

Sheldon Baker

Stephenson

None - Jan. 4, 2014

Sheldon Baker Stephenson, 93, of Grace Ridge, Morganton, NC, died Saturday, January 4, 2014 at Grace Ridge Health Care Center. He was born in Hornell, New York, son of the late Sheldon Canfield and Minerva Baker Stephenson. Raised in Syracuse, NY, Sheldon graduated from Eastwood High School in 1938. He was a 1942 graduate of Syracuse University College of Forestry majoring in Organic Chemistry and Pulp and Paper Manufacturing. During this time he had a life-changing moment in which he committed his life to Jesus Christ. He then went to Boston University School of Theology, graduating with honors in 1945. In May of 1944 he married Charlotte Marion Love, a beautiful, talented, and caring person. Upon graduation, he was appointed Assistant Minister at First Methodist Church, Syracuse, NY. He then served as the Minister of Minoa/N. Manlius Methodist Church from 1946-52; the First Methodist Church of Penn Yan from 1952-1962; and St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Ithaca, NY from 1962-1974. From 1974-1978 he served as District Superintendent of the Central New York Conference, supervising 85 churches and their pastors. He then served as pastor of Manlius United Methodist Church from 1978-1985. During his ministry from 1945-1996 he preached over 2500 sermons, and officiated at the baptism of over 800 children, 700 marriages, and 1000 funerals. Several highlights of his ministerial career include preaching missions to Mexico, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua; leading a group of ministers to Russia to promote peace during the Cold War; and marching with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Washington, DC. at the time of his "I have a Dream" speech. Upon

retirement in 1985 he moved with Charlotte to a farm in Trumansburg, NY where he rode his Morgan horse and tended honeybees. During this time he served as a semi-retired pastor of Mecklenburg and Jacksonville United Methodist churches. He and his wife selected Grace Ridge as a final home where they moved in January 1994. As part of their life in Morganton, they joined the First United Methodist Church, and became active members of the Sunday Aldersgate Class. Always looking for ways to serve the community, Sheldon volunteered at Grace Hospital in the Emergency Room, gave the invocation at the Morganton City Council and the local AARP. He served as Chaplain with the Morganton Dept. of Public Safety, riding up to 3 evenings a week with Police officers until he was 90 years of age. He also volunteered as a reading coach for an elementary school, an Usher at CoMMA, a greeter at Christmas Cheer, and helped out in a Soup Kitchen. Sheldon is survived by his 3 children and their spouses, Tom and Wendy Stephenson of Brooklyn, NY; Mark and Kristin Stephenson of Napa, CA; and Marcia Stephenson and Tom Broden of West Lafayette, IN; as well as 3 grandchildren: Graham Sheldon, Claire, and Lucas of Napa, CA. A memorial service will be held at First Methodist Church in Morganton on Saturday, January 11, 2014 at 11:00 a.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Burke United Christian Ministries, 305 W. Union St. Morganton, NC 28655.

Tribute Wall

No tributes added yet.