

## Deaths

**Joseph Perry Priest** (MA '72), 70, of Berrien Springs, passed away at Lakeland Regional Medical Center in St. Joseph on May 19, 2013. He was born to the late James and Josephine Priest on August 15, 1942, in Oliver Springs, Tenn.

Joseph received his BA in music from Southern Missionary College in 1970. In 1972 he earned his master's degree in English from Andrews University, where he also met his wife, Barbara Ann Swope. They were married on June 7, 1971.

Joe loved people and loved to talk. His deep bass voice always rang out in the crowd, whether making quips in the checkout line at the grocery store or sharing insights in Sunday morning Bible class. Joe was an accomplished pianist and vocalist, and a true lover of music. In his college days he worked in radio, first as a DJ at WNIL, later becoming program director of WAUS. Joe was also a stay-at-home father for his three sons. This was such a novelty at the time that in 1983 he appeared on the *Phil Donahue* TV show as a guest!

Although illness often confined Joe indoors, his interests ranged far and wide: tinkering with computers, writing poetry, and composing music were just some of his many hobbies. Joe was an active member of Trinity Lutheran Church & School in Berrien Springs, where he served as an elder and on the school board. Joe was a passionate lover of Scripture and enjoyed nothing more than sharing his Christian faith with anyone, anywhere.

Joseph is survived by his wife Barbara and three sons: Jonathan and his wife Beatrice of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Michael Priest and Jeremy Priest of Berrien Springs; and one granddaughter, Evelyn Priest.

**Wilfrida Ruiz** (MA '95), 91, died at her home in Berrien Springs on Sunday, May 19, 2013. Wilfrida was born October 12, 1921 in Ica, Peru, South America, the daughter of Felix Maximiano Tenorio and Austregilda Bendezu Tenorio. She married Clodomiro Ruiz Rodriguez on July 28, 1955 in Lima, Peru, and he preceded her in death on June 10, 1975.

She dedicated her life as an Adventist educator for 31 years in Peru, her native country. Her passion to educate children extended to her students' homes where she was also able to minister to their families. Her years of teaching extended from elementary to college level. In tune with her desire to minister, she accepted a summer position as women's dean. The students remember her as friendly and caring, gaining not only their love but their respect.



At the age of 53 she became a widow with two teenage daughters. Her determination, perseverance and unshakable trust in God were instrumental in finding the way to send her two daughters to the U.S. in June 1979. In 1981 she retired and moved to the U.S. to be with her daughters, first at Southwestern Adventist College in Keene, Texas, then at Loma Linda University, Riverside, Calif., but it was when they moved to Andrews University that she was able to fulfill a long-time goal to

complete her master's degree in religious education.

After she graduated from Andrews University she moved back to Texas where she had the opportunity to have her own radio program to reach the Spanish community. Her programs were mainly about the importance of a Christian education, health, family and prayer. Her radio program lasted only a year due to declining health, but her service and willingness continued to the end. She willingly attended the last four GC Sessions and still hoped to attend the next one in San Antonio. She loved her church and its mission—the salvation of souls for Christ.

Survivors include her two daughters, **Willyta** (Douglas) **Wamack** (MAYM '06, current staff) of Eau Claire, Mich. and **Luz Haydee Ruiz** (AA '85, BA '97, MDiv '00, current staff) of Berrien Springs, Mich.; three grandchildren, Tanya Wamack-Simpson, Heather Wamack-Hall, and Kimberly Wamack-Allen; five great-grandchildren; and her brothers, Raul Fernando Tenorio Bendezu.

**Neal C. Hamel** (BA '43) passed away at his home on April 15, 2013. He was born in 1921 in Abotsford, Wis.

After graduating from Loma Linda Medical School and taking residencies at the University of Pennsylvania and Olive View Medical Center in Sylmar, he practiced medicine as a cardiothoracic surgeon in the San Fernando Valley for over forty years. He practiced primarily at Valley Presbyterian Hospital, where he served as Chief of Medical Staff in 1976, St. Joseph's Hospital, Holy Cross Hospital and Olive View Medical Center.

He was part of a team that performed the first open-heart surgery in the San Fernando Valley and was a founding

member of the Society of Thoracic Surgeons. Neal was also a veteran and served in the Army. He was honorably discharged as a Captain in 1949. He was also a very accomplished private pilot and was a flight doctor for the FAA. He flew many thousands of hours including flights to Costa Rica, Mexico, Baja California, Alaska, British Columbia and cross-country flights on many occasions. He was a charter member of the Association of Flying Physicians and served as president. He also spent time as a volunteer surgeon and instructor for Project Hope in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Ecuador.

He enjoyed fishing and pheasant and duck hunting with his faithful black lab.

Neal is survived by his wife Ann and children, Marcia Politi (Greg), Neal Halcyon, Ian, Lois Irene, Louis, and Jennie. He has four grandchildren. He is also survived by two brothers, **Lyle** (BS '49) of Waverly, W.V., and **Paul** (DIP2YR '40, BA '48, professor emeritus) of Berrien Springs, Mich.

**Vinamae Pearl (Clark) Losey** (DIP2YR '26) of Horton, Mich., passed away peacefully at home surrounded by her loving family on April 7, 2013, at the age of 108.

She was born Jan. 4, 1905, to William and Mary Clark in Battle Creek, Mich. At the age of 10 she joined the crowd at the Battle Creek Tabernacle on the day of Ellen White's funeral there.

She married Kenneth Losey in 1928 in South Bend, Ind. Before she was married she was a teacher for three years in a one-room schoolhouse. Her passion was teaching and learning and she often tutored children and adults.

After marriage she became a homemaker and a 4-H leader. She loved being outdoors; she enjoyed gardening, planting fruit

trees, and growing garden vegetables. She and Kenneth were beekeepers and Vinamae was known as “The Bee Lady.”

She was a lifelong member of the Seventh day Adventist Church and contributed her longevity to her vegetarian lifestyle and trust in God. She was the oldest alumna of Andrews University.

Pearl is survived by her children, **Florence** (Laurence) **Jerome** (BA '55), Joan (Carl) La Roe, **June Losey** (DIP2YR '62, BS '73), **Kenneth George** (Betty) **Losey** (MDiv '87); seven grandchildren; many great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents and her husband, Kenneth Losey, in 1974.



**Olav Michele LaBianca** (BA '64, MA '65), 89, was born July 29, 1923 in Oslo, Norway, an only child of his Swedish mother and Italian musician father. He died on March 13, 2013, in Springfield, Ore.

As a young man of 20 years, he contracted polio. During his recovery, he was treated by a physical therapist whose Christian witness convicted Olav to join the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a decision which would completely change his future. Olav's adult career path began with training as a physical therapist. It was around this time that

Olav met and married Kirsten Olsen. Together they began their family, which in the course of three years became complete with a daughter and two sons.

Though educated as a physical therapist, Olav was eager to work for the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a pastor. He began in Norway in 1952 as a literature evangelist and weekend pastor of small congregations along the western fjords. Because of his success in selling books and magazine subscriptions in sets, he was soon appointed as leader of the colporteur work for all of Scandinavia.

But Olav's sense of calling, which was rooted in his traumatic encounter with polio, was to the gospel ministry—to serving God as a full-time pastor. He was determined to qualify himself academically. This led him to study at Onsrud Skole in Norway, Newbold College in England, and eventually, after immigrating in 1962 to the United States with his family, at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Mich.

Olav and Kirsten's first post as a ministerial couple here in the United States was in Findlay, Ohio, where they set the pattern for the rest of their years of service. Theirs was to be a ministry devoted to empowering local congregations through building new or renovating old churches; strengthening local church schools; conducting evangelistic series; visiting church members and seekers; and opening their home nearly every Sabbath to church members and visitors. After leaving Ohio, they served similarly in Michigan, Wisconsin and Oregon. He served the Adventist Church for nearly 60 years.

Olav will be remembered for many things: his infectious smile, his enthusiasm for every-

thing and everyone he believed in, his pure delight in listening to Italian operatic music, his diligent practice on the trombone, his persistence in fighting the limitations resulting from polio, his daily reading and marking in his Bible, his unflinching conviction of God's leading in his and Kirsten's life, his gratitude and patience during his final months, and his devotion to his best friend and one true love, Kirsten.

He is survived by Kirsten, his wife for nearly 66 years; Anne-Mari, daughter; **Øystein** (BA '71, current faculty) and wife **Asta** (MA '08, current faculty), and **Tormod** (BA '73) and his wife **Jette** (BA '75), sons; Kristina, Sonja and Ane, granddaughters; **Erik** (BS '01), and his wife **Lisa** (BS '98, MA '02), Stian, **Aren** (BA '07, BS '08), Ivan and Theo, grandsons; and Leif, his great-grandson.

**Beverly Jeanne (Jorgensen) Soper** (BA '56) was born August 9, 1933. She was the only child of Raymond and Berniece Jorgensen. She died on May 2, 2013, only seven weeks after a cancer diagnosis on March 13, 2013.

She graduated high school from Wisconsin Academy and then attended Emmanuel Missionary College (now Andrews University) graduating in 1956 with her degree in elementary education. While attending EMC she met the love of her life, **Marley Huber Soper** (BA '58, MA '77). They were married in 1957 and were married for 55 years. Beverly began teaching school and Marley finished college.

The 1960s brought two children, Scott and Sheila. Marley was teaching at Stanton High School and Beverly was substitute teaching for the local elementary school. Then they moved from Stanton, Mich., to Wisconsin Academy located in Columbus, Wis. During the summers Beverly cared for the

children while Marley earned his master's degree in Library Science.

After six years at Wisconsin Academy they moved back to Michigan. They lived in Berrien Springs for 26 years while Marley worked in the James White Library and Beverly was primarily a stay-at-home mom. Later she began teaching elementary school and eventually she started the first daycare center at Andrews University. She loved planning events and trips for the family and camping outings with friends. One of her goals in life was to step foot in each of the 50 states—and she did!

For several years Beverly was the leader of the cradle roll Sabbath School at Pioneer Memorial Church. She loved working with little children.

Then Marley got a job offer at Florida Hospital College (now Adventist University of Health Sciences) and a new adventure started in Florida. For a few years Beverly worked as an assistant manager for a local RV campground. Then she retired from working but not from planning. She continued to plan cruise trips and excursions to see friends and family.

She is survived by her husband Marley, children Scott Soper and **Sheila (Soper) Evans** (BS '85), and three grandchildren: Alicia, Lorelle and Nicholas.

**Richard William Schwarz** (BA '49), 87, was born on Sept. 11, 1925, near Wataga, Ill., to Mildred Imschweiler and George W. Schwarz. He died on May 16, 2013 in Hawaii.

After graduating from Broadview Academy in 1942, Schwarz attended Emmanuel Missionary College for a year. In the midst of WWII, he returned to the family farm in Illinois and received an Agricultural Deferment from the U.S. Government. In 1944 Dick and his cousin Dale went to the Great Lakes Naval Station northwest of Chicago for basic military training, after which he was dispatched to Madison, Wis., as a radioman. Upset with his refusal to work on Sabbath, he was sent to San Francisco for general sea duty. Schwarz found himself working in the Fleet Post Office for a Jewish supervisor who gave him Sabbaths off and allowed him to live in civilian housing. In 1945 Schwarz was sent to the Philippines, working in Fleet Post offices until the war ended. He was honorably discharged in 1946.

Schwarz graduated from EMC in 1949 with a major in history and minors in business, education and English. Following graduation he returned to Broadview Academy, where he taught history and business courses while serving as librarian and registrar and working on a master's degree in library science at the University of Illinois. On June 11, 1950, he married Joyce Frances Anderson. Their first child, Constance Kay Schwarz, was born on August 30, 1952. In 1953 they accepted a call to Adelphian Academy near Holly, Mich., where Dick taught government, history and economics while serving as assistant librarian. Here their son, Richard Paul Schwarz, was born on March 18, 1955. During his two years at Adelphian, Dick completed his Master of Science in Library Science in 1953 and worked as an assistant librarian at the Minneapolis Public Library.

In 1955 Schwarz began working at Andrews University as an assistant librarian and history economics instructor. After 1958, he taught full-time in the history department while Joyce taught art at the Village SDA School. During those years he taught the first Black History course ever offered at Andrews University, as well as graduate history courses. In 1959 he earned a Master of Arts in history at the University



Richard W. Schwarz

of Michigan and became an assistant professor of history. Their son Dwight Luther Schwarz was born on April 8, 1962. In 1964, Schwarz completed his PhD in history at the University of Michigan.

Schwarz became history department chair in 1966, a position he held for 11 years. In 1968 he was advanced to professor of history and two years later, his revised dissertation was published by Southern Publishing Association as John Harvey Kellogg, M.D. Schwarz also wrote a college-level Adventist history textbook, published in 1979 as *Light Bearers to the Remnant*.

Schwarz became vice president for Academic Administration in 1977. His administrative responsibilities took him to Africa, Mexico and the Caribbean as he consulted with educational institutions affiliated with Andrews University. During the summers, he taught workshops, codirected study tours of Europe, and maintained a rigorous scholarly schedule. In 1987, he resigned as academic vice-president and returned to teaching until his retirement in 1990.

Schwarz published numerous articles and book reviews in journals including *The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, *The Library Journal*, and the *Dictionary of American Biography*. He presented scholarly and professional papers at conferences nationwide, and was a member of many professional organizations including the

American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Alpha Theta, and Phi Kappa Phi.

In addition to his teaching, administrative and scholarly contributions, however, Schwarz dedicated his life to service. From 1971 to 1983 he served on the Board of Editors for Studies in Adventist History. He was frequently consulted by both the Kellogg Museum in Battle Creek, Mich., and the Ellen G. White Estate in Silver Spring, Md. For many years he served as a consulting editor for the *Adventist Heritage Magazine* and editor of the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Historians newsletter. Schwarz spoke often at local volunteer clubs as well as at the Dowagiac Human Relations Council. He also served as a deacon, Sabbath school superintendent, and Seminary Sabbath School teacher at Pioneer Memorial Church. He enjoyed gardening, traveling across America with his family, reading, and volunteering as a reference librarian at the Berrien Springs Community Library.

In 1994 Dick and Joyce moved to Hendersonville, N.C., near Fletcher Academy. During the next 13 years, Dick was an elder in the Fletcher Seventh-day Adventist Church, sat on the board of the Hendersonville Rescue Mission, and joined the Hendersonville Christian Business Men's Club. In 2007, Dick and Joyce joined their son Dwight and his wife Launnies in Kaneohe, Hawaii.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Joyce Frances (Anderson) Schwarz of Kaneohe, Hawaii; daughter **Connie (Schwarz) Smith** (BS '74) and her husband Roger Smith of Eau Claire, Mich.; son **Richard Schwarz II** (BS '77) and his wife Stephanie (VanWart) Schwarz of Visalia, Calif.; son **Dwight Luther Schwarz** (BBA '84) and his wife **Launnies (Reinholtz) Schwarz** (BS '84) of Kaneohe, Hawaii, as well as his grandchildren Kimberly, Chantel, Scott and Caitlin, and several great-grandchildren.

Donations may be made to the Richard Schwarz Memorial Fund at Andrews University. This fund will help to sustain and preserve the Andrews University Arboretum by purchasing commemorative trees. Online donations may be made at [andrews.edu/go/give](http://andrews.edu/go/give). Check and credit card donations may be mailed to: Andrews University, 8903 U.S. 31, Berrien Springs MI 49104-0660.



**Steven Parfitt Vitrano** (BA '45, MA '58), father, pastor, evangelist, missionary, educator, teacher and author, passed away on May 4, 2013 in Auburn, Calif.

Vitrano was born on Oct. 18, 1922, in New London, Wis. When he was four weeks old his family moved to Chicago where his father had been called to be the pastor of the Italian church. It was there that he met **Tony Castelbuono** (BA '48), who he considered one of his best lifelong friends and was fortunate to work together with at Andrews University for years. When his father fell ill 12 years later, Vitrano moved back to Milwaukee to live with an aunt and uncle and go to school at Boys Technical School. It was during his high school years that he worked on a dairy farm, a sawmill and in residential construction. The skills he learned helped him to build several churches and a personal residence in later life. During that time, he also traveled with a physician uncle to Texas and Mexico and seeing poverty at its worst had a significant impact in future life decisions.

Out of high school, his career plans were to be a graphic artist, but that changed when he committed to serving his church. He worked various jobs for two years until he had enough money to enroll at Emmanuel Missionary College.

After graduating in 1945, and marrying **Charlene Smith** (BA '46, MA '69) in 1946, Vitrano spent seven years as an evangelistic pastor in the Illinois Conference, serving as pastor of the Centralia church. It was there that he met Frank Vessels, who had also graduated from EMC and the two of them became like brothers, building the Centralia church and holding evangelistic series throughout the state. They could be best described as the Cliff Barrows (Frank) and Billy Graham (Steve) of the Adventist Church.

During that time, he felt the calling of the Lord to become a missionary and, beginning in 1952, he and Charlene spent five fulfilling and enjoyable years in India. While there, he was the ministerial secretary of the Northwest India Union and pastor of the New Delhi Church. As a result of his evangelistic efforts, one of his many converts established more than 50 churches in the region. His house was full of Indian me-



Steven P. Vitrano

mentos and his files were full of letters from those he came into contact with during that time, including the family servant who also converted to Seventh-day Adventism.

In 1957, with every intent to return to the mission field after a yearlong furlough, he completed his MA at the Seminary in Takoma Park, Md. While there, he received an invitation to become a faculty member at his alma mater, which he couldn't resist primarily due to the influence of one of his other professors at EMC, Edwin Thiele.

Beginning in 1958 and for the next 40 years, he served EMC, later renamed Andrews University, as a professor of religion and philosophy, serving both in the Religion Department and the Theological Seminary. During his long tenure, in which he delighted in preparing students for the ministry, he was chair of the Department of Religion, director of Field Education, chair of the Department of Church & Ministry and, for a short time, served as acting dean of the Seminary. His files were similarly filled with letters of appreciation and requests for references from the leading preachers in the Church and it would be safe to say that, for a while, not one Adventist preacher in the nation, dare say even the world, had not come under the tutelage and guidance of Steven Vitrano.

During his time at Andrews, he worked on his doctorate at Michigan State University during the summers and took a 15-month

sabbatical in 1962 to complete work on his dissertation, entitled "The Chicago Sunday Evening Club: A study in Contemporary Preaching." It was later published by that organization as *An Hour of Good News*. Vitrano authored more than four other books on preaching and wrote numerous articles appearing in both Adventist and non-Adventist religious periodicals, the last one as late as 2009. He had several sermons in the series of books entitled *Best Sermons*, which were printed in the late 1980s. He loved discussing hermeneutics and homiletics with contemporaries and was a member of the Academy of Homiletics.

He technically left the tenured employment of Andrews University in 1988 as a professor emeritus in Preaching, Worship and Evangelism, but continued as a contract teacher until full retirement in 1998, when he moved to Auburn to be closer to family. Even then, he served his church by teaching at Weimar Institute up the road in Colfax, Calif., as well as serving on its board of directors.

Vitrano was buried on June 9, 2013, next to his beloved Charlene, whom he was married to for 60 years. Charlene preceded him in death in 2006 but not before they fulfilled a promise made to each other in their 20s to roller skate at the age of 80. A roller rink in Roseville, Calif., opened early and played "Unforgettable" while Steve and Charlene skated, hand-in-hand, around the rink.

He leaves behind a sister, **Ruth Merkel** (BA '89, former staff); three children, a daughter, Joyce Dirnberger and sons **Edwin** (BS '73) and **Roger** (BA '82); six grandchildren (Marc, Brian, Alle, Amy, David, Douglas) and three great-grandchildren. Fittingly, **Roy Castelbuono** (BA '79, MDiv '83, DMin '01), Tony's son, officiated at the graveside service.

The following was found in a biographical sketch in his files. "Teaching at Andrews University for 40 years is, to a major degree, the story of my life. For me, it could not have been better. Andrews will always be 'at home' to me. A wonderful place...a wonderful life."

**Allan R. Buller** (BA '41), 95, of Worthington, Ohio, passed away at home Saturday, March 23, 2013, holding the hand of his wife Mickey and surrounded by other family.

He was born Dec. 2, 1917, in Morse, Sask., Canada to the late Jacob and Stella Buller, who later emigrated to South Dakota and then Michigan.

Allan attended grade school in Michigan, graduated from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, and later received an MBA at Ohio State University. He served in the U.S. Army during WWII as a staff sergeant. At 24, and supervising a staff of 8, he accomplished in 1 month the complete stocking of a 1,400-bed military field hospital.

He married college sweetheart Mildred Elizabeth Walberg in 1942. After the war, they moved to Worthington for Allan's new job at Worthington Foods, where he joined an innovative team of pioneers in the vegetarian food industry. He was CEO of Worthington Foods when he retired in 1985, and continued with the company on their Board of Trustees.

He was a longtime member of the Worthington Seventh-day Adventist Church and was instrumental in planning and

building both churches and the associated school.

Allan was a great accomplisher; he worked hard and played hard. He was a fan of any OSU Buckeye team, and was a lifelong golfer, once playing in a dream foursome with Jack Nicklaus and Bob Hope.

He was a founding member of the Worthington Prayer Breakfast, and a member of the Worthington Chamber of Commerce, Lions, Rotary Club, Harding Evans Foundation and many other organizations. He was involved in a wide range of charitable projects, too many to list; all were close to his heart.

He was a great traveler; with his wife, he traveled to 50 states and 48 countries on six continents. He was very active in hiking, camping, and planning the famous "annual family vacation." He enjoyed carpentry, a skill he learned from his father. He kept an immaculate yard and was proud to win "Yard of the Month."



Allan Buller, for whom Buller Hall was named, at the dedication of the building on July 29, 2011

Allan was a devoted and loving son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Lloyd Buller and sisters, **Verda Trickett** (BA '44) and Bertha Steeger. He is survived by his beloved wife of 70 years, **Mickey** (DIP2YR '39, BA '41); daughters C.B. Buller, Jann Buller (John Curran), Suzy Juarros (Thom), and son Allan "Al" G. Buller; and grandchildren, Amanda Crump, Sierra Juarros (Chris Arnett), and Savannah Juarros.

**Edith C. Davis** (MA '65), 99, of Berrien Springs, died on Wednesday, May 1, 2013, at Lakeland Specialty Hospital in Berrien Center, Mich. Edith was born April 5, 1914, in Hyde Park, Vt., the daughter of Harry and Alice (Holbrook) Davis.

She received her elementary education in a one-teacher school in the small community of Garfield in the town of Hyde Park. Her junior high and high school years were spent in the village of Hyde Park at Lamoille Central Academy, graduating in 1931.

Edith earned her Bachelor of Arts in 1935 at Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Mass., with majors in English, Bible and education. After graduation, she taught elementary and junior-high church schools in Maine, then served as Bible instructor in the Northern New England Conference from 1938–42. During that time their district of seven churches was without a pastor for six months and she was asked to pastor the district. This including taking three church services each Sabbath, meeting with

the church boards and instructing local elders on how to conduct communion.

She responded to a call to teach at Middle East College in Beirut, but because of wartime, the trip to Lebanon via South America took 11 months. She studied Arabic en route. She taught at the college from 1945–1960 and also served as dean of women, principal of the elementary and secondary schools, and chair of the education and languages departments. In 1950 she received her master's degree from Pacific Union College in Angwin, Calif., with a major in education and a minor in English.

She came to Andrews Academy in 1962,



Edith C. Davis

where she taught English with distinction until 1985. She was one of two first women elders in the Village Seventh-day Adventist Church, where she held membership for 33 years.

In 1965 she was granted her master's from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich., with a major in English and a minor in education. To receive teacher's certification, she took postgraduate work at Andrews University in history, speech, and journalism.

Edith dedicated her life to teaching and mentoring, both in formal and non-formal settings, serving her church as teacher, Bible instructor, pastor, dean of women and missionary—making a difference in hundreds of lives.

**Reger Cutting Smith** (BA '49) was born on Oct. 19, 1926, to Rothacker and Pearl Smith in Conneaut, Ohio. He died on March 6, 2013, in Berrien Springs, Mich.

When he was six months old his mother died, and Eleanor Williams became his stepmother and truly his mother. The youngest of three boys, Reger was known for his intellect and individuality, and loved displaying his knowledge by using big words. His experience with Christian education began at Adelphian Academy in Holly, Mich., and continued at Emmanuel Missionary College in Berrien Springs, Mich.

After one year of college Reger was inducted into the U.S. Army and served one year. At the age of 19 he returned to EMC to continue his education. His father, a minister with the Lake Region Conference, was assigned to a new congregation in nearby Benton Harbor. He told Reger about one of the newly baptized young ladies, someone he thought “was just the type of future wife he was looking for.” Upon meeting Katherine Baker, then 16, Reger wholeheartedly agreed with his Dad and courted her for four years. Reger graduated with a BA in English with minors in French, education and history in 1949, and married Katherine in 1950. To this union was born Merridith, Reger Jr., Marjorie and Susan. All four children are graduates of Andrews University. This marriage lasted for 63 years.

Following graduation, Reger became a principal/teacher at a 10-grade Adventist church school, first in Inkster and then in Cassopolis, Mich. After five years of teaching, he was required to go back to school to maintain his teacher certification. He had no money. His salary as a church school teacher was \$35 dollars per week; when he married, his salary was raised to \$36.50. The State of Michigan was offering to help pay for a master’s in social work in exchange for five years of service. Reger earned a Master of Social Work from Michigan State University in 1960 while at the same time, from 1954–1962, he worked for the Michigan Department of Social Services.

From 1962–1964 he headed a branch of a state-wide adoption agency, and also worked for the Children’s Aid Society. In 1964 the family moved to Arizona, where he was a social worker for the Bureau of Indian



Reger C. Smith

Affairs on the Pima Indian Reservation, near Phoenix. From 1966–67 he accepted an offer to develop and head a multiservice center in Phoenix as a part of the War on Poverty. This center was unique in that it offered 17 services, housed under one roof, and provided free transportation.

In 1967, Andrews University invited Reger to develop a social work program. He was half-time faculty, teaching in the Behavioral Sciences department. During the other half-time, he directed the Tri-County Community Action Program of Southwestern Michigan, another War on Poverty Program in Benton Harbor, Mich. active in the 1960s, and also worked as a counselor for the Samaritan Counseling Center in St. Joseph, Mich. He later taught part-time at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, and began working on his doctorate at Michigan State University in Lansing, Mich. In 1978 he earned his PhD, an interdisciplinary doctorate in the areas of social work, sociology and anthropology. He was also a licensed marriage and family therapist, with a private practice. He and Katherine, also a social worker, conducted many seminars on marital growth and development throughout the United States and Bermuda.

He wrote more than a dozen articles for lay journals and authored a book, *Two Cultures, One Marriage*, on premarital counseling for mixed marriages. From 1967–1979 he

taught at Andrews where he developed the undergraduate social work program, one of the first in an Adventist college to receive accreditation, and he then began the development of the graduate program.

During 1980–1988 he left the teaching of social work to become the vice president for Student Affairs. In 1989 he returned to the social work department to reactivate the dormant BSW program, leading it through another successful accreditation process two years later. He was a major driving force in the establishment of the MSW program, which was completed after his retirement.

Being an active church member was important to him. Throughout his adult life he was a deacon, head elder, choir director, Earliteen Sabbath School leader, and pathfinder director. He and Katherine were the first couple to serve as co-head elders at Pioneer Memorial Church, which they faithfully did for eight years. They then served as church social workers for seven years. Reger also taught the same Sabbath School class for 25 years, with Katherine serving as hostess and outreach planner. He enjoyed being a member of PMC for 45 years. In the community he was chair of the board for the Adventist Community Services Center, and was instrumental in developing it into the current Neighbor to Neighbor. He retired from Andrews in 1996 but continued to teach until 1998. In 2001, Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Ill., invited him to serve as chair and teacher of their social work department while they sought program accreditation. He commuted and stayed three days each week for five years. In 2006 they received their accreditation and he retired for the second time, at the age of 80.

He is survived by his wife, **Katherine (Baker)** (BA '71); two daughters, **Marjorie (Russell) Bates** (BS '79, current staff) and Susan Smith; his oldest brother, **Rothacker (Dorothy) Smith** (BA '49) of Huntsville, Ala.; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his daughter, **Merridith Smith-Dickerson** (BS '74) in 1998; his son, **Reger (Sonny) C. Smith Jr.** (BS '76) in 2008, and his middle brother, **Nelson** (BA '56), in 2007.