

MM Summer Blue Sheet # One
From Puget Sound



REMEMBERING MY FRIEND AND WILD HUCKLEBERRY PIE

“Rev. Payne, the pastor of First Christian Church, Bremerton from 1965-1986, was 93 years old...”

The photo was taken just a few months ago. Jean and I visited Don at his apartment on Oyster Bay in Bremerton. It will be the first time in a half century that we won't be seeing him. We will be at his memorial event on June 11. Memories will be shared. More memories than time.

It took me only a second to think what my memory might be.

I thought of the day of Jean's birthday when he came down the path to our outdoor kitchen and deck carrying a wild huckleberry pie. He made it himself, something he never had done until Nettie died. He presented it with a grin. He picked the huckleberries from his place across the water from our cabin that he called “Toolots.” There were 1,000 huckleberries in that pie, he said. Wild huckleberries are very, very small.

Who would count huckleberries when making a pie? Well, Don would.

We sometimes talked “church” as clergy are likely to do. One idea was worked into our conversations quite a few times. He said that if churches wanted to reach the largest demographic group they would try to create a lively appeal to “seniors.” All the churches seemed to want were young people. They could do better if they had fewer announcements, shorter sermons and better bathrooms!

Older people are open to new ideas. They are smarter, healthier and more physically active than ever. And besides, he winked, they have most of the money!

It is good to have a friend with whom to discuss ideas. My end of the discussion usually started with a Blue Sheet. His ideas went beyond opinions. After all, he was a Yale man. One reason I have kept writing all these years is that great conversations sometimes occur. News, traffic and weather talk is not like discussing ideas.

An amazing thing about life is that we leave far more memories in people's lives than we ever know. Sometimes people remember things we did or said that we don't remember ourselves. There is an immortality to our being that we cannot imagine. Influence and memories have their own life. They abound and resound even though we are forgotten.

Most on my list didn't know Don Payne. Many were not even born during his active ministry. But I am reluctant to let him go without some notice of his presence among us. Anyway, thanks for letting me talk about my friend. He lived until age 93. I mean it. He lived!

On Memorial Day I always scatter Forget-me-nots along our beach in memory of those whose ashes have been scattered there, along with a few special others. Don will be on that list. I will remember things about each of them. And I will remember that it takes 1,000 wild huckleberries to make a pie.

Art Morgan, for Memorial Weekend, 2016

