



Rev. Dr. Roger L. Anderson

August 15, 1938 - April 8, 2026

Rev. Dr. Roger L. Anderson, died April 8, 2026, at the Gables Care Center of Johanna Shores in Arden Hills.

Roger was born August 15, 1938, in Detroit Lakes, MN, to Rev. Roger W. and Marion (Olson) Anderson. Early years were spent living in Duluth and Svea, MN. A 1956 graduate of Willmar High School, Roger went on to study at Gustavus Adolphus College. It was there, in the choir, that he met Venita (Nita) Swanson. After graduating from Gustavus (1960), Roger went on to Augustana Theological Seminary in Rock Island, IL. He and Nita married in 1962, prior to his year of internship in Des Moines, IA.

Having received his Master of Divinity degree (1964), Roger served congregations in Eveleth (1964-1969), St. Paul (1969-1973), Grand Rapids, MN (1973-1984), Menomonee Falls, WI (1984-1988), and Maplewood, MN (1999-2000). While serving in Grand Rapids, he earned his Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary (1983). He also served as Director of Church Relations for Lutheran Social Service of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, followed by a similar role at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN. He concluded his career working part-time for Kairos and Associates.

A source of some of his favorite stories, Roger served as chaplain for the Minnesota State House of Representatives during the April - July 1971 special

legislative session. He volunteered and ministered beyond the pulpit in every community he served. He was a member of the Grand Rapids School Board for 8 years, acted in community theater, participated in civic organizations and sang in choirs of all kinds. He was especially proud of being part of the decisions that led to the preservation of the Old Central School, and the building of a shopping mall both in downtown Grand Rapids. While on the school board he worked diligently to have the Myles Reif Performing Arts Center constructed as part of the Grand Rapids High School. Also near to his heart was serving on the Board of Directors of Northwestern Theological Seminary, and then the board of Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary when the two schools merged.

Roger went by many names throughout his life: Sonny, Louie, Dad and later Grandpa and PopPop. For his grandchildren, he made ordinary moments magical with stories of the Dala Horse coming to life and tales of the Sugar Lake Monster. Never one to miss a chance to share some history, he often called them close to have a chat about historical or current events. He loved to share pontoon rides in his captain's hat, attend the concerts, plays and sporting events the kids were in, and learn the details of their lives. His children and grandchildren were his favorite topics of conversation. In 1973, Roger and Nita bought a cabin on Sugar Lake. Tallbacken, as it was named, was the center of their family life. It was also where their generous and gracious hospitality was extended to their host of friends. He was active in the Siseebakwet Lake Association, serving on its board, including a term as President. Roger was a gifted storyteller, amateur historian, and political analyst. He always loved a good joke and brightened the room with his infectious laugh. He enjoyed attending musical events and theater, and loved his dogs.

Roger is preceded in death by his parents, his wife Nita, and grandson Micah. He is survived by his three children: David (Gayle), Peter (Angie), and Laura

(Daniel); five grandchildren: Jake, Katie (Ben), Annika, Benji, and Lydia; his sister, Ruth (Paul) Tillquist; a niece, nephews, cousins and sister-in-law Carole (Robert) Minor.

The Funeral Service of Worship will be held on Friday, May 22, 2026, at 11:00 AM at University Lutheran Church of Hope in Minneapolis. Visitation will begin at 10:00 AM. A luncheon will follow the funeral. Inurnment will be at Christ Chapel Memorial Garden, Gustavus Adolphus College.

Memorials preferred to University Lutheran Church of Hope, Gustavus Adolphus College or St. Andrew's Lutheran in Grand Rapids, MN.

Tribute Wall

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“ *My husband (Wayne) and I spent many fun times with Rog and Nita. A weekend getaway to Chicago, their cabin in Wisconsin, their home in Grand Rapids. And of course during his time in Maplewood mn. He buried my husband and married my youngest child. RIP*

Alice Lindahl - May 16 at 09:54 AM