21 PM

DK

“ Dianne K Kemp lit a candle in memory of Darold Henry Beekmann



Dianne K Kemp - January 21, 2021 at 03:43 PM