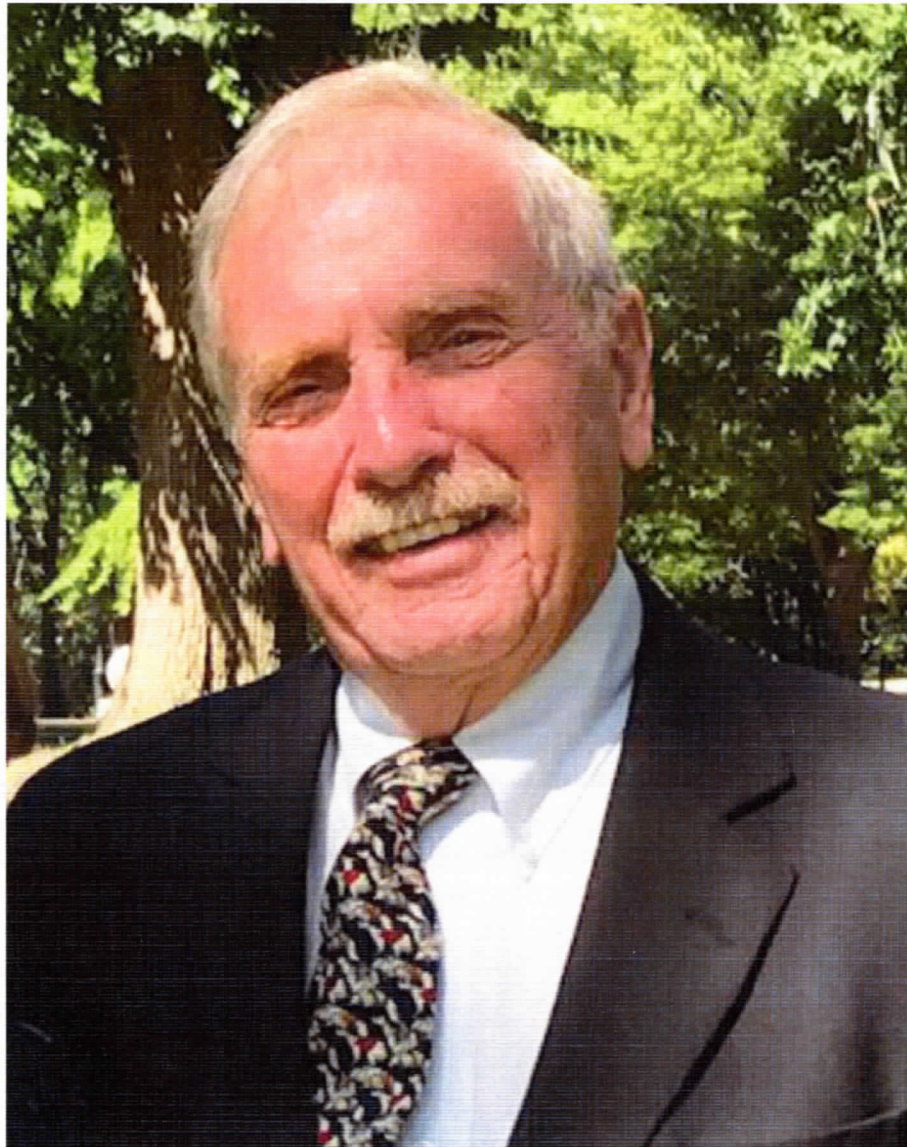


A MEMORIAL SERVICE DEDICATED TO THE GLORY OF GOD

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF

Donald Gillmor Willhoit

February 5, 1934 – March 7, 2024



**THE OLIN T. BINKLEY MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA**

April 27, 2024

11:00 am

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

PRELUDE

Mike Harris, organist

*ENTRANCE OF THE WILLHOIT FAMILY

CHIMING THE HOUR

MUSICAL SELECTION

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go
Alan Brown, Tonya Hamm, Karin Mills

Matheson/ Peace

OPENING SENTENCES AND WORD OF GRACE

Marcus McFaul

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

(from Ecclesiastes 3:1-13)

For everything there is a season:
And a time for every matter under heaven:

A time to be born and a time to die.
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.

A time to break down, and a time to build up.
A time to weep and a time to laugh.

A time to keep and a time to throw away.
A time to be silent and a time to speak.

A time to love and a time to hate.
A time for war and a time for peace.

God has put a sense of past and future into our minds.
And God's love, across all seasons, endures forever.

* HYMN

In the Bulb There Is a Flower

638

* INVOCATION

Amy Armstrong

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Micah 6:6-8
Romans 8:35-39
II Corinthians 1:3-7

William Siler, Jacob Siler

POEM

"When Great Trees Fall" by Maya Angelou

Olivia Viola

REMEMBRANCES FROM FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES

Grace Moore
Claudia and Joe Templeton
Howard Lee
Charles Coble

Donald Gillmor Willhoit
February 5, 1934 – March 7, 2024

Donald Gillmor Willhoit, a University of North Carolina professor emeritus who combined his deep faith with a love of scientific reasoning as he served Orange County for decades, died March 7, 2024. He was 90.

Born February 5, 1934 in Kansas City, the precocious only child of Marjorie and Robert Willhoit quickly developed a mind for science and creative problem-solving. Long before he studied the health effects of radiation in the early years of the nuclear age, Don was a boy in nearby Independence, Missouri, with a big curiosity.

His childhood inquisitiveness yielded important lessons: His Superman cape did not counteract gravity, for instance, and pulling floorboards from the attic to build a soapbox derby car would make Mom apoplectic. A series of mentors saw the potential in his experiments and helped channel it toward a lifelong love of learning he would impart upon his children and grandchildren.

At the urging of a high school teacher and others, he enrolled at William Jewell College, a Baptist school. There, he earned a degree in physics, deepened his faith, and met his eventual wife of 59 years, Norma Katherine Norris Willhoit.

She loved his red hair, but he was sure his souped-up 1941 Ford and ducktail haircut had won her heart. They would go on to have - in Don's words - four "lovely (but ornery at times)" children.

At William Jewell, a professor encouraged him to consider graduate school. With Norma at his side, he earned a master's degree from the University of Washington and a doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh.

In 1964, their young family arrived in Orange County, where they found a spiritual home in Binkley Baptist Church, and Don found a lifelong passion for Carolina sports, particularly basketball.

On campus at UNC, he joined the faculty of the School of Public Health, researching and teaching radiation biophysics. Later, he became the founding director of UNC-Chapel Hill's Health and Safety Office. Upon his retirement, he was named professor emeritus.

His legacy extends far beyond his professional life. Inspired by the social justice theology of the Rev. Robert Seymour, Don served on the Carrboro Planning Board for eight years and Orange County's Board of Commissioners for 20, stewarding the area through a period of growth. He led with wit and pragmatism, and he did not shy away from tough issues.

He served on a variety of other state and local boards, and he served the Binkley congregation in a variety of roles, becoming a deacon at age 89.

Don was preceded in death by his wife, Norma Katherine Norris Willhoit, and his parents. He is survived by his children, Mark Willhoit of Durham; Valerie Moore (David) of Columbia, S.C.; Lynne Willhoit (Ritch Viola) of Arlington, Va.; and Melissa Siler (William) of Charlotte; and his former daughter-in-law, Paige Vinson. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Celeste Willhoit; Reed Moore (Elizabeth Koenig); Grace Moore (Haimin Yie); Thad Moore (Kristmar Muldrow); Olivia and Marco Viola; and Jacob and Alexander Siler; and two great-grandchildren, Junhee Yie and Miriam Moore.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution to the Binkley Memorial Fund.

Published by The News & Observer on Mar. 17, 2024.

In my heart's sequestered chambers lie truths stripped of poet's gloss.
 Words alone are vain and vacant and my heart is mute.
 In response to aching silence memory summons half-heard voices,
 And my soul finds primal eloquence and wraps me in song.

If you would comfort me, sing me a lullaby.
 If you would win my heart, sing me a love song.
 If you would mourn me and bring me to God,
 Sing me a requiem, sing me to heaven.

Touch in me all love and passion, pain and pleasure,
 Touch in me grief and comfort; love and passion, pain and pleasure.
 Sing me a lullaby, a love song, a requiem.
 Love me, comfort me, bring me to God:
 Sing me a love song, sing me to heaven.

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

"A Radical Rule"

Marcus McFaul

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

360

*We are not alone, we live in God's world.
 We believe in God:
 who has created and is creating,
 who has come to Jesus, the Word made flesh,
 to reconcile and make new,
 who works in us and others by the Spirit.*

*We trust in God.
 We are called to be the church:
 to celebrate God's presence,
 to love and serve others,
 to see justice and resist evil,
 to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
 our judgement and our hope.*

*In life, in death, in life beyond death,
 God is with us.
 We are not alone.
 Thanks be to God. Amen.*

MUSICAL SELECTION

Just a Closer Walk with Thee
 Tonya Hamm, Karin Mills vocals
 Mike Davis, Piano

Anonymous

*PRAYER OF COMMENDATION & BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE



*The family invites you to join them for a reception in the
 Fellowship Hall immediately following the service.*



This past December, on a beach vacation with his daughter, Melissa, and her family, Don became fascinated with the double sunset they experienced. He took this picture of a relatively rare parhelion or "sun dog," which is caused when sunlight is refracted through atmospheric ice crystals in a cloud to the side of the sun, creating a prism effect that appears as a second sun. Always the scientist, Don sought out the explanation for this sighting.