



Arthur Morse O'Neil

November 13, 1932 - August 30, 2011

Arthur M. O'Neil, Jr., retired United Methodist minister, passed peacefully at home on August 30, 2011 in Newnan, Georgia of complications from kidney disease. He was 78 years of age.

Celebrating his life and remembering him with love are his wife of 53 years, Julia Camp, formerly of Anderson, South Carolina, their daughter, Julie O'Neil Perkins (Chris) of Newnan, Georgia, their son, Arthur M. O'Neil III of Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, their daughter, Mary O'Neil Wentlent (Chris) of Greene, New York, 13 grandchildren: Sara P. Dewberry (Jason), Rebecca P. Giles (Chris), Christy Perkins, Boone O'Neil, Mollie-Emma O'Neil, Anna Wentlent, Rachel Wentlent, Luke Wentlent, Jacob Wentlent, Elizabeth Wentlent, Abigail Wentlent, Zach Wentlent, Grace Wentlent, and 3 great grandchildren: Nathan Dewberry, Sara Alice Dewberry, and Lucy Pearl Giles. He was preceded in death by his parents, the Reverend Arthur M. O'Neil, Sr. and Mary Louise Coleman O'Neil and by his only sibling, Mary Ann O'Neil Alford (Mrs. Flavius T.) all of Houston, Mississippi.

Art was born November 13, 1932 in Drew, Mississippi and graduated in 1950 from Forrest Hills High School in Jackson. He graduated from Millsaps College in 1954 where he played center for the Millsaps Majors football team, sang with the Millsaps Singers, was a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, worked in the school cafeteria, in the library, as a dorm assistant, and a coach for the YMCA. At graduation from Millsaps he received the Galloway Award for outstanding preaching.

Between 1954 – 1967, Art was a student at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. While attending seminary, he sang with the “Miss Atlanta Show”, worked as a Gray Y Coach, and was the Youth Minister for the North Georgia United Methodist Churches of Decatur First, Dalton First, Epworth, and also at the United Methodist Church of Hammond, Louisiana.

In 1957, following in the footsteps of his father (the Reverend Arthur M. O’Neil, Sr. and his grandfather (the Reverend Thomas Joseph O’Neil), Art was admitted into the Methodist Mississippi Conference. From 1957 – 1960 he was the Associate Pastor in Jackson at Leavell Woods United Methodist Church, Pastor for the Belfontaine Circuit, religion teacher, baseball and basketball coach for Wood Jr. College, Pastor for Flowood United Methodist Church and the founding Pastor for the McLauren Heights United Methodist Church in Jackson.

In January of 1960 Art was transferred to the North Georgia Conference to create a unique program as Minister of Recreation and Family Life at Peachtree Road United Methodist Church in Atlanta. While in Georgia, he served as the pastor of the Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Augusta (1963 – 1971), Milledgeville First United Methodist Church (1971-1975), St. John UMC in Atlanta (1975-1978), Newnan First UMC (1978-1983), Dalton District Superintendent (1983-1987), Administrator of Simpsonwood Conference and Retreat Center (1987-1991), and the Atlanta/Roswell District Superintendent (1991-1995). In June 1995 he retired from active ministry to Lake Junaluska, NC. In 1998 he again took up the mantle of ministry and served as the pastor for the Bethel United Methodist Church of Waynesville, North Carolina until 2003.

Since his youth, Art held a special love for the mountains and environs of the Southeastern Conference of Lake Junaluska, near Waynesville, North Carolina. He worked there during his college years and returned often with family and church groups for retreats, conferences, and vacations. He and Julia retired in 1995 where they were active in the life and ministry of

Junaluska until Art's final illness. Art was an active member of the Junaluskans and twice served as president. He also coordinated the annual Flea Market for 8 years.

In the fall of 2008, Art and Julia returned to Newnan, Georgia, where they made their home at the Commonwealth of Calumet, making new friends and renewing old friendships. As Art's kidney disease progressed, they learned to value the staff and physicians of the RAI Dialysis Clinic of Newnan and the gentle professionalism of the Healthfield Hospice Care. Art spent his last weeks in appreciation for the many blessings of his life, in joyful anticipation of the life to come, and in thankfulness to God for the many opportunities he had to love and be loved.

The worship service and celebration for his life will be held in the sanctuary of Newnan First United Methodist Church of Newnan, Georgia on Sunday, September 4, 2011 at 3:00 PM. Prior to the service; beginning at 1:30 PM, the family will be in the church parish hall to receive guests. The worship service will be conducted by Bishop Mike Watson, Reverend Hal Brady, Reverend Bob Bowling, Reverend Gordon Goodgame, Dr. Med Roach and Reverend JoAn Kinrade; this service to be followed by the interment in Oak Hill Cemetery in Newnan.

In lieu of flowers, that family suggests that memorial contributions may be made in Art O'Neils' memory to the music ministry of Newnan First United Methodist Church 33 Greenville Street Newnan, Georgia 30263.

Arrangements are by McKoon Funeral Home 38 Jackson Street Newnan, GA 30263 770-253-4580. Online condolences may be expressed at www.mckoon.com.

Cemetery Details

Oak Hill Cemetery

96 Jefferson Street
Newnan, GA 30263
(770) 253-3744

Previous Events

Visitation

SEP 4. 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM (ET)

Newnan First United Methodist Church
33 Greenville Street
Newnan, GA 30263

Service

SEP 4. 3:00 PM (ET)

Newnan First United Methodist Church
33 Greenville Street
Newnan, GA 30263

Tribute Wall

LT

“ O'Neil Family, My prayers and thoughts are with you at this time. Art was such an inspirational pastor during his time at Bethel UMC in Waynesville. Julia, we are thinking about you and your family during this time.

Linda Tollefson - September 10, 2011 at 06:02 AM

LM

“ Julia, I was so sorry to learn of Art's death. I knew he was ill and he was often in my thoughts, as you have been. His smile, his words, his encouragement will always be remembered. I still have notes taken during many of his sermons at Bethel. I pray for your strength and acceptance during the months ahead.

Lee Myers - September 09, 2011 at 10:59 AM

CT

“ Hello O'Neil family! Our family is saddened to hear of the passing of your wonderful father! Mom and Dad and I (Scott and Tina) were looking at old pictures (probably 1979) of a circle meeting at their house and there was your sweet Daddy, with his loving smile! What great memories we have at St John's and MYF! I will be at St John's this Sunday for their anniversary celebration if you happen to be able to go. Much love, Chrissie, Scott and Tina, Elizabeth and Scotty

chrissie james thead - September 08, 2011 at 12:46 PM

WA

“ How can we say what is deep in our hearts except that we cry? Art, who we called Smiley for over 50 years, was our sweet friend and brother in Christ forever. That will never change even though we can't see him anymore as our neighbor at Lake Junaluska. He is still alive but in our eternal Home. God heals the brokenhearted and we are filled with thanksgiving that we knew and loved him for so long. God's blessings to Julia, three beautiful children, their mates and those thirteen beautiful grandchildren. We send our love and prayers. Woody and Lucy Adams

Woody and Lucy Adams - September 07, 2011 at 07:41 PM

NF

“ Dearest Family members, Today my heartaches so very hard for this great loss. Rev. O'Neil was and will always be the strongest preacher in my memories of a true Preacher. There is NOT enough room to express ALL the memories (wonderful) that I have of him and y'all. Your home was always open to us loud, wild, and extremely crazy kids! I raised my children with the same values, morales, and love I remembered from your home and Rev. O'Neil's preaching. I've cried and cried because I just found out because I would have been there to celebrate a great man and a beautiful family that have left never-ending memories for me. I have to admit to you I have laughed pretty hard to....I hate to tell you but he was greeted with a big smile from daddy (of course a joke and a story) and then Culver asking for him to help stop daddy's stories. I know they are discussing Hank Aaron not hitting that home run that first night and we loading up again the next. Maybe they are having the weekend golf gathering with all those fine "gentlemen" from the Country Club. Please know your in my thoughts and prayers but have always been in my "greatest childhood memories". May God bless you with wonderful memories as the days will be difficult. He was a great man!

Nancy Gercken Floyd - September 07, 2011 at 03:50 AM

KE

“ Dear Art and the family, You are in my prayers as you grieve and celebrate the homecoming of your father. Kay + + +

Kay Edwards - September 05, 2011 at 09:58 AM

JL

“ We were saddened to hear of Art's passing. He was a dear man with a big heart and a big smile. We will always remember him fondly for the care he put into Benjamin's baptism at the Lake Junaluska butterfly garden. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Jenifer, Mike, Benjamin & Justin Laver - September 04, 2011 at 09:42 PM

KM

“ I will always remember the bird's nest in Art's car at Aldersgate. He refused to move it until the baby birds hatched. And, his swim trunks under his robe on Sunday morning as he was prepared for an afternoon at the lake. Art was responsible for encouraging me to accept my call to ministry. He was a wonderful mentor to me in my youth. I hold his memory close to my heart. Art blessed all who knew him. I pray peace for his family.

Kirk Miller - September 03, 2011 at 10:51 AM

BM

“ Art was a wonderful person, and an inspired pastor. Just a great guy. He will be sorely missed. Sending up prayers for the family.

Barbara McDonald - September 02, 2011 at 06:04 PM

EE

“ Julia, The Mathenys have such fond memories of our growing up years in Leavell Woods, and I, as the oldest, remember Art with special delight and gratitude---I used to love accompanying his solo singing (his favorite at the time was "Road to Mandalay" when we would sing for civic clubs), and he even got me playing for Miss Mississippi (later Miss America) once. When the Millsaps Singers toured in spring of 1963, I remember staying with your family in Anderson, again with delight and gratitude. I am so sorry for your loss of this dear and cherished husband, but I know you are rejoicing with the communion of saints as he joins their eternal Alleluias. Blessings to you and your family, Christ's shalom to you, Elise M. Eslinger

Elise Matheny Eslinger - September 02, 2011 at 04:32 PM

BB

“ e are so saddened by Art's death. How we wish we could reach out and hug you right now. As you know, our memories of Art go back so far. Barbara knew him as a child and I knew him from our earliest days a "preacher boys." Our memories or freshened every time we look at our wedding pictures and there he is smiling, as usual, and adding to the special meaning of that day. How we wish we could be with you at the service but our travel is limited now. Please give our condolences to all your family and know that our prayers are with you. Bill & Barbara

Bill & Barbara - September 02, 2011 at 01:47 PM

DF

“ Judy, It has been a long time since you were a Jr. bridesmaid in my wedding in 1950. I am thinking of you and do know how you feel. I lost Marshall in 2005. Wish I could see you. Love, dot

Dot Fant - September 02, 2011 at 09:14 AM

DE

“ To say goodbye is difficult, but to not be able to say goodbye is even harder. I am certain that Art cherished his final days surrounded by his awesome family. I feel so blessed to have been welcomed into the O'Neil family. Heaven is rejoicing now that Big Art has arrived!

Don Ebaugh - September 02, 2011 at 08:54 AM

RW

“ To the O'Neil family, I grew up in the First United Methodist Church in Newnan and have wonderful memories of Mr. Art throughout middle school and high school. I was very sad to hear of his passing. My thoughts and prayers are with you all. Ruth Jones Warren (Don & Mildred Jones' daughter)

Ruth Jones Warren - September 01, 2011 at 06:55 PM

JS

“ Julia, Our thoughts and prayers are with you and all of your family. It is a joy to have the O'Neils in our lives.

Julie & Christopher Schroer - September 01, 2011 at 03:53 PM

PW

“ Many kinds of community involvement are what connects people. Art and Julia were both involved in the life of Lake Junaluska and although they have been away, we appreciate everything that was done here at the Lake Junaluska Assembly. God bless each member of the family at this time.. Peggy Winters

Peggy Winters - September 01, 2011 at 02:39 PM

DJ

“ Julie and Family, We are sorry to hear of Art's death and we know he is walking the streets of Heaven. He will be missed by many, especially his Family, Church Family and all his friends. I wish we could join you, but Mildred is having a hard time with pain down her left leg. We love you and your family and if we can help (we are praying for you) any way let us know. God Loves You and We Do TOO, Don and Mildred Jones

Don and Mildred Jones - September 01, 2011 at 02:35 PM

MB

“ My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family. May the Lord bless you and keep you in His arms. Marge Anderson Bennett (Hanna Class of '56)

Marge Bennett - September 01, 2011 at 11:55 AM

SG

“ Julia, It was with sadness that I read of Art's death this morning. I have such wonderful memories of the years we shared at Aldersgate Methodist Church in Augusta. Art Christened all my children and was a wonderful pastor to us as a young family. He will be remembered fondly by all of us. When I think of him, I see his beautiful smile. You and your family are in my prayers.

Selly Goodwin - September 01, 2011 at 09:52 AM