

## OBITUARY FOR THE REVEREND RICHARD LEE GELWICK, TH.D.

The Reverend Richard Lee Gelwick, Th.D. died on June 29, 2014. He was born on March 9, 1931 in Bristow, Oklahoma, the son of the late Allen Garrett Gelwick and Lenora Jean Foster Gelwick. Dr. Gelwick graduated from Southern Methodist University with a B.A. in 1952; Yale University Divinity School with a M.Div. in 1956; and the Pacific School of Religion with a Th.D. in 1965. Dr. Gelwick was ordained a Methodist minister in 1957 and transferred his ministerial standing to the United Church of Christ in 1963.

In 1954, he began his professional career in faith and education as Protestant Minister to Students at Temple University, where he met his wife of 59 years, Dr. Beverly Ann Prosser Gelwick. He is survived by Beverly, of Lisbon Falls, Maine, and the families of his two children, Jennifer Lee Gelwick-Luecke and Greg Luecke, and Allen Morrison Gelwick and Almira Dzerlek Gelwick. He also has six grandchildren, Mirelle Gelwick Luecke, Conrad Allen Luecke, Sean Allen Gelwick, Katrina Desireé Gelwick, Allen Garrett Gelwick III, and Aydin Morrison Gelwick.

During his early career, he served as Chaplain and assistant professor of religion at Washington and Lee University, as the Director of Religious Activities at Oberlin College, and as the Campus Minister at the

University of California, Berkeley. In 1967, Dr. Gelwick turned to teaching full time, first in the Religion Department of Chapman College and next as chair of the Religion and Philosophy Department at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri. During his long professional career in education, he was a visiting professor at many international institutions, including Claire Hall at Cambridge University, and Merton College at Oxford University, Union Theological Seminary in New York City, and Bowdoin College in Maine. In 1989, he became Professor and the Chair of Medical Humanities and Behavioral Medicine for the College of Osteopathic Medicine at the University of New England, and retired as Professor Emeritus in 1998.

Dr. Gelwick continued to teach as an adjunct professor in theology at the Bangor Theological Seminary maintaining his attention on research and writing, while participating in collaborative conferences on topics including ethics, public policy, the thought of Michael Polanyi, H. Richard Niebuhr, and Paul Tillich, all with a focus on the intersections between science and religion and world religions.

He was actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement and the Free Speech Movement, where he served as the University of California, Berkeley's official liaison with the Anti-Vietnam War Committee.

Throughout his life, Dr. Gelwick worked hard to identify and correct the inequalities faced by women and minorities in both higher education and society.

As a teacher, Dr. Gelwick's life work was devoted to ways of incorporating Christian faith with the science of the modern world. The thought of Michael Polanyi, an eminent physical chemist and philosopher, became central to Dr. Gelwick's scholarship, and he wrote two books on Polanyi's thought, *Crede Aude* (1965) and *The Way of Discovery* (1977). He also led in developing an international scholarly organization, the Polanyi Society, and its journal, *Tradition and Discovery*. In 1991, Dr. Gelwick spoke at the Polanyi Centennial in Budapest, Hungary, where national television highlighted his insights into Polanyi's central tenet that faith is essential to the most objective knowledge as shown in the structures of knowing itself: personal knowledge and tacit knowing.

Later in his career, Dr. Gelwick addressed the dilemma of combining modern medical science with religious values and human needs. At the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the University of New England, he developed an algorithm for evaluating clinical ethics based on the triadic relation of God, Self, and Other. He also founded the Maine Bioethics Network.

Dr. Gelwick's national and international reputation includes work as chair of the Religion and Ethics in Health Care Group and the chair of section on the Academic Study and Teaching of Religion with the American Academy of Religion. His faith and intellectual life centered on the

challenge posed by the rise of moral skepticism in higher education and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Dr. Gelwick sought to restore the importance of compassionate human values in our dangerous modern world, writing, "If there is nothing to trust, to believe in, how can we solve differences without violence? The fate of the earth is more dependent upon our beliefs than our technology."

Dr. Gelwick was in *Who's Who in Science and Technology*, and a longtime Fellow of the Society for Values in Higher Education. In Maine, he served as an ethicist on the Cancer Prevention and Advisory Control Board, the Commissioner of Health's Bioethics Advisory Committee, the Brighton Medical Center Ethics Committee, and as coordinator of the Society for Theological and Religious Studies Inquiry of the General Theological Library of Bangor Theological Seminary in Portland.

In March 2014, the Hobby Center for Public Policy at the University of Houston honored Dr. Gelwick with annual endowed lecture series on, The Importance of Ethics in Public Policy, in his name. He has chosen to donate his papers to the Hobby Center. At the time of his death, he was writing two books. The first was titled *A Clue toward Knowing Truth and God: Polanyi's "Forms of Atheism."* The second, a children's book, was inspired by the question posed by his grandchildren when young, "What is God?" His answer was, "God is love."

Dr. Gelwick and his family were avid sailors, enjoying their home in Cundy's Harbor in Harpswell, Maine. He is survived by his wife Beverly, his children, and his

grandchildren, as well as his brother Allen Garrett Gelwick, Jr.; nieces Marsha Gelwick Swift, Rhonda Prosser Copp, June Prosser, and Susan Gelwick; nephews Philip Gelwick, Paul Prosser, Rick Copp, and Don Swift; and many great nieces and nephews.