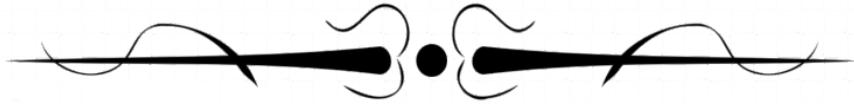
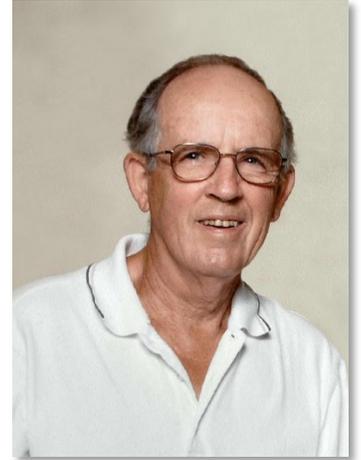


Richard “Rick” Turner



February 7, 1936 – January 30, 2021

Barb, Mike, Pam, family and friends, grace and peace to you from the one who lived for us, who died for us, and who now claims victory over every grave, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.



The Bible is a book full of surprises. Often the stories don't follow a predictable pattern. A shepherd named Moses is sent to tell the king of Egypt to let God's people go. A young servant girl named Mary is asked to give birth to a baby who will turn the world upside down. A simple fisherman named Peter is asked to leave his fishing nets behind and follow an unknown rabbi from Galilee.

The world we live in is full of surprises too. Those surprises might not seem quite as momentous as those in the Bible, but we don't want to sell them short, either. A college graduate gets a new job and takes on the world. A couple finds out they're expecting a baby and suddenly start rearranging their priorities. An inventor known as Charles Babbage comes up with the concept of a digital programmable computer and all sorts of people take an interest. Often, as with stories in the Bible, these surprises are filled with possibilities. But, let's be honest, sometimes they catch us off guard. And we're not sure what to do next.

I think Rick Turner is someone who surprised us over and over again. In planning a funeral, I normally sit down with a family to talk about a person's life. I have to admit, when Barb, Mike, and Pam started talking about quiet, mild-mannered, steady-as-he-goes Rick, I knew very little about his accomplishments in life. I didn't know he liked to take slides in photography. He'd taken some slides in Alaska while serving in the Air Force. When he got a job at Burroughs in Springfield, Illinois, he offered to show his slides to an office assistant named Edna. That sounds almost like a pick-up line, but that wasn't Rick. He was just being a nice guy. It turns out that Edna had a niece named Barbara who was interested in seeing the slides too. I'm not exactly sure what happened to Aunt Edna, but the next thing you know, Rick and Barb were an item. And then they were getting married. It was one of life's joyous surprises.

Rick was a student. He never stopped learning. He took an introductory computer course. Then he enrolled at Southern Illinois University. Barb worked as a campus nurse. Combine Rick's interest in computers with a math major and a physics minor, and soon came a job offer from a company known as IBM. It was the first of many surprises in Rick's career. Rick and Barb were packing their bags and moving to Omaha.

Son Mike was born in Omaha. They didn't stay long. IBM sent Rick to Houston, to place called NASA. Suddenly Rick was working on the Gemini and Apollo projects. I'm sure it

was heady stuff, a feather in Rick's cap, but you'd never know it, He was a steady-as-you-go kind of guy. He didn't draw attention to himself, but it had to be an exhilarating experience.

Next, Rick was sent to St. Louis. He was progressing in his work with IBM. Many of us might describe our work simply: fix pipes, wait tables, care for patients, teach students. But Rick's work was a bit more complicated: computer programming, data management. He continued to be the same humble guy, but his professional life with filled with one fascinating surprise after another.

Daughter Pam was born during the time in St. Louis. Suddenly the household was noisier and busier. There were kids to raise, meals to fix, children's books to read, Sunday School lessons to learn, nighttime prayers to pray. Many of the household responsibilities fell to Barb, especially during the early years. Like any number of us, striving for work-life balance was a challenge. Rick hadn't had the most stable home life while growing up, but he did his best to love and support his family.

The Turners moved to Rochester in 1973. Family life was about as full as it could be. They joined Holy Cross. They went to church every Sunday. Mike and Pam went to Sunday School and confirmation. Rick followed Mike's hockey team and even refereed hockey with Mike. He followed Pam's development in figure skating and gymnastics. But perhaps Rick had the most fun when he taught his children how to play golf. Rick was a real student of the game, and Mike and Pam took an interest. No doubt, during those formative years, Rick and Barb had one heartwarming surprise after another.

IBM put together a team to work on developing the AS 400 Computer. Rick was pleased to be a part of that team. He didn't need to come across as the smartest guy in the room, but he never stopped learning and developing. He had a passion for knowing how things worked, and he regularly put that to good use. No kidding, he actually had a three-ring-binder on the inner workings of cell phones.

Rick retired from IBM in 1993. He eventually started his own AS 400 consulting firm. Pedestrian as this may sound, it wasn't like he was doing this down the road in Owatonna. Nothing wrong with Owatonna, mind you, and Rick would have been perfectly happy to help wherever needed. However, this was a world-class, high-performance computer, and Rick was a foremost authority. He was traveling all over the United States, and Europe, and especially the Far East. He consulted in performance management for large corporations wherever they happened to be - Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Australia and China. Quiet, mild-mannered, steady-as-he-goes Rick Turner was a leading expert on the AS 400, but surprise, surprise, you probably never knew it. I didn't.

That's because back home Rick was a humble guy. He was showing up for church on Sunday and going to Bible Study on Tuesday. Late last spring he sent me a link to a Blue Zones article. It was entitled: "Straight Answers from Top Epidemiologist Who Predicted the Pandemic." I opened it up. It had to be close to 50 pages long. I didn't read the whole thing, but Rick did. I called and asked him about it. In his quiet, unassuming way, he let me know about some of the challenges our society and our church would be up against in the face of COVID-19. That was Rick - always studying, learning, growing; always full of surprises.

Rick's diagnosis of Lewy body dementia was a tough one to take. We found out that Rick

would begin to develop problems with thinking, movement, behavior, and mood. Much of the transition happened quietly because of the isolation of COVID. We wondered about his future: How long could he drive? Would he and Barb make it to 60 years of marriage? Would he be able to remember things? Would he have to give up the game of golf?

In case you didn't know, Rick had always hoped to shoot his age in golf. That's when your score for 18 holes matches your age in life. For most golfers, there's a narrow window of time – maybe age 75-90, and it's not an easy thing to do. Sad to say, Rick had to give up the game. He never got to shoot his age.

As Rick's Lewy body progressed, more and more hopes and dreams began to fade away. He eventually had to go to Cottagewood, a care facility in Rochester that specializes in those with memory loss and cognitive challenges. Rick began imagining things, feeling lost, crying out, "Find me. Find me. Find me." Barb reassured him, "Jesus will find you. He's gone on ahead to prepare a place for you."

Pastor Jason stopped at Cottagewood just before he died. He asked about Rick's favorite hymn. It was *Blessed Assurance*. So, as Rick's life was coming to an end, Pastor Jason and Pam were singing: "Perfect submission, all is at rest. I in my Savior am happy and blessed; watching and waiting, looking above; filled with his goodness, lost in his love." And then Rick was gone.

Friends, in the midst of our loss, we might think we have come to the end of the story. But maybe we haven't. In his own quiet way, Rick spent a lifetime trusting in a God who specializes in surprises. You might know of some of those surprises: dry land suddenly appears in the churning waters of the Red Sea; a group of slaves are formed into a chosen people during 40 years in the wilderness; a heavy stone is rolled away and a tomb is found empty. Indeed, Rick believed in a God who is especially good at creating a way when there is no way.

We may think we have come to the end of the story, but then we open up the book of Revelation. A voice from the great throne of God cries out: "Behold, I make all things new. Sorrow, and suffering, and pain, will be over." Death will be no more."

We may think we have come to the end of the story, but there is one more surprise. In our sadness, God promise to dry our tears. In our troubled hearts, God promises peace. In the midst of death, God promises resurrection and life. We don't have the words to describe the life of the world to come, but we trust in a God who specializes in surprises, a God who is able to make a way when there is no way.

Are we going to miss quiet, mild mannered, steady-as-he-goes Rick? Sure we are. His loss leaves a big, empty place inside. As we say our goodbyes, we entrust Rick to Christ's eternal safekeeping. Jesus has come and found him. Rick and his Savior are happy and blessed." Amen

avid never forgot the God who had given him life and claimed him in baptism. Faith was a big part of his journey. He wasn't just a pew-sitter. He did everything from serve as a deacon to congregational treasure to be part of the Finance Committee here at Zumbro. David took his faith on the road too. He was on the board of Samaritan Bethany Nursing Home for a number of years. Right up to when COVID-19 closed many of our churches, David and Joyce were regulars at worship.

A few weeks ago, I found out that David had been placed on hospice. I arranged for a visit. He was looking frail. He was curled up under a blanket. He couldn't understand why he didn't have any energy, but then he mentioned that his heart was working at 19% capacity. Still, David continued to tell stories. Joyce was always at his side, helping him keep track of the details, finishing the stories if need be. David was always glad to see Mikael and Lisa. He welcomed the grandchildren, and great-grandchildren too. He was really hoping to make it to his 70th wedding anniversary with Joyce on June 16, but such was not to be. Along the way, David and Joyce decided they'd been together as a couple for 70 years and more, so that would be celebration enough. *It's hard to keep a good man and a good woman down.*

I last saw David a couple weeks ago at Season's Hospice. He wasn't saying much. I sang a song to him, as I often did when I visited. We read scripture and prayed. I wasn't sure if he could hear anything, but I assumed he could. David had hung on for a long time. He was nearing the end. I read a passage from Romans 14: "We do not live to ourselves and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord, so then whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."

I stood up to leave. I said goodbye to David as I left the room. I told him I didn't expect to see him again. As is often the case at a time like that, Paul's words to Timothy were close to my heart: "The time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I had finished the race, I had kept the faith."

Not long afterward, David died. We began the process of saying goodbye to this humble, gracious man. As the book of Hebrews says, "He joined the great cloud of witnesses, watching us run the race, cheering us on." We know David cherished his family. We believe his faith was as strong as a rock. As David breathed his life, we trust that he fell asleep in the arms of Jesus, and that Jesus would never let him go. Amen.

Pastor Vern Christopherson
May 22, 2021