



Donald A. Russell

September 8, 1929 - December 5, 2023

Donald A. “Don” Russell (94) died peacefully at home December 5, 2023, deeply attended by his family and with his beloved Susan by his side. Born September 8, 1929, a month before the great crash of the Great Depression, to Clara L. (Braidert) and Paul E. Russell in Chicago, his early years and life were shaped by that period in history. Don was simple and deep, a kind, call-me-Don sort of man. He related to all as a humble, common person quietly grounded in the reality of who he was before God. From the depths of being a deeply attentive listener, his quick-witted humor would bubble up in full-hearted laughter. His own rigorous inner honesty gave rise to a humility that put others at ease. Music, his first language, filled house and soul with the sweetness of the world. A rich baritone, he sought to harmonize in life as in song. After graduating in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Illinois, he answered a call to ministry receiving a Master of Divinity from Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY. Ordained an Elder in the United Methodist Church, he along with his first wife, Lela, served churches in Hubble, KY, Mayview, IL; Byron Center, Lawton, and Watervliet, MI before going to the Church of the Saviour, Washington, DC. There he served in a retreat ministry to the global church, Wellspring of Germantown, MD, from 1974-1999. While there, he met and married (1993) his second wife, Susan Morley. In 2001, they co-founded and directed Primavera, a Sacred and Sustainable Earth Center of Dunamis Peace Institute, located east of Kalkaska, MI at the head of the Boardman watershed until Earth Day 2021

when the land was sold. In the words of Thomas Berry, the primary call of his last twenty-four years was “to go into the future as one single sacred community or perish together in the desert.”

Don is survived by his wife, Susan Morley, his daughters and their spouses: Rebecca (Tim) Finch and Ruth (Rick) Lenz (Mancelona), and granddaughter, Raechel Lenz (Traverse City) and his wife’s children, spouses and grandchildren: Christa J. Morley (Eric) Walry and Isaiah, Susanna, Marcus (Ottawa, ON), J.R. “Rich” (Stephanie) Morley, Ben and Cohen (Niagara Falls, ON) and son, R.S.”Bob” Morley (Wakefield, Quebec), niece, Bonnie Bing Graham and nephews and spouses: Ron (Stacy) Bing and Larry (Mary) Bing. He is predeceased by his parents, first wife and friend, Lela Russell, infant daughter, Christine, and sister, Lois Bing.

A memorial service will be held February 17, 2024, 1pm at Kalkaska United Methodist Church, 2525 Beebe Rd Kalkaska, MI 49646. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to: Dunamis Peace Institute, Central America, P.O. Box 433, Allenspark, CO 89510-0433. Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, 2846 3 Mile Rd N, Traverse City MI 49686. Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

FEB 17. 1:00 PM (ET)

Kalkaska United Methodist Church
2525 Beebe Road NW
Kalkaska, MI 49646

Tribute Wall

FC

“ There is an old saying that goes somewhat like this: "I have met many many males in my life. I have met very very few men in my life." Don was such a man.

Fred Cooper - December 20, 2023 at 10:35 AM

RL

“ Ruth Lenz lit a candle in memory of Donald Russell



Ruth Lenz - December 15, 2023 at 04:27 PM

AD

“ Ashleigh D. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Donald A. Russell.

Ashleigh D. - December 14, 2023 at 06:32 PM

LS

“ Lisa Standen lit a candle in memory of Donald Russell



Lisa Standen - December 13, 2023 at 04:08 PM

RL

“ 2 files added to the album *Memories*



Ruth Lenz - December 12, 2023 at 04:31 PM

RF

“ *Rebecca Finch lit a candle in memory of Donald Russell*



Rebecca Finch - December 12, 2023 at 11:21 AM