Rev. William Eugene (Gene) Bolin

July 2, 1940 - February 7, 2019

The Reverend William Eugene (Gene) Bolin was born in Dundalk, MD, July 2, 1940 to Helen Gertrude Williams and Carroll Eugene Bolin. He died in Towson, MD at 78-years-old on February 7, 2019. He was preceded in death by his parents and Mary Jean Bolin, an older sister who died shortly after birth. Gene is survived by his wife, Marion Northern of Hagerstown, MD, his half-sister, Karolyn Dawn Ostrum (née Bolin) of Broken Arrow, OK, his daughter Liesl C. Bolin of Baltimore, granddaughter Amelia, and former spouse Frances Schoonmaker.

Following World War II, the Bolin family moved to California where his father developed a land-leveling business, later en-tering the ministry and attending Golden Gate Theological Seminary in San Francisco. Gene was entering his teen years when the family moved to Madras, Oregon, where his father pastored First Baptist Church. Gene began playing football in Madras, becoming part of the school's varsity team and devel-oping a life-long passion for football. He was in high school when his father accepted the job of starting a new church in Seattle, Washington. Transferring to Lincoln High School in Seattle, Gene played varsity football, sang in school and church choirs, and worked on the school paper. Upon graduation from high school in 1958, Gene entered the University of Washington, Seattle. He lettered in football, making the varsity team and playing until he suffered a severe back injury during a game his sophomore year. He remained a committed UW Huskies fan the rest

of his life. An active member of Baptist Student Union at the local and state level, Gene became director of the State Baptist Student Choir, leading the choir on trips around the Pacific Northwest and to the Baptist Conference Center in Glorieta, New Mexico.

Gene was married to Frances Schoonmaker of Aberdeen, Washington in 1961. He taught high school at Foster High School in Tukwila, WA before accepting a position as Teaching Assistant in Speech and Communication at the University of Washington in 1962, completing all of the coursework for a PhD. An opportunity to become Director of Student Ministries and Church Music took the couple to Portland, Oregon and the Baptist Convention of Washington, Oregon, and Canada where Gene served from 1965-1969 with an academic year at the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, TN in 1966-67. During this period he wrote The Christian Witness on Campus, published by Broadman Press in 1968.

His daughter, Liesl Claire, was born in Portland, OR in 1969. Following her birth, Gene took a full time position as Director of New Work Development in Campus Ministries for the Stu-dent Ministries Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board where he served until 1980. He was a popular speaker at youth meetings, conferences, and conventions and began developing a manual for starting and sustaining Christian campus ministries that was later published by Student Ministries.

In 1979, Gene took a sabbatical leave and began studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York. In 1980 the family moved to New York where he continued his theological educa-tion and began pastoring the Metro Baptist Mission, leading the mission to constitution as Metro Baptist Church, New York in 1982. His work at Metro Baptist Church moved it from a handful of people who met on the third floor of the New York Baptist Convention offices to its present location at 410 West 40th Street. He served as pastor until 1991.

After a divorce in 1990 he entered Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia serving at All Souls Episcopal Church, in Washington and at The National Cathedral. He was ordained to the Episcopal priesthood and served as Chaplin at the University of Maryland before becoming the priest at St. Anne's in Damascus, MD, eventually taking on the responsibil-ity of beginning a new church ministry in Walkersville, MD in 1997, focusing on appeal to baby-boomers and generation Xers.
After retiring, Gene was married to Marian Northern in 2010. In 2013 he moved to Oak Crest Village, Parkville, MD where he resided until his death.

Gene was passionate about social justice. As a campus minis-ter for fifteen years he lead groups of college students to en-gage in direct social ministry in places such as the Lower East Side of New York where they helped convert a dilapidated building into the Graffiti Center, still serving children and fami-lies today. When Metro Baptist Church was negotiating to buy what became its permanent home in Hell's Kitchen, he prayed "Lord, don't give us this building if we can't put it to use for the people who need it 24/7." Under his leadership the church quickly established a food pantry and clothes closet, ministries he took so personally that he returned home in his stocking feet one evening because he'd given his shoes to somebody who didn't have any. When crack-cocaine first hit the streets and local businesses began closing, Gene called on them per-sonally, organizing the first meeting of businesses in Clinton South (Hell's Kitchen) to lobby for better police protection and City services, a thriving organization today. Gene was known as a master of the pun, for his creativity, skill as a speaker, infectious enthusiasm, and compassionate spirit.

A memorial service will be held at Woodbrook Baptist Church, 25 Stevenson Lane, Towson, MD 21212 on April 6, 2019 at 1:00 PM, reception following. His ashes will be placed in a Bios Urn along with a tree on the rooftop garden at

Metro Baptist Church in New York. A memorial service will be held at Metro Baptist Church in New York in June. In lieu of flowers, the family is asking that donations be made to Metro Baptist Church, 410 West 40th St., New York, NY 10018.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

APR **6**. 1:00 PM (ET)

Woodbrook Baptist Church
25 Stevenson Lane
Towson, MD 21212

Tribute Wall

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To Gene's family,

I got to know Gene during his ministry in Walkersville. He was one of the most creative colleagues I have known during my 40 years of ministry. I thank God for the time we shared.

One memory....two days after September 11 on a pleasant Thursday evening, Gene and I (with the help of a few other clergy) put together an outdoor community service at Heritage Farm Park for the Town of Walkersville. I put together many of the details, but Gene was the creative spirit that enabled that service to bring meaning to the lives of the hundreds of people who needed community and a message of hope that evening. It was an amazing time.

Dayna and I extend to your our deepest love and sympathy. May you know God's peace and comfort.

Bert Lane (currently pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Utica)

Albert K. Lane, III (Bert) - March 17, 2019 at 08:52 PM

Liesl Bolin

Bert, Thank you for sharing this. We appreciate so much hearing how he touched the lives of others as he served God in all sorts of ways. Grace and Peace, Liesl (daughter)

Liesl Bolin - April 04, 2019 at 11:01 AM

KH

Wow. I just now found this obit and letter I knew Gene since the early 60's since we served in campus ministry together for years. So Happy to hear the details. We have so many mutual friends. I loved gene and Liesl. And we followed each other around in positions we held. Yes, so creative and gifted man

Keith. Harris - February 17, 2020 at 08:15 PM