



DR. NEAL OWEN THORPE

A humble man of vision, integrity, and compassion,
he leaves a legacy of deep faith and love for his family.

Neal Owen Thorpe died at home Wednesday morning, March 3rd, 2010 surrounded by his family, following a 19-month battle with cancer. Neal was born Sept. 8th, 1938 in Wausau, WI, growing up in the little farming community of Town of Easton, WI where his early life revolved around the activities at Bethany Lutheran Church.

Neal met his future wife, Kay Agnes Dustin, his senior year at Wausau High School when he was Vice-President and she was Secretary of the Student Council. Neal and Kay were married June 25th, 1960 in Wausau. Neal attended Augsburg College in Minneapolis, MN graduating in 1960 with a BA in Chemistry/Mathematics. He received his Ph.D in Physiological and Organic Chemistry/Zoology minor from the University of Wisconsin in Madison followed by a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of CA at San Diego. In 1967 he joined Augsburg College, eventually serving as Chairman of the Department of Biology and Chair of the Division of Natural Sciences. He was published widely in respected journals and his textbook, "Cell Biology," was published in 1984.

Neal received an invitation to join the staff of the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, first as Senior Program Officer in 1989, then in the dual role of Executive Director and Trustee until his retirement in July 2006. For 21 years including his continuing role as Trustee, he unreservedly believed in his colleagues and the mission of the Trust in the Northwest. He considered his time serving at the Trust to be a wonderful gift.

Neal's passions have included directing sacred choral music, teaching, mentoring, beekeeping, sugar-maple tapping, gardening, hiking, traveling and flying...with a special enthusiasm for the Kodiak Aircraft. Neal was an avid pilot and flew a 1951 Cessna 170A taildragger. Alaska and its people were especially close to his heart.

Since moving to the Northwest, Neal and Kay have been members at Columbia Presbyterian Church where he was an Elder, a Chairman of NorWesters and served on both the Worship and Music Committee and Missions Study Committee.

Neal is survived by his wife of 50 years, Kay (Dustin) Thorpe; children, Peter Neal Thorpe of Vancouver, WA; Lisa (Jason) Machan and grandson Luke of Torrance, CA; Heather (Barbara) Mundis and granddaughters Ling and Lauren of Shoreview, MN; sister, Janet Galbraith of Gurnee, IL; brother, Mark (Lila) of Kirkwood, MO; mother-in-law, Loris (Voigt) Dustin of Wausau, WI; as well as many loved nieces, nephews, cousins and godchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, George and Gunvor (Riiser) Thorpe of Town of Easton, WI.

Services will be held at Columbia Presbyterian Church, Saturday March 13th at 11:00 a.m.

Special thanks to Columbia Presbyterian Small Group Bible Study, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, SW Hospice, friends and family.

Memorials are designated for United Indian Missions International Aviation Department, P.O. Box 6429, Glendale, AZ 85312 (www.uim.org), or Columbia Presbyterian Church Foundation, 805 Columbia Ridge Dr., Vancouver, WA 98664-2615.

A tribute to Neal Thorpe may be found at www.murdock-trust.org. If you would like to submit a tribute or remembrance in honor of Neal, we invite you to do so at: aliciam@murdock-trust.org.