



Reverend George A. Tanner

October 1, 1933 - February 22, 2023

With the same grace and confidence he demonstrated throughout his life, the Reverend George A. Tanner passed away peacefully at Belvedere Nursing and Rehab on February 22, 2023. Born on October 1, 1933 in Fordyce, Arkansas, he was raised by two devoted parents, Conrad Harold “Bill” and Minnie Mae Adair Tanner. His childhood, spent surrounded by family and friends, was filled with love and playful adventures. From the pulpit in his adult life, he would describe walking to the First United Methodist Church in Fordyce with his paternal grandfather, brother and two cousins, Charles and Kenneth, where the seeds for his future career were sown.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his wife and partner of nearly 66 years, Mary Sue Smith Tanner. George leaves his brother and sister-in-law, Jim and Marilynn Tanner, and his two sons and angelic daughters-in-law, Gary Tanner and Denise Chamblee and Scott and Connie Hickman Tanner to share stories and inspiration that his life and legacy helped create.

Seeking a future envisioned by his parents, George left Fordyce to pursue an education at Hendrix College. While at Hendrix, he formed enduring friendships. He also began his loving relationship with his future bride while both were students at Hendrix. Following graduation from Hendrix, George spent a year on staff at the former Winfield United Methodist Church in downtown Little Rock while he awaited Sue’s graduation. In the fall of 1956

following their wedding, George and Sue moved to Durham, North Carolina where George received a master's in divinity at Duke University.

Upon return to Arkansas, George served as Director of the Wesley Foundation at the former Southern State College in Magnolia. Sue took a hiatus from classroom teaching to begin producing and raising their two sons, and first and only grandchildren on both sides of the family tree. In addition to being Director of the Wesley Foundation, George taught classes in English and Philosophy. Enjoying the comradery and intellectual challenge of several bright, promising students, George elected to pursue a PhD in philosophy at the University of Oregon in Eugene with plans to remain in the world of academia. However, his first two semesters were spent largely defending the role and purpose of religion in modern life amongst his fellow doctoral students. George revisited and recommitted to his original goal as written in November 1955 of "settling down in Arkansas and raising a most wonderful family and to being the parsonage family of some small church."

George returned to his native state and served as associate pastor at First United Methodist Church in Pine Bluff. He went on to serve as senior minister in Lake Village, Camden and Dumas helping build and strengthen communities. He developed strong, lasting bonds with many friends along the way. He then spent several years in the Arkansas Methodist Headquarters in Little Rock, first serving as Executive Director of the Little Rock Conference Council on Ministries and then as Superintendent of the Little Rock District. He was also honored to be named as a trustee of Hendrix College. Following a decade in church administration, he then became senior minister at Village United Methodist Church in Hot Springs Village, delightfully serving out his ministry until his retirement as senior minister in 1997.

George cited having received sage advice early in his marriage to travel early and often "while you have your health and not wait 'til you have more time and

money.” He and his lifelong and willing travelling companion attended several World Methodist Conferences and his family spent a summer in Rugeley, England during a pulpit exchange in the summer of 1977. He and Sue also led groups from Hot Springs Village on tours of the Holy Land and made multiple trips across Europe with Ireland being a favored destination. He recalled fondly being named “unofficial personal attaché” to retired Army Major General Bill Lefler while the two couples drove across France in search of Normandy Beach. Building memories and feeding insatiable curiosity, George and Sue visited every continent except Antarctica.

But George always rejoiced in returning to Hot Springs Village, a community he called home longer than anywhere he lived. Countless hours were spent with dear friends and family gathering for meals, dancing at the DeSoto Club, and enjoying time on the golf courses. Once he determined his back and joints could no longer be reliable on the links, he would enjoy gathering on the veranda overlooking the 18th hole enjoying onion rings and libations with a trusted council of friends who would share their trials and tribulations and commenting on world events.

A celebration of George’s life will be held at Village United Methodist Church, 200 Carmona Road in Hot Springs Village on March 10, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, the family requests you consider memorials to Village United Methodist Church (villageumc.net) or Hendrix College in Conway (hendrix.edu).

Previous Events

Celebration of Life

MAR **10**. 2:00 PM.

Village United Methodist Church
Hot Springs Village, AR

Tribute Wall

DL

“ George was a wonderful college room mate and I followed Reverend Tanner's life with admiration . I miss him and Mrs Tanner.
Dennis Lucy, M.D.

Dennis D Lucy - March 12, 2023 at 10:48 AM

DL

“ George was a wonderful college room mate and I followed Reverend Tanner's life with admiration. I miss him and Mary Sue.
Dennis Lucy,M.D.

Dennis D Lucy - March 10, 2023 at 10:04 AM

KF

“ My deepest condolences to the Tanner family. I will always remember them both, fondly. George always made fun of my hair when I would wear it up, and asked me when I was having the knot removed from my head. haha And, Mary was always so kind and fun. We miss them both!

Kristen Farley-GSS therapy

Kristen Farley - March 08, 2023 at 12:03 PM

DA

“ A dear friend who enriched our lives and the lives of countless others. His respect for others, including those who had a different worldview, created friendships that opened doors to ministry that many pastors fail to experience. I've believed that his view of a great God enabled him to see something good in everyone. He modeled ministry in a great way. I wish we had more pastors like George. He will be missed. God's blessings on his family. - David and Carolyn Wilson

David - March 01, 2023 at 11:00 PM