



Dr. Richard Butler Gray

May 29, 1922 - April 24, 2021

Richard Butler Gray died Saturday, April 24, 2021. He was born May 29, 1922 in Fort Atkinson WI, the only child of Harold and Laura Gray, two loving parents who raised him to be a caring and compassionate person. In the 1960s he opposed segregation which was still very much the norm in Tallahassee, including at FSU. Later in that decade he opposed the Vietnam War. He supported affirmative action in the 70s when there was still resistance to full representation of minorities in both the faculty and student populations. In recent years, he championed gender equality and was proud that his denomination was among the first Mainstream denominations to approve ordination of gay and lesbian priests.

Richard joined the United States Army in 1943, served in the European Theatre and was honorably discharged in 1946. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a B.A. in Hispanic Studies in 1947, followed in 1949 by an M.A. in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin in 1957. In 1958, he joined the FSU faculty in the Political Science Department and had a distinguished career until his retirement in 1989 upon which he was conferred Professor Emeritus status. He is the author of countless scholarly publications relating to Hispanic and International politics and studies, including a biography of Jose Marti, a key player in Cuba's liberation from Spanish rule.

Prior to completing his Ph.D., Richard travelled widely. He spent two years in

The Dominican Republic and two years in Cuba living, working and writing his doctoral dissertation. He left Cuba as Castro's Revolutionary Army was ousting the existing Military Dictatorship.

Richard was a life-long Episcopalian attending the Chapel of the Resurrection at the Episcopal University Center for decades. In the 1990s, the University Center shifted its focus more toward a strictly student ministry and Richard moved his membership to St. John's where he remained active until Covid and mobility issues limited his participation. For years, he was the Lead Sacristan and Head of the Altar Guild for Episcopal services at Westminster Oaks' St. Francis Chapel. Faith was both a spiritual and intellectual exercise for Richard and the Church was a source of comfort, particularly in times of grief.

He was revered and respected by the hundreds of students who enrolled in his classes and whom he advised. He had a sharp wit and a wry sense of humor with which he would regale his friends, colleagues and students in the course of recounting his many adventures. He had a long, full life and will be remembered fondly by all who knew him.

A graveside service will be held at Roselawn Cemetery at 11:30 AM, Friday, May 7, 2021.

Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home of Tallahassee (850/385-2193 or www.bevisfh.com) is assisting with the arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Roselawn Cemetery

815 West Piedmont Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Previous Events

Graveside Service

MAY 7. 11:30 AM (ET)

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