



Walter William Benjamin

October 10, 1926 - March 23, 2024

Walter W. Benjamin passed away at home from cancer in his sleep on March 23, 2024, at the age of 97.

He was preceded in death by son, Bradley; brothers, Robert, Roger, "Dickie"; and sister, Martha. He is survived by wife, Marjorie, 96; daughter, Barbara (David Howell) of Minnetonka; sons, Mark (Cynthia) of Minneapolis, Steven (Diana) of Minnetonka; and sister, Mary Louise ("Weezie") Bowen. He and Marjorie were blessed with four children, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Walter was born in Pipestone, MN on October 10, 1926. He served honorably in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to 1946. He wanted to enlist at the tender age of 17 but couldn't get his Dad (who knew something about war) to sign the papers - which was probably a good thing for us kids what with the kamikaze planes dive bombing ships right and left in the South Pacific. The war ended before he could deploy overseas. Although an average student in public schools, he attended Hamline University where he met Marjorie, marrying her in 1951. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in History. Not satisfied with that, Walter went on to Garrett Theological Seminary, earning a Master of Divinity and Ph.D. from Duke University. He then taught theology at Morningside College, Sioux City, IA from 1957 through 1966. Walter was called by his alma mater one day to come teach at Hamline University and took the job without

even consulting his wife and children (which caused some consternation). He was named head of the Theology Department and taught from 1966 through 1994. When he wasn't teaching, Walter maintained "office hours" with an invitation to all his students to come by and chat about anything on their minds. But he always left promptly at 5:00 pm so he could get home for the Walter Cronkite news.

Walter also led students and alumni groups to England and other European countries. He particularly focused his teaching on historical theology and medical and business ethics. It is this dedication to his students that earned him outstanding teacher of the year at both Morningside College and Hamline University. Walter's typewriter and, later, computer were seldom silent. He wrote many essays and Op-Eds for national journals including Newsweek, the Wall Street Journal, the New England Journal of Medicine, the Washington Post, the Christian Century and the Canadian Humane Journal. He regularly wrote and spoke on medical and business ethics, lecturing widely in the U.S., Canada and Great Britain. Somebody must have noticed because in 1996 Walter was selected by the British, American and Canadian Society for a three-week lecture tour of England and Scotland. He authored three books about growing up during the Great Depression, his stint in the Navy as well as his thoughts on the morality of war and his first battle with cancer in 2010.

Walter cherished his wife, his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and, of course, his students. He enjoyed all forms of sport, especially tennis where he was captain of the Hamline University team in his junior and senior years. Upon his return as a professor, he regularly challenged members of the tennis team and beat them soundly despite being 20 or 30 years older. His family knows this because Walter couldn't stop doing the play-by-play at the family dinner table. He finally stopped playing at the age of 90 because his knees told him so. He loved to fish and hunt. Walter will be very much missed by all except perhaps the fish and wild animals.

A Memorial Service will be held at 10 AM on Saturday, May 18th at Hamline Church, St. Paul, MN. Visitation one hour prior to the service.

Please send your condolences to Marjorie Benjamin, 100 Promenade Ave. N., 405, Wayzata, MN 55391.

In lieu of flowers, Walter's family would like donations to: Presbyterian Homes Foundation FBO Folkestone, 2845 Hamline Ave. N, Roseville, MN 55113; or, Hamline University FBO Bradley Kent Benjamin Memorial Scholarship, 1536 Hewitt Ave. MS-C1917, St. Paul, MN 55104.

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 18. 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM (CT)

Hamline Church United Methodist
1514 Englewood Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55104

Memorial Service

MAY 18. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Hamline Church United Methodist
1514 Englewood Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55104

Tribute Wall

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“*Dr. Benjamin was my college advisor from 1978-1982. He was the first person to mention ministry to me, though I was going on to law school at Georgetown. He connected me with the National Methodist Church in DC as well. I took many of his classes and valued his wisdom. He was going to come here to Rio Verde AZ to do one of our lectures, but he got cancer at that time and could not. He enriched my life and faith. And he was so right about so many things! The Rev. Dr. Cathy Northrup*

The Rev. Dr. Cathy Northrup - April 16, 2024 at 02:22 PM