

Charles Walter "Bud" Hendry, Jr.
March 9, 2018

On the 5th of December 2009, Bud Hendry wrote me a letter expressing his wishes for a Service of Witness to the Resurrection. It is probably the most unusual letter of this type that I have ever received (which will come as no surprise to anyone here.)

Bud lists no preference for scripture passages or hymns or prayers to be included in the liturgy. He simply says, "Let it be only a service of remembrance and celebration as you may ordinarily conduct." As for who should speak at the service, he is crystal clear: ". . . I do not want any eulogies by family or friends at the service. In other words, I prefer that only your voice is to be heard from the pulpit."

So, there you have it. The ball is in my court and that's the way Bud wants it. I have never read in print a kinder way of saying "Keep it short and sweet, preacher. And if you can't make it sweet, keep it short."

Bud Hendry came to Florida State University before it was Florida State University. He was among that first cohort of 500 male students brought to the Florida State College for Women after World War II. The recently demobbed captain in the Army Air Corps lived in barracks south of town as he began his academic studies. When he expressed an interest in earning a Master's Degree in Geology, he was more or less told to write up his own curriculum. At that point, no one had ever earned a Master's Degree in Geology at Florida State University. Bud was the first.

However, it was not his skill at math and science that attracted a young co-ed named Patricia Lee Merrell. It was the fact that he had "kind eyes." That co-ed married the young geologist with the kind eyes, and their covenant endured until her death 55 ½ years later.

In his thirty-seven years of service to the State of Florida, Bud advanced not only knowledge of Florida's unique natural resources, but also the preservation of its delicate ecology. It was Bud who advised the State that there was not enough ground water on St. George Island to support commercial development of the entire island. Why not make part of the island a park? he suggested. If it had not been for Bud, there would be no St. George Island State Park.

Bud was the world's leading expert on Florida's springs and even co-authored a book on the subject, with the intriguing title, "Springs of Florida."

As Chief of the Bureau of Geology, Bud attracted the favor, and quite often, the ire of developers. I am quite certain the phosphate industry was glad to see him retire in 1988. His children and friends remember the time that the oil company Exxon sent him a case of fifth

prime steaks – all of the finest cuts. He gave every one of those steaks away – not to his friends, and certainly not to his family – but to a nearby ministry to homeless people.

Bud served the public with integrity. May that tribe, so rare in today's headlines, prosper.

Bud was a churchman. He was a superb Sunday School teacher, I am told, and a conscientious elder. He made frequent home visits and once built a pyramid in a classroom so that Sunday School scholars could practice being slaves in Egypt building pyramids before being led by Moses across the Red Sea and onward to the Promised Land.

By the time I arrived to be pastor of this church, Bud was no longer on the session, but the first time we opened our doors on frigid nights to welcome homeless people in, Bud showed up to move the furniture, assemble the cots, and sit up all night. One of my fondest memories of the beginning of what became the Kearney Center is the sight of Bud Hendry and Kent Miller welcoming homeless neighbors to their church to spend the night.

Bud was a family man. Walt and Sarah speak fondly of outings on Saturdays, vacations in the mountains and at St. George Island, and being present almost every time the church doors opened. Mention was made by an unnamed sibling of being at the beach and having to tune in the Sunday morning service of First Presbyterian Church on a scratchy a.m. radio. Even at the beach, family and church came first.

Bud's niece and nephew, Martie and John, called him "Bud," not "Uncle Bud," but he was more than an uncle to them. Bud and Pat became surrogate parents and even surrogate grandparents to nieces and nephews and their children. It's mighty handy to have an uncle who will go with you to the emergency room when you split your head open playing T-ball and will also help you with your 8th grade science project. Apparently, Bud was also pretty good at hiding Easter eggs in the grass on Atapha Nene.

The newer members of this church weren't around when Bud and Pat joined other church members in support of civil rights and racial integration. It's hard for us today to imagine the courage that took back then. This congregation would have taken a very different path had it not been for key leaders like Bud Hendry.

Bud also valued his friends and nurtured deep relationships through the years. Many of those friends, like Bud, have entered the Church Triumphant. Today we give thanks for that tie that binds and the love that defies the grave.

In recent years, Bud's health declined as his frustration grew. He was not a man accustomed to inactivity, and he didn't care for the limits that come with institutional living. Last weekend he enjoyed a visit with Sarah, Walt, and Janet. He went to sleep on Monday, and did not wake in the morning – that is, he did not wake into this world, but rather into the world to come.

So far, we have followed Bud's instruction in that you have heard only one voice from this pulpit, but even he, in his admirable and somewhat stubborn modesty, could not stop us from joining our voices in thanks to God for the life and witness of Charles Walter Hendry, Jr.

**Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, says the Spirit.
They rest from their labors and their works follow them.**

From the prayers:

. . . We praise you for the great company of the faithful whom he has brought through death to behold your face to face in glory, and for those among them whom we have known and loved.

Especially we thank you for your servant Charles, for the gift of his life,
for all in him that was good and kind and faithful, for the grace you gave him
that kindled in him the love of your dear name, and enabled him to serve you with courage and joy.

For his faithfulness to Pat in their marriage of 55 years,
for vows kept, love renewed, and covenant unbroken.

For the joy he found in family
and his commitment to all his loved ones,
for family pleasures and good memories,
for long days at Big Ridge,
and time made precious by its passing.

For his faithfulness to your church
and his leadership in troubled times.
For children nurtured to love and serve you,
and the example he set for us to follow.

For his enduring integrity
and his modest ways,
for praise deserved but deflected,
and credit happily given to others.

For his keen intellect and quick humor,
for friendships maintained across the decades.

Rest eternal grant unto him, O Lord,
and let light perpetual shine upon him . . .