

## **Memorial Minute – Donald Grubbs**

Donald Shaw Grubbs, Jr was a man of many talents and many careers. From the time that Don was a young child he showed a strong interest in matters of faith and religious commitment. When Don was trying to decide what to do with his life after high school, he considered being a minister. His family however, encouraged him to be an engineer because he was good at math. He began college studying engineering, but switched to English in his Sophomore year. He received his diploma and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Reserves and was immediately called to active duty in the Korean War.

Upon his return, he again studied engineering. He also took courses in education toward teaching certification and taught high school math. He took a course in school administration, where he first learned of TIAA, a company that offered variable annuities to protect college faculty from inflation eating away pension income. Thus began Don's dedication to assuring that every American has an adequate retirement income.

After teaching, Don took a job as an actuarial assistant, but after four years he decided he wanted to enter the ministry and entered Princeton Theological Seminary. He took a part time actuarial job with a company which served as a consultant on pension plans. He added a second part time job as a minister for a small Presbyterian Church, but he struggled with an old problem of being torn between faith and doubt.

Don switched to a more conservative Presbyterian seminary, Westminster Theological Seminary, where he went through more soul searching. He concluded that the Bible was a product of human beings and certainly not inerrant, and that all life had value. He finally dropped out of seminary and became a Unitarian.

Don's life work from that time forward reflected these beliefs. He joined the local branch of NAACP and noticed that the white members were all Quakers. He quickly realized that there was something about Quakers that caused a high level of commitment to others.

Having worked for an outstanding actuarial firm for six years, he had met the requirements to become a Fellow of the Society of Actuaries and became an independent consulting actuary. He quickly made a name for himself, particularly regarding pension plans. He was asked by the Senate Labor Committee to come to Washington, DC to conduct a study regarding vesting requirements for pension plans. He also worked in NYC on creating cost-of-living adjustments on pensions. The IRS asked him to return to Washington DC to direct a new Actuarial Division, where he was in charge in implementing ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act) to achieve his vision of a secure safety net for all older Americans. During his time in Washington, DC, Don studied for a law degree at night and was

admitted to the District of Columbia Bar. He did not practice law, but found his legal training useful in making small improvements in IRS law.

Upon retirement, Don continued his volunteer efforts with the United Nations Association, the World Federalist, Peach Action, the Population Institute, and various political campaigns. When they moved to Pennswood Village, Don began to attend Newtown Friends Meeting and became a member. He served as its comptroller for four years. He found the silent worship inspiring and the spirit was a good fit with his commitment to love.

Don brought to this country and helped to educate a Korean army officer and his wife who became prominent professionals active in the Presbyterian church. He assisted a brilliant Ghanaian student who became a lifelong friend, and became guardian of a disabled neighbor for many years. Don lived his convictions. Many people in our country today benefit in some way from the many contributions Don made to his profession and his belief that human life has value.

~Charley and Ruth Peterson, October 2016