



Rev. Eli B. Whitney

February 29, 2004

Rev. Leonard B. "Eli" Whitney 87 of Baldwinsville and formerly of Camillus died Sunday. Born in Syracuse he graduated from Syracuse Central HS in 1934, SU College of Forestry in 1938 where he lettered three years in swimming and Boston Univ. School of Theology in 1943. He served many churches as a Methodist Minister including Pultneyville, NY 1943-46; Hannibal-Hannibal Center 1946-50 and as associate at Fulton First 1946-48; Phelps 1950-63; Camillus First 1963-69 and his proudest accomplishment was the formation of the congregation that created Immanuel United Methodist Church. He was their first pastor until his retirement in 1982. In addition he took great joy in the saving of church bells from other churches to create the Bell Tower. He has served N. Syracuse Andrews Memorial UMC as associate from 1982-88, as an Interim at James Street UMC and Marcellus UMC. He has been the Protestant Chaplain at Loretto Geriatric Center and most recently served at Marietta Christian Church (former UMC). Eli was a former volunteer Fireman for over 20 years, a Mason since 1947, a member of Boy Scouts of America, Finger Lake Council and a member of Camillus Rotary since 1967 with perfect attendance for over 30 years and in addition a Paul Harris Fellow and started a project in early 70s to donate turkeys to needy families. He had been a long time water director and counselor at Camp Casowasco. He had served on the Board for United Methodist Federal Credit Union. He had been an usher for Syracuse University Football since 1959 and Basketball from 1963 and usher captain at both Manley and the

Dome before retiring in 1987. He is predeceased by two sisters; Dorothy Fellows and Harriet Whitney Borchers. He is survived by his wife of 22 years, the former Beatrice (Dean) L. Peffers; a son Bradd J. Whitney of Bedford, TX; four daughters, Nancy Whitney Carroll of Bedford, TX, Merrilee and husband Randy Frese of Syracuse; Diane Peffers and husband Charles Stewart of Fairfax, VA and Bonnie Peffers and husband Gerry Nicholson of W. Monroe; two sisters Jane Eleanor Roberts of Oswego and Ruth Whitney Nyberg of Stockton, CA; eight grandchildren, Jeff and his wife Mary Lee McClaskey, Shari McClaskey, Christian Whitney and Tara Peffers all of Syracuse, Michael Stewart and Heather Stewart of Fairfax, VA, Andrea Frese of Raleigh, NC, Alison Frese Higgins and husband Paul, of Cincinnati, OH and eight great grandchildren; several nieces and nephews. Services are 2 pm Saturday at Immanuel United Methodist Church "Church of the Bells", 303 Kasson Rd, Camillus. Spring burial in Mexico Village Cemetery. Contributions in lieu of flowers to Camp Casowasco , 158 Casowasco Dr. Moravia, NY 13118. Arrangements by B.L. Bush & Sons Funeral Home, Camillus.

Tribute Wall

JG

“ To Bea and family, So sorry to hear that Eli passed away. He will be missed by many, and you and your family will be in my prayers. I remember Eli from when I first entered the ministry. We served on the Camp Casawasco Committee together. Do take care and God Bless. Joe De Groote.

Joseph De Groote - March 31, 2004 at 12:00 AM

FC

“ The Totman family, formerly of Phelps, will miss Eli very much. He was always there for us when I was growing up. I remember wonderful times at church and at Casowasco. Eli returned to Phelps to do my mother's funeral in 1982 and again in 1989 for my dad's funeral. So glad that I was able to reach him by phone last fall as it was good to be in touch. The memorial service was very lovely and I am sooo pleased that I was able to attend and see The Church of The Bells. May God bless you all.

Flo Totman Chaintreuil - March 26, 2004 at 12:00 AM

MF

“ Eli's family will always be grateful to Brian Bush for assisting us during this difficult time. Brian was a wonderful help, taking on a multitude of tasks behind the scenes, giving us time to grieve and collect our thoughts and plans for the Service, and then working with our ideas to ensure that the Service and all details were handled as Eli would have wanted. We sincerely appreciate all of Brian's efforts and kindnesses. With deepest appreciation, Bea, Merrilee, Nancy, Bradd, Diane, and Bonnie

Merrilee Frese - March 14, 2004 at 12:00 AM

DE

“ *Bea, So glad I got to see you at the last RUMPS meeting. Sorry to learn of Eli's passing. He has always been special in my early memories of Casowasco and in my decision to enter Christian service. We have lost a wonderful man.*

Dorothy Emblidge - March 14, 2004 at 12:00 AM

PS

“ *My condolences to the Whitney family for the loss of your family patriarch. Rev Eli exemplified what Joy there is in knowing and loving Jesus. He touched the lives of many people, young and old, during his ministry in Phelps. May the Peace of God be with all of you in this time of sorrow. Paul Salisbury*

Paul Salisbury - March 08, 2004 at 12:00 AM

BP

“ *The Kenneth W. McAllister Sr. family from Phelps, NY would like to extend our condolences to the Rev. Eli B. Whitney family as Rev. Whitney married our parents in 1950, baptised all 6 of their children and also conducted our Fathers Funeral Service in 1980. He has been in our lives for many years.*

Barbara Patrick - March 07, 2004 at 12:00 AM

JW

“ *My family has so many wonderful memories of Eli. From helping build the Church of the Bells, singing and preaching on Sundays, canaries singing too, plus his love of what he was doing and the people in the congregation and the community - not to mention SU sports. It seemed he would be around forever. He performed at my wedding, and at family funerals. We all loved him and will miss him. Condolences to the family.*

Joyce (Hankinson) Welitschinsky - March 07, 2004 at 12:00 AM

VC

“ *What wonderful memories we have of a very special person "Rev. Eli". A Christian, a leader, a confidant and a friend. He was always there for the "Hannibal Gang" the teenagers of the 40's. We had many good times. Betty Horn Taylor and Virginia Hewitt Cooper*

Virginia Cooper - March 06, 2004 at 12:00 AM

LF

“ *A lot of fond memories of Eli at the Church of the Bells. I was Chief of Police in Camillus and retired in 1993 after 26 1/2 years with the Police Department. Had many occasions to work with Eli on several very important cases in our community, his advise was always sought and always helpful. He will be Missed by so many. Larry and Ellen Fleming-Ocala, Florida*

Larry Fleming - March 06, 2004 at 12:00 AM

LB

“ *We'll never forget the "good times" with you, your influence on both of our lives, and upon the community, both in our time in Phelps and in Camillus. Thank you!*

Lyle & Terri(Adams) Baker - March 06, 2004 at 12:00 AM

HA

“ I knew Rev. Whitney from the time I was maybe, 3 years old. I am now 39. He, along with my Grandparents Cloyce and Conni Hankinson, built the church of the bells which I dearly loved! He helped me with my confirmation, he enjoyed bell choir as much as we did! I enjoyed going to church because he was there and I know that my Grandparents did too! I will never forget how much he looked forward to my Grandmother's fudge every Christmas season. He married my Mother too! I have so many fond memories of him I could go on and on forever! My Mom and I were laughing saying that Eli and Gramps are probably yucking it up in heaven. I feel as though I have another guardian angel now! He was a wonderful person and I will never, ever forget him!

HEIDI AHRENS - March 05, 2004 at 12:00 AM

TM

“ Bonnie, My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. Tim

Tim McElroy - March 05, 2004 at 12:00 AM

BS

“ So sorry To hear of Eli's passing. He was a special friend and great Pastor while he served us in phelps. We have many wonderful memories of the special times we shared with him while he served in Phelps. May God bless you al and grant you peace and know that you will be in our prayers. He was such fun....a real treasure. Barb and Jerry Schafer

Barb & Gerald Schafer - March 05, 2004 at 12:00 AM

BV

“ Dear Bea, I am sending my sympathy to you. Eli was a wonderful person. He would often break into singing in the middle of his sermon. He provided us such good examples to live by in his love for Jesus. He was our minister at Camillus First United Methodist Church in the early 1960's. I was always happy to see you two when you would visit Camillus First. Blessings to you. Betty VanGelder

Betty VanGelder - March 05, 2004 at 12:00 AM

TF

“ To the family of Eli.. When I heard tha Eli had died, it brought back to mind many fond memories. It was from Eli that I first heard the phrase, "I will make you fishers of men". It was Eli that taught me the fine points of badminton. It was Eli that asked me to be an usher at the dome. It was Eli that gave our church in Auburn the seed money that enabled us to begin the repainting of our sanctuary. It was from Eli that I first fully understood what it meant to be a "happy" christian. I am saddened at his passing and know that heaven is a happier place today. God Speed!

Tom Filiatreau - March 05, 2004 at 12:00 AM

BS

“ We want to express our deepest sympathy in the passing of our friend "Eli". In his years in Phelps he touched many lives. Eli got things done. Some people say "why", Eli said "why not". He and his family are in our thoughts and prayers. God bless. Bob and Doris

Bob and Doris Spink - March 05, 2004 at 12:00 AM

LT

“ Travis Family were members of the Phelps Methodist Church and have fond memories of Eli and his Family.

L. Woodrow Travis - March 05, 2004 at 12:00 AM

WT

“ Travis family were members of the Phelps Methodist Church and have fond memories of Eli and his Family.

Woodrow Travis - March 05, 2004 at 12:00 AM

BM

“ Bea Your marriage to Eli gave him such joy. He was always giving to others. You gave to him. Eli was the first person to make me feel like one of the team in this conference. I continue to be grateful for his encouragement.

Betsy Mowry - March 05, 2004 at 12:00 AM

MR

“ My sympathy to Eli's family and friends as they mourn. Eli's ministry in Camillus in the 60's had a great effect on my life. My marriage in 1969 was blessed by his presence. To God be the Glory, Mary Ann(Kimble)Riker

Mary Ann(Kimble) Riker - March 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

DA

“ June and I extend our condolences. Reverend Whitney was a powerful and positive influence in my life. I can vividly recall the trips to Casowasco, the trips to Sodus and all of our MYF gatherings. If you are ever in the Boston area please do look us up. We're retired now (effective Tuesday this week) and would enjoy your company. With Deepest Sympathy, Dick Axtell

Dick Axtell - March 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

EH

“ To the Whitney family: I just learned of Eli's passing when talking to my sister Nancy and Mother Estelle Hauge yesterday. It's hard to believe that he's gone. I guess I just figured he's be around forever! He was my Dad's best friend since Central High days back in the '30's, and through the College of Forestry and on until Dad died several years ago at Loretto Rest. Eli came up there to comfort all of us, and his presence there really helped us through our initial grief. I hope this message will do the same for you folks, too. I had lots of great memories of Eli myself, including seeing him at every home football game and basketball game at SU. He was always in a great mood, and that got me into one as well! I hope he and Dad are now reunited and enjoying each other's company forever! GO ORANGE!

Erik Hauge - March 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

RR

“ Our love and synpathy. Eli will be missed.

Roland & Susanne Ryan - March 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ My sincerest sympathies to Eli's family. There are many fond memories of Eli: One in particular is helping him work on the 'new' Phelps library on the S.W. corner of Main St. and Church St. in the summer of (approx.) 1960 when I was a teenager. We hung and wired the overhead lighting and other tasks. As a youth in the Phelps Methodist church I saw him only as a minister before that. Working in the library with Eli, along with examples of my own family and other community leaders volunteering, opened my eyes to see that being involved in one's community can take many forms of service, not just the obvious roles due to one's occupation. Thank you Eli.

Scott Gifford - March 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

KB

“ Dear Aunt Bea, We pray the Lord's strength and comfort for you and the family. Uncle Len touched so many lives through his exuberant witness of his love for our Lord Jesus Christ. How touched we were to have him come to surprise us with the renewal of our wedding vows at our 25th. Ken remembers his joy at performing your wedding vows in front of a surprised congregation. So many wonderful memories.... We will miss him. Love from Ken and Liz Borchers

Ken and Liz Borchers - March 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

SB

“ Dear Bea, Jane and family, Susan, Winnie and I were so saddened to learn that Eli had died. He married Susan and me, visited Dorothy in Herkimer many times and officiated at Dorothy's funeral. His life was full of good works for his family and his churches and his Lord. Susan, Winnie, Bruce, Pam and Heather

Susan and Bruce Beal - March 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

RF

“ To Bea and the family of Eli Whitney: I was saddened to read of the passing of Eli. He will be greatly missed. However, he leaves behind a list of people whose lives he has touched that is immeasurable. I know what an influence and how big of a part of our families lives Eli was. I always looked forward to listening to Eli's sermons while attending the "Church of the Bells" that he was so proud of. While growing up I also had the pleasure of spending many summers under the guidance of great counselors such as Eli, Al Gribble and Royce Newell at Camp Casowasco. What memories we made! Eli was such a reinforcing personality, it was impossible but to smile when in his presence. I will always remember his laugh! Yes, Eli will surely be missed, as he was a huge influence in my formative years. I am very sorry for your loss.

Randy Flath - March 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

GB

“ *Bea, We will all miss Len. He was a fine person with a great sense of humor and love for life. We feel so fortunate to have such wonderful memories of him. Everytime I eat pancakes I think of my Uncle Len and his supersized pancakes that I just couldn't finish! There will be plenty of fine music and fun in heaven with him there. Please know that we understand your loss and our prayers are with you and yours. Gordon, Sheila, Lynn and Heidi Borchers*

Gordon Borchers - March 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

DB

“ *We have many fond memories of Uncle Eli - in particular his unabashed love for Jesus Christ, his collection of Christ paintings, his singinging every morning, his mowing (while singing)the long pathway to Rich and Callah's (Grandpa and Grandma's)camp on Sandy Pond. We look forward to seeing him again in eternity!*

Dave and Cathy Borchers - March 04, 2004 at 12:00 AM

JF

“ *When Chris his dad and I would go to sand pond,watching Eli sailing. What a joy it was to see him sailing and loving it. Eli was a wounderful person. You will be missed by eveyone. God bess to everyone in the family. My prays will be with you and th family. Jeannine Love you grampa I will miss you. Love Christian*

Jeannine Fiore - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

ES

“ *Bea, Jane and family, I wish that I could suddenly be with you from Florida to celebrate Eli's life with you and his family and friends. He was a special pastor and person and is remembered and loved by me and so many. My thoughts and prayers are with you. Earl*

Earl Smith - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

BH

“ it is with great regret that i learn of the death of Eli Whitney by warmest greetings to his family and loved ones we shall miss his presence, voice, humor, faith and spirit we rejoice in his rest in God's presence

Bob Hill - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

DO

“ Dear Aunt Bea, You are a special lady! I know this because my two favorite women in the entire world love(d) you dearly, my mother Harriett and my Aunt Jane. Please know that we also loved our Uncle Len and have the best,happiest memories of the times we got to spend with him at Sandy Pond.He was so much fun! Please give my dear aunt a kiss and hug and tell her that I love her. My thoughts are with you, Dottie B

Dorothy Ouellette - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

PM

“ Bea, Let us offer our condolences for the lost of Eli. You may remember me (Paul) at Unisys and at LaFayette Ave Church where you visited often. We always had a few minutes to talk to the two of you and welcomed seeing you always. Sorry we will not be able to make the services. Our prayers go out to you and your family. God Bless.

Paul and Beverly Meigs - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

RE

“ Jeanne and I wish to extend our deepest sympathy to you and your family. I remember the last time I visited with him that day at Wrightway hardware. I also remember your visits to the Adams UMC while I was pastor there. God Bless you in your sorrow.

Reverand Donald A. Easton - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

LG

“ For the family of Eli Whitney: I am the daughter of Maynard and Nancy Gardner of Hannibal. They have both passed away, but my mom always liked to tell me this story about Eli and myself. I was just a little girl at the time and saw him in "downtown" Hannibal. Mom asked who I saw. I said, "I saw God!" Please accept my deepest sympathy for your loss. I shall keep you in my prayers.
Linda

Linda Griffin - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

DJ

“ All of us are better for having know Eli Whitney. He is now with his friends and I know that Harland Andrews and he will watch over us. We will miss Eli , but I know he will be guiding us from above. My deepest sympathy to Bea, and all his family and friends. Dan Johnston

Daniel Johnston - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

TB

“ Hello Aunt Bea: All of us Borchers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire are thinking oh so fondly of Uncle Len at this time. We have dozens of happy memories and the best of which is probably Mom's love for her brother and you. We know he is with the Lord today. Best regards, Tim and family.

Tim Borchers - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ Bea and family, I was saddened to read about "Eli's" passing. My prayers are with you and your family. Joannie(formerly from Parker's office)

Joannie Mix - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

LU

“ Dear Bea, Accept my sincere condolences at this important time in your life journey; I have enjoyed getting to know you and Eli these past few years. May you feel the warmth of God's love surround you, made known in family, friends, through Christ. Les Ulm

Les Ulm - March 03, 2004 at 12:00 AM

BW

“ *"Gonna Live"*

Bradd J. Whitney - March 02, 2004 at 12:00 AM