



Richard Frothingham PhD

August 29, 2019

Richard Frothingham, PhD, 93, of Little Rock, passed away on August 29, 2019. He was born in New York City to Richard Frothingham, MD, and Eleanor Hutchinson. Orphaned young, but blessed with good schools and a good church, he developed compassion and a love of learning. All his life, he used his resources to help all kinds of people through his careers as an army chaplain, a Presbyterian minister, and a college professor.

Dick grew up in New York City with his stepmother, Florie Deutsch Frothingham, MD, and his half-brother, Harry. He graduated from Stuyvesant High School and enlisted in the US Army during World War II. He served in the 656 field artillery unit in Germany and Czechoslovakia, visiting the concentration camp at Dachau soon after its liberation. The only thing Dick ever shot at while enlisted was a rabbit - which he missed.

Dick began his college education at a GI American University in Biarritz, France, while waiting to return to the United States. He finished his college education at Wooster College in Ohio. While at Wooster, he joined a leftwing organization, the Student League for Industrial Democracy. He remained engaged with socially progressive politics throughout his life. After graduating from Wooster in 1948, he studied for the ministry at the Oberlin Theological Seminary in Ohio, graduating in 1951. At Oberlin, he went on a blind date and met the love of his life, Mary Elizabeth Mosse. They began their 67-year marriage on June 28, 1952. Late in life, Dick took to composing sonnets for her.

Two small churches in Ohio shared Dick's pastoral services until he reentered the military during the Korean War as a chaplain stationed in El Paso, Texas. He continued in the Army Reserve as a chaplain, reaching the rank of colonel. His reserve stints included teaching a World Religions course to help Army chaplains understand the diverse religious customs and needs of soldiers in their outfits.

Dick returned to New York City to pursue a PhD at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, writing a thesis on the Unitarianism of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. While in New York, Dick and Mary welcomed two sons, Richard in 1956 and Thomas

James in 1960. He began his first faculty appointment at Doane College in Crete, Nebraska. While in Nebraska, they welcomed their third son, Edward Paul, in 1961.

In the summer of 1962, the family moved to Little Rock, where Dick began teaching in the Departments of Philosophy and Religion at Little Rock University. Dick was the faculty sponsor for the first Black Students Union on campus. At a recent UALR symposium held in Dick's honor, Clarence Guy reported that as one of the first black students at LRU, "we knew that many of the faculty did not want us there, but we were always welcome in Dick Frothingham's office." Dick remained at LRU as it was absorbed into the University of Arkansas system. Following his retirement, he continued teaching his favorite courses, Existentialism and Greek Philosophy. He regularly encountered former students and joked that he couldn't rob a bank anywhere in Arkansas without being recognized.

Dick's main calling was teaching and scholarship, but he filled in as a pastor in various Presbyterian churches in Arkansas throughout his life, including a longstanding relationship with Allison Memorial Presbyterian Church. His sermons were informed by tremendous scholarship and his knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. He took pains to fill the baptismal basin with too-hot water so it would cool to a soothing lukewarm temperature by the middle of a church service.

Dick expressed his passion for lifelong learning by generously supporting members of his extended family with college tuition and personalized book donations from his vast collection. He remained intellectually active to the very end of his life, working on his autobiography and translating works by an obscure 17th century German poet, Daniel Czepko von Reigersfeld. After his death, his physician at the Longevity Center requested a donation of his brain for research studies, as a rare example of a 93-year-old with fully intact cognition.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Frothingham; children, Rich Frothingham (Margaret) of Durham, North Carolina, Tom Frothingham (Laura Phillips) of Roland, Arkansas, and Eddie Frothingham (Lisa) of Corvallis, Oregon; grandchildren Rick Frothingham (Megan) of New York City, Cameron Frothingham Kruis (Neal) of Lafayette, Colorado, Sunny Frothingham of Durham, North Carolina, Emma Frothingham of Redwood City, California, and Julia Frothingham of Northampton, Massachusetts; and great-grandchildren Henry Monroe Frothingham Kruis and Hazel Mae Frothingham Kruis of Lafayette, Colorado, and Charlotte Elaine Frothingham of New York City.

A memorial service will take place at Westover Hills Presbyterian Church (6400 Richard B Hardie Drive, Little Rock, AR 72207) at 10 a.m. on Saturday, September 21. Dick's online

guestbook may be signed at www.littlerockfuneralhome.com. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Westover Hills Presbyterian Church or the UALR library.

Comments



“ Mary and Family : I am one of your neighbors. You and your husband are a great inspiration to us because of your determination to keep fit by your walks around the neighborhood. You were very obviously in love with each other and you were refused to be sedentary. He was kind and welcoming to everyone. He was gracious. He did not see race except that he treated everyone with love as a member of the human race. May your husband Rest in the Peace of Christ in Heaven with all of our loved ones who have passed away. Reg Rogers



Reginald Rogers - Yesterday at 03:09 PM



“ Ceronsa Pulliam sent a virtual gift in memory of Richard Frothingham PhD



Ceronsa Pulliam - September 06 at 07:53 PM



“ Reverend Richard "Dick" Frothingham helped to officiate the wedding of my husband and I, Ceronsa and Terry Pulliam on May 28, 2016. He has been very much like a father to me. We will dearly miss you, Dick. We love you! Forever! Thank you!



Ceronsa Pulliam - September 06 at 07:52 PM



“ He always shared his egg drop soup with Mrs. Mary. Thursdays won't be the same at our restaurant.



Angela Selby - September 06 at 12:46 PM



“ Mary, my heart goes out to you and your family. Dick was a generous person -- generous intellectually and in every other way, always open to share and to learn. It was a pleasure to see him at lectures and faculty dinners and in the department when he came by to check in and to provide gifts. I'm so glad I got to know him (and you) just a little during my stint in the department. Sincerely, Angela Hunter

Angela Hunter - September 06 at 12:35 PM



“ I am sad to learn this although a very full and positive life was lived. As a colleague I spoke with Richard often but not deeply and in retrospect I wish I had. As my wife reminds daily we don't really know people until we take the time to know them. One thing I do know about Richard is that his dedication to his students and discipline was strong and enduring. His many students will always have a place for him. Art English, Political Science.

Art English - September 04 at 09:16 AM



“ Mary, prayers of comfort for you and your family. Celebrating a life well lived and his continued life with his Lord. Donald and Andrea Campbell

Donad Campbell - August 31 at 12:43 PM