

Effingham, KS

Larry Lee Bowyer, lover of God and family, pastor, and part-time archeologist passed away on Monday, March 29, 2021.

Larry was born in Concordia, Kansas on November 24, 1937 to Ross L and Iva E (Campbell) Linton. Iva died of a blood clot three days after Larry was born. Because he had three significantly older siblings, Paul, Max, and Monna Jean (Breault), he was given to Ross' sister, Mae and her husband, William V. Bowyer, who were not able to have children and had suffered miscarriages and a stillborn. They were so very grateful, and Larry became their one and only child. He described his childhood as blessed.

Larry grew up around southeastern Kansas living in Walnut, Moran, and Hepler helping his father with the Creamery. The family moved to Iola, Kansas, where he graduated from Iola Senior High School in May 1955. Apparently, he had to walk uphill both ways just to get there! He worked at a grocery store and saved his money (5 cents) because, again, as he frequently told his children, he had to buy everything with it including a 1950s Chevy. A brilliant man with a high IQ and great sense of humor, Larry then went to Allen County Community College where he took basic courses, but tragedy struck, and his father Will died shortly thereafter. He then transferred to K-State to become a nuclear engineer and was recruited by NASA. Before going to Ohio to work at Plum Brook Station during the summer of 1958, Larry heard his call to ministry at the Walton Foundry in Iola. Listening to that call he transferred to Baker University and began his biblical studies, receiving his Bachelor of Chemistry with a minor in religion in 1960.

Upon graduation, he moved to Boston to attend the oldest theological seminary of American Methodism, Boston University with friend Joe Brownrigg where he was highly influenced by Dr. Harrell F. Beck. There he met and married Katherine A. Fitzpatrick, marrying in 1963, and graduated in 1964 with a Bachelor of Sacred Theology (AKA Master of Divinity). He would want you to know that in addition to serving churches and doing work study he would type papers for extra money as he was the first in his family to not only go to college but put himself through graduate school. Larry had always wanted to see the world and while Kathy and Larry spent their honeymoon in Kansas to be with Larry's family, they saved and borrowed money to go with Dr. Beck on a mission/archeology trip to the Holyland including, Jerusalem, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Israel, and several European countries. He would always have a special place in his heart for the areas where Jesus walked and went back on a ÒvacationsÓ to do more archeology digs and help bring to life the words of His ministry.

Larry and Kathy had two children Amy (b. 1966) and Lara (b. 1972) . Living the life of a United Methodist minister meant moving and serving different churches and communities. They served in Lisbon Falls, ME (1961-63), Union Congregational Church, Braintree, MA (1964), Centralia, KS (1964-1969); and Church of Our Savior Junction City (summer of 1969). They moved overseas where Larry received an accomplishment of intensive study at Ecumenical Institute at Chateau de Bossey a collaboration of the World Council of Churches and the

University of Geneva (1969). They moved back and served at the Church of All Nations, Boston, MA (1969), then on to Kansas: Kansas City St. Marks (1970-1972); back again to New England! Moultonborough-Weirs Beach, NH (1972-1974); Enfield-Canaan-West Canaan, NH (1974-1979); Then back to Kansas where they served Gridley-Turkey Creek (1979-1973) and Cottonwood Falls-Saffordville-Bazaar (1983-1987).

In 1987 they moved to Effingham. Larry and Kathy got divorced January 1989. Larry and Beverly got married August 1989 and Bev's children Jenni and Kristin joined Larry and Lara in Effingham. Larry, Bev and Kristin stayed until 1991 as Lara and Jenni both got married in 1990. The adventures continued: Cherryvale 1991-1993; Moline-Grenola 1993-1997; Sedan-Elgin-Peru and Cedar Vale-Wauneta 1997-2001; Larry retired in 2001 but came out of retirement to serve the churches of Frankfort 2001- 2002 and Easton 2003 - 2009. Larry and Bev had such a fondness for Effingham they would move back while serving Easton. There are so many achievements in his nearly 50 years of pastoring, ministry, and missions. He was a loving and caring man. Highlights are, of course, the baptisms, marriages, Bible studies (especially on Luke) performing the Maundy Thursday Service *ÒIs it I?Ó*, doing extensive mission work both locally and globally, and funerals, but, most of all listening to the Holy Spirit and getting to know God's people while being an active part of each community.

Many may know of Larry's passions of french-fries, chocolate covered peanuts, Keebler fudge sticks, popcorn, fried chicken, and pie, but it was through his creativity he would find a joy he would describe as God's handiwork in all of life's adventures. He would show this through paintings, writing children's global VBS curriculum and a play *ÒIs It I?Ó* based on the Last Supper, and writing and singing songs. Other than a tall tale or a sermon, he made friends and loved sharing best through poetry and was active part of Writers and Poets groups, chronicling his experiences in Haiti, Kenya, and the history of Camp Chippewa through poems. In 2014 he received the Founders Award for the Kansas Folklore Society. Larry would also be creative when teaching bible at junior colleges and his words always meant so much when he would avidly send cards to family and friends.

Larry's heart was overflowing with a desire for mission and church camp, and he excelled at bringing people together. From rebuilding communities after tornados, hurricanes, to bringing kids to Christ via Horse and Archeology camps at Camp Chippewa, Larry's greatest pride was seeing God work in the accomplishments of others. You see, Larry was just a conduit. He rejoiced in people becoming who God created them to be. He led and encouraged dozens of mission trips and hundreds of people. Local mission work of the Bishops Round Up for Hunger, national mission trips to Red Bird Mission, tornado clean up in Topeka, rebuilding after Katrina and other hurricanes, and Native American Reservations, and international mission trips to Mexico, Haiti, and Africa (specifically Kenya) where he built schools, a hospital, rebuilt and built churches and took a bucket list trip with wife Beverly.

Larry's other activities included playing scrabble or doing crossword puzzles, coin collecting, stamp collecting, model trains, and a penchant for a good western or anything on The History Channel. He loved books (getting paid in books after retirement for his work in a book store) and was a voracious reader particularly of Christianity and history - reading all of the Time Life series and remembering nearly each and every battle in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, World Wars I and II, and the Vietnam War. He was inspired by Jesus, Martin Luther King,

Dwight Eisenhower, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington. He loved going to any kind of sale and you could count on him to bring back a treasure that he saw that made him think of you.

His appreciation and wonder of nature was constant. From the smallest bud or planting, to birds or other animals he would see, he appreciated the intricate beauty God has designed. He relished planting gardens and was always excited for Spring to come; experiencing life with all of its blessing with his children and grandchildren helping him cultivate and plant the mother of all gardens. The time of new beginnings and plantings, of discovering what the dirt can do: ÓGod makes great things out of dirt and rocks,Ó Larry would often say. His rock was his absolute love of the gospel.

Preceding him in death were: His parents, brothers, and sister. He leaves to cherish his life and legacy: wife, Beverly (Randall), daughter Amy McComb (Robert); daughter Lara Strube (J.T.) and their children Samantha, Alicia, Cassandra and her daughter Brandilynn; Step-daughter Jenni Barton (Tracy) and their sons Gabriel & Gage (Lindsey) and their kiddos Emma & Owen; Step-daughter Kristin Njoroge (Matt) and their children Ann and Xavier and a host of fellow clergy, poets, parishioners, extended family (like J. Sue Bayer), and of course friends. He also loved his pets and his most recent lap buddy Oreo Cookie has been, of course, devastated.

An early riser, Larry loved sunrises and has wonderful memories of Easter sunrise services and would often wake up and begin reading his bible, pray for the people on his prayer list, and keep his journal up to date. He would write out the word PRAISE as an acronym, particularly when doing housework, et al: Prayers (Pray for anything/anyone that comes to your heart, Reflection (remember positive things around you or that happened to you – being thankful!), Action (begin your task), Inspiration (have fun - do a puzzle, play a game, listen for God's voice), Scripture (read a passage from the bible), Eat or in EVERYTHING give thanks for Jesus is the Bread of Life. In ALL things give PRAISE to God. It is, then, not lost on any member of his family that he wanted to get an early seat for what must be the most spectacular celebration – Easter in Heaven.

All are invited to the Visitation to be held at Dishon Maple-Chaney Mortuary, Horton, KS on Good Friday, April 2nd, from 3:30-5:30 p.m. All are also welcome to his Celebration of Life to be held at 10:30 a.m. at the Effingham Union Church in Effingham, KS on Saturday April 3rd with a lunch from the church to follow. We hope you will all be sharing stories of Larry! A private burial of ashes will be performed later in Easton, KS. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you make a donation in his name to UMC mission work (ÓUMC -The AdvanceÓ) in Mexico 3022291 Cuba 982860, or Maua, Kenya 140161.

Finally, the family asks that in honor of Larry that you attempt to seek God in everything that you are and everything you do.