



Robert Fischer

APR 26, 1918 - JUL 5, 2004



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On July 5, 2004, the Reverend Dr. Robert H. Fischer passed away peacefully at the Decatur, IL. home of his daughter, Susan Fischer Wade. Born in Williamsport, PA. on April 26th, 1918, he grew up in Gettysburg, PA., where his father was the first professor of Religious Education and English Bible at Gettysburg Seminary. Dr. Fischer is survived by his wife of 61 years, the former Edna Mae Black; his daughter Susan Kathleen and her husband James; his grandchildren Amanda Kathleen and James Robert; and his sister-in-law M. Kathleen Hudson. He was preceded in death by his parents, Dr. M. Hadwin and Alice Gortner Fischer, and three elder siblings: Alan, Marian and H. Keith.

Remembered professionally as an internationally respected church historian and Reformation scholar, Dr. Fischer specialized in Martin Luther, American Lutheranism and Eucumenics at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago formerly Maywood, IL. from 1949 until his retirement in 1986. During his long and varied career, he served first as a parish pastor to congregations in Vermont and Pennsylvania. Upon earning his Ph.D. from Yale Divinity School, he accepted a call to teach church history at the Maywood Seminary in 1948. In 1957-8, Dr. Fischer established the Lutheran Tutorship at Mansfield College in Oxford, England. Subsequent sabbaticals included research and study at Tübingen University in Germany 1964-5, and guest professorships at the Kirchliche Hochschule in Berlin 1971-2, and Japan Lutheran Seminary, Tokyo 1980. Additionally he chaired the effort to establish a School of Missions at the Maywood campus, participated in the Lutheran-Conservative Evangelical Dialogue 1980-81 and the Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue, Series III 1981-83, and was a delegate to seven International Congresses for Luther Research. Upon retirement, Dr. Fischer enjoyed the winter months in Marco island, FLA. working on his golf game, fishing for snook, and learning the intricacies and frustrations of home computers. He also bowled with the men's league from his



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church.

The record of his life's work has been published in four decades of scholarly journals and bulletins. A compilation appears, along with tributes by grateful friends and colleagues, as a Festschrift honoring Dr. Fischer's many contributions, in the December 1988 issue of *Currents in Theology*, Vol 15, No. 6, published by the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. After retiring from teaching, Dr. Fischer continued to research and write on various topics. His last work on the 16th century Catholic theologian and opponent of Luther, Jacobus Latomus, awaits final editing and will hopefully appear next year. In 2002, Dr. Fischer's home congregation, Grace Lutheran Church in La Grange, IL., honored him and two other recipients by endowing the "Bernard, Fischer, Westberg Chair of Distinguished Ministry" at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Seminary colleagues and audiences around the Chicagoland area also remember "Dr. Bob" as an accomplished musician who founded and conducted the Maywood Seminary Choir 1949 – 1967 and accompanied the Suburban Veteran's Mens Chorus for 36 years 1949 – 1985. Frequently soloing on the piano, Dr. Fischer enjoyed command of a wide repertoire which included everything from sacred music and classical works to Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and light jazz. As a farewell tribute from the Suburban Men's Chorus proclaimed, Dr. Bob was a "gentleman, scholar and musician extraordinary who can do it all — above all able to listen and support us, not simply from the fingers....but from the heart." The same could easily be said for every aspect of a life spent in God's service; his gentle and quiet ways reflected the strength of his faith in Jesus Christ. He will be sorely missed.

The family wishes to thank Dr. Fischer's physicians and the loving support group that helped them through this difficult time, particularly: Dr. Benjamin Esparaz; Dr. Edward Elliott and Dr. Steven Sobol of Decatur, IL.; St. Thomas Hospice nurses of Hinsdale, IL.

especially Sherry Hancock; Decatur Memorial Hospice nurses of Decatur, IL. especially Susan Rasor; Family Visiting Nurses of Decatur especially Brian Thomas; Ministers Daniel Spruell, Richard Wolf and Terry Shields of Decatur; and very especially the Reverend Dr. Robert Shaner of Grace Lutheran Church in La



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Grange, IL.

A memorial service will be held at Grace Lutheran Church, La Grange, IL. on Saturday, July 17th at 2 p.m.. The family asks that memorial gifts be made to the “Bernard, Fischer, Westberg Chair of Distinguished Ministry”, which is endowed through this, Dr. Fischer’s home congregation. Interment of ashes will take place at Evergreen Cemetary in Gettysburg, PA. at a later date. Arrangements are being handled by Moran & Goebel Funeral Home, 2801 N. Monroe St., Decatur, IL. 62526; 217 875-2004; <https://www.moranandgoebel.com>



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Robert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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