

## **MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**

### **THE PRESBYTERY OF ST. AUGUSTINE**

#### **In Memory of The Rev. Dr. Donald Lee Harris**

January 9, 1947 – April 28, 2016

Whereas, The Rev. Dr. Donald Lee Harris, born on January 9, 1947 to Robert and Jeanne Harris in Troy, Ohio, entered the eternal kingdom, on April 28, 2016 at Westminster Winter Park with Cornerstone Hospice, we, the Presbytery of St. Augustine, at the Fall Stated meeting at Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center on this October 4, 2016, do resolve to hear and spread upon the minutes of this meeting the following Memorial:

The Rev. Dr. Donald Harris (Don) grew up in Arlington Heights, Illinois. After high school Don matriculated and graduated from Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin with a B.S. in religion in 1969. He graduated from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1972, followed by a Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary in 1979, where he later served on the Board of Trustees.

Don was pastor of three churches within twenty-three years and was described by a parishioner as “a man of deep and abiding faith who believed in the ability of the local church to be impactful both in the lives of its membership and in its community.”

Here in the Presbytery of St. Augustine we came to know Don first as the third called pastor of Highlands United beginning his ministry there in April of 1980. Don, his wife Brenda and two children, Tom and Jennifer, moved from Michigan and were soon deeply involved in the life and ministry of the Highlands faith community. During Don’s tenure Highlands began to form a new identity and purpose in the East Arlington community of Jacksonville. The congregation grew under Don’s care, and over his tenure Highlands would construct a new fellowship hall, renovate the sanctuary, build the Family Life Center, and enlarge the church offices.

Don’s leadership brought expansion in ministry as well. The LOGOS program, the Highlands Precious Gifts Preschool, the choral and handbell programs, Vacation Bible School and local mission all took shape in Don’s care. Don and local colleagues in ministry founded the Arlington Ministerial Fellowship, which led to Arlington Community Services, Jacksonville Campus Ministry, Meals on Wheels and other outreach programs.

In 1985, Highlands gave a new name to its educational building. “Harris Hall” was named in honor of Don who had encouraged and overseen the purpose and construction of the building. Today a newly renovated “Harris Hall” continues to serve Highlands, but now in memory of this beloved pastor.

Don, feeling God’s call once again, moved on to another work for which he is not only well known to us in the Presbytery of St. Augustine, but throughout Florida. Don took his considerable administrative skills to his latest call with Westminster Communities of Florida where he came to serve as Vice President of Foundation Services and also held the position of Director of the Office of Church Relations. In his capacity with Westminster Communities Don would happily greet us in the hospitality room at Presbytery meetings engaging us and greeting us with genuine concern and care for our ministries and for those of our congregations in need of assistance in later life.

Don described himself as an “administrator with a pastor’s heart.” He will be remembered as both. He loved the church and its people. He preached and taught, he offered care and compassion, and he shared a vision with people dedicated to being the church. He was a friend, a pastor, a minister.

Don is survived by his spouse Brenda to whom he was married for 47 years; his son Tom, (Michelle) Harris; his daughter Jennifer (Adam) Meyer; his brothers Jay (Judy) Harris and Steve Harris; his grandchildren Baylee Harris and Lucas, Ethan, Gavin and Timothy Meyer; his Aunt Barbara (Jim) Stoneman and his nieces, nephews and cousins. May God continue to bless Don’s loving family and his legacy of faithfulness to the Church of Jesus Christ.

Don was a man of God, a colleague in ministry, and friend to all. May God bless the legacy and memory of our brother in Christ, The Rev. Dr. Donald Lee Harris.