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The United Methodist Church

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June 5-8, 2003

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**GARY D. VAN BOENING**  
**FEBRUARY 21, 1934 - SEPTEMBER 27, 2002**

**Van Boening, Gary D.** (P. 57; F. 59)(U.U.N.W.U. 55) (S. STC 79) N. Texas 57 Williams Chapel Ct. 59 Becker & Wilson Chapel 62 Bells SCA 63 (Dec 1) Phoenix: Crutchfield 68 Long Beach, CA: Dominguez 71 Glendora, CA: Edgewood PSW 77 Glendora, CA: Edgewood 79 D/L DSW 84 (Sep 1) D/L 97 R'd

Rev. Dr. Gary Van Boening was born February 21, 1934, to Henry and Hattie Van Boening on the family farm south of Wallace, Nebraska. He contracted childhood polio and did not learn to walk until the age of three. He was also diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy at an early age.

He graduated from Wallace Public School in 1951. Before he graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan University in 1955, he lost his leg due to surgical complications caused by an attempt to correct the effects of the childhood polio and Muscular Dystrophy. He then graduated from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. After his ordination in 1959, he served churches in Texas, Arizona and California. Gary went on in later years to receive his Doctorate of Theology from Claremont School of Theology.

Gary married Eunice Hedgpath, a nurse and missionary, on April 20, 1968, while serving in the inner city of Phoenix, Arizona, in a congregation where they were both very involved with the inner city youth. During this time, he was also a scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts of America. Scouts from this troop were a delight in later years, many of which could not believe a one-legged man could lead them on wilderness camping trips.

They moved to Long Beach, California in 1969 to pastor a church. Gary and Eunice adopted two Korean children through the Holt Adoption Agency in 1970. Paul and Sharon were blood brother and sister, and the Van Boening's did not want them to be separated. Their decision to adopt children rather than have their own was decided out of love - they did not want to pass Gary's Muscular Dystrophy on to any other generations of Van Boening's.

Gary was forced to take a medical disability from the ministry in 1979 due to the many complications of his medical background. Following his return to the greater Phoenix area, he and Eunice involved themselves heavily in Marriage Encounter. Gary was completely confined to a wheelchair in 1989, but that did not stop he and his wife from starting a prison ministry at the Florence State Penitentiary. He officially retired from the ministry in 1997.

After the death of his wife in 1995, he entered an Adult Foster Care Home following further medical complications and the need for 24-hour care due to his reliance on a ventilator. Despite all of his medical problems, Gary continued to be strong in his faith. He continued to minister and teach to all those who came in contact with him. His body was frail, but his mind was sharp and his heart full of love and laughter.

All of Gary's trials and tribulations were over on September 27, 2002, when his body succumbed to kidney failure due to prostate cancer, and his spirit was taken to heaven. Those who knew him and loved him, mourned his passing, but rejoiced in his new life - free from pain, with a whole body for the first time ever.



Sharon Neill  
 Daughter

see: First & Trinity, PSW 77  
 DSW 84 (Sep 1) R'd

ated from Godwin Heights High  
 the U. S. Army. In April 1940,  
 outh, NJ, he was assigned to the  
 . By April 1942 he had attained  
 Bataan Death March and was  
 he was rescued on January 30,  
 ates in March 1945 to undergo

was married to Dorothy, returned  
 it their first home. He also  
 Thomas Heating and Cooling  
 employed as a police officer for  
 ive in South United Methodist  
 ilding committee for their new

his family (Michael, Deborah &  
 due to Deborah's health. He  
 Church United Methodist and  
 ain he was a part of the building  
 nd Sunday School rooms.

ay pastor in Tucson and other  
 bell where he was appointed to  
 he church. He also served  
 n and Trinity and First United  
 several times.

at St. Paul's going several  
 a deacon in 1972 at Redlands,

did volunteer mission work and  
 use.

p services at Lockhart Nursing  
 id attended St. Paul's United

" (WWII chronicle) and "As I  
 ur biographed ex-prisoners in

Dorothy Thomas  
 Wife