



Fred Jay De Jong

May 1, 1953 - April 8, 2019

He passed away at age 65 after a three-year struggle with cancer. He leaves an empty place in our family, being survived by his wife and best friend, Sharon, their married children Katherine McMahon (to Rory), Anne Walsh (to Dennis), Philip (to Donna), Paul (to Kim), and adult children added by guardianship to us by compassion and grace, Hong, Emmanuel (with Amanda), and Petr (with Hitomi). The family is so blessed by 15 grandchildren: 10 grandchildren by our children and 5 grandchildren from our international children. He is also survived by his beloved brother Marlin De Jong (to Karla), brother-in-law John Vander Heide, sister-in-law Linda Gibbs (to Jerry) and many nieces and nephews.

Fred loved his children and grandchildren. He and Sharon traveled often to see them, and frequently helped with local grandchild care, with Fred structuring his work differently to make such time. Fred, with Sharon as partner, worked many years to be sure their legacy provided college educations to their grandchildren even before any existed. Fred's affection to his grandchildren was years in the making. Being raised by his parents in a foster home for newborns, he was anxious to have his own. He loved children in general and regularly served in church nursery. At all times he carried a handkerchief and extra Band-Aids in his wallet for mothers with little one's with who had real and imagined hurts. Fred worked a lot – always having more than one job. He once said, “sleep is highly overrated”, and practiced that rule. A colleague named him the ‘working-class professor’, of which he was pleased. He had an academic career, directed agencies and human service programs, consulted for groups that served “frail, vulnerable, and stigmatized” populations, eventually forming his own research and evaluation firm. To support their goals to be generous, Fred and Sharon invested in and managed multi-family rental units. Fred did not sit still well. In an attempt to stay home more and work less, in his 40's he began to read history, which became a wonderful interest, along with raising orchids. In his 50's Fred began to more consciously pay more attention to relationships with the coaching of his daughter, Anne. Fred and Sharon enjoyed taking car trips each summer visiting civil war battlefields, antique shops and wandering with no schedule or destination. Service was a theme in Fred's life. Beginning in his twenties as a deacon in his church, he continued to serve as deacon and elder in several churches and held leadership positions

for a diaconal conference. He was organizer of a Vietnamese refugee resettlement, served as Classis President and became committed to generating resources for church planting. For 16 years, Fred served as a mentor for many men struggling with addiction. When life demonstrated that Fred had lessons to learn and changes to make, he set upon a quest for the last 16 years to remove by grace character defects, attending a weekly group for confession and accountability, and twice yearly retreating to a monastery for a weekend of “re-centering” on Jesus, lest his busy schedule caused “mission drift” as he called it. He often took mentees along. When he first learned of his terminal diagnoses, his first reaction was surprise that Jesus was planning this early life outcome, but then immediately felt confident of His care and control. He felt confirmed that as a sinner saved by grace, indeed Jesus’s agenda had increasingly become his own.

A memorial service celebrating his life will be held Sunday, April 14 at 2:00 at Beverly Reformed Church located at 2141 Porter Ave. SW Wyoming, MI. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions can be made to the American Cancer Society.

Events

APR 14 **Memorial Service** 02:00PM

Beverly Reformed Church
2141 Porter Ave., Wyoming, MI, US, 49519

Comments



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Fred Jay De Jong.



April 14 at 02:17 PM



“ It was 1978 and I wanted to accept a job in Michigan with CRWRC. Fred took up the mantle of professor and bailed me out since I was scheduled to teach that fall. He commuted as I recall from CA. Soon his reputation as a rigorous researcher grew! On my last visit with him he repeated what so many students had heard over the years, the dependent variable is... the independent variable is...

Wayne Squires and I were so blessed to do some consulting with Fred on an international missions project he was passionate about. Research is not the same as building relationships and harnessing the imagination and capacities of a low income village. Fred understood the distribution of human gifts and the beauty of collaboration.

You were a force for good in God's world Fred! I miss you.

Jay H Van Groningen - April 14 at 09:47 AM