



The Rev. Donald LeRoy Gokee Ph.D

August 8, 1933 - November 17, 2017

The Reverend Doctor Donald LeRoy Gokee was translated from the church militant to the church triumphant on November 17, 2017. A faithful servant to his Lord Jesus Christ, he was born August 8, 1933 in Lansing, Michigan to Richard Alden Gokee and June Elizabeth Colenso Gokee. He was educated in Michigan, Tennessee and Virginia and was ordained to the ministry November 28, 1965. Graduate studies continued at Union Theological Seminary as well as in Edinburgh, Scotland, Frankfurt, Germany, and Athens, Greece. He received his PhD in religion and literature from Columbia Theological Seminary, and was a member of Phi Psi Sigma honorary scholastic fraternity. Donald served as Director of Christian Education at Central Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga, TN, as Associate for Youth and Christian Education, then Associate Pastor at Fairlington Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, VA, followed by Associate Pastor for Youth and Christian Education at Pine Shores Presbyterian Church in Sarasota, and the last 23 years of active ministry as Senior Pastor of Conway Presbyterian Church in Orlando, FL. After retirement in 1992, he became Pastor Emeritus of Conway, and subsequently of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church when Conway merged with Grace.

In the larger church, Donald served on numerous committees of Presbytery, served on Synod's council, was a charter member of the General Assembly's Task Force on Criminal Justice, and represented Synod on the Assembly's

Ecumenical Coordinating Team. In addition, Donald served as an athletic coach and director of the Boys' Club of Chattanooga, and Director of Youth for Christ in Sarasota. During his early ministry, his family fostered four children, and throughout his ministry eleven young men attended seminary then entered the gospel ministry. He served as Vice President of Ministries and Director of Christian Education for the State of Virginia and President of the Ministerial Association in Sarasota. He also founded numerous ecumenical worship, study and dialogue programs in his local communities, was a frequent speaker on college campuses, conducted preaching missions in the US and Mexico with his youth groups, and served as a conference speaker at Massanetta Springs, VA and Montreat, NC.

In the Orlando community, Donald was appointed by the Governor and served for many years as Chaplain in the Orange County Juvenile Justice System, leading drug therapy sessions for recovering juvenile offenders. He was involved in crisis intervention ministries at hospitals, volunteered and rode with deputies from the Orange County Sheriff's Office, and served in the early volunteer chaplaincy program at ORMC. In recognition of these efforts, his work on Civil Rights and contributions to the rehabilitation of incarcerated male youth, he was presented the Key to the City by Mayor Bill Frederick. In 1980, he and his family were also presented the "In God We Trust" Award by the Family Foundation of America.

Donald was also a talented artist, creating bulletin designs for his churches, cherished sketches for friends and family, and cartoons to delight his grandchildren. His melodious voice sang in gospel quartets, led youth choirs, and serenaded his wife. Inspiring and appreciated for his intellect and wit, he made many literary contributions and was a published author, having contributed to various journals and periodicals. He was a contributing editor for Pulpit Digest, and his poetry appeared in the American Poetry Anthology. His sermons inspired and challenged many and his book "It's a Love Haunted

World,” was well received by the religious and academic public.

Donald’s family will best remember him for his devotion, loyalty, and lovingly firm guidance. He was involved with his children as a wrestling coach, soccer coach, supporter of all interests, editor of term papers, trivia master, and teacher of hunting, fishing, golfing and shooting pool. He supported his wife of 43 years in her vocation and scholastic aspirations without reservation.

Donald’s legacy is that of faithful servant, devoted husband, loving father, and adoring grandfather and great grandfather, as well as inspiring preacher, gifted writer, and eternal knowledge seeker. He will be sorely missed yet we rejoice that he is home and safe in the arms of Jesus!

In addition to his parents, Donald was preceded in death by infant siblings William and Patty. He is survived by his wife, Maxine Elaine, and children Douglas Richard of Brandon, Charles Jeffrey (Peggy Sue) of St. Cloud, MaryBeth of Williston, Jessica Lynn (Marc) LaRose of Richmond, VA; and grandchildren Rebecca Kinnan (Dan) Hixon of USAF, Ashleigh Elizabeth (Clifton) Chapman of Kenansville, Wade Turner Gokee of St. Cloud, Aaron Vance Gokee of St. Cloud, Alden Davis Gokee of St. Cloud, Addison Marie Gokee of Lakeland, Tanner Mantle Gokee of Lakeland, and Grace Elizabeth LaRose of Richmond, VA; and Chapman great-grandsons Rowdy Luke, Ryder Justus, Rustyn Eli, and Rooke Shiloh, all of Kenansville. Additionally, Donald is survived by his sister Shirley (Marvin) Seal of East Lansing, MI, nephew David (Melanie) Seal of East Lansing, MI, and niece Jamie Sue Seal (Kurt) Eisler of Laingsburg, MI.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Donald’s memory to Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, 1655 Peel Avenue, Orlando 32806. Visitation is Friday 11/24 from 5-8pm at Community Funeral Home. A memorial service will be held Saturday 11/25 at 11:00am at Grace Covenant with reception to

follow. Burial will be private.

Cemetery Details

Greenwood Cemetery

1603 Greenwood Street
Orlando, FL 32801

Previous Events

Viewing

NOV **24**. 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

A Community Funeral Home & Sunset Cremations
910 W. Michigan Street
Orlando, FL 32805
(407) 841-4424
<https://www.acommunityfuneralhome.com/>

Service

NOV **25**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church
1655 Peel Ave
Orlando, FL 32806

Tribute Wall



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of The Rev. Donald LeRoy Gokee Ph.D.* ”



November 24, 2017 at 10:47 AM



“ *Sharon & Jack Toolan lit a candle in memory of The Rev. Donald LeRoy Gokee Ph.D* ”



Sharon & Jack Toolan - November 20, 2017 at 09:13 PM



“ *Divine Peace Bouquet was purchased for the family of The Rev. Donald LeRoy Gokee Ph.D.* ”



November 20, 2017 at 03:23 PM



“ *Beautiful in Blue was purchased for the family of The Rev. Donald LeRoy Gokee Ph.D.* ”



November 20, 2017 at 03:08 PM

NM

“ *Naoly Mathison lit a candle in memory of The Rev. Donald LeRoy Gokee Ph.D*



Naoly Mathison - November 20, 2017 at 09:36 AM