

## *MM Email Blue Sheet - from Puget Sound by Art Morgan*

This is not an obituary. It is a post-memorial comment on just one of the passions of the life of Don Whitney.

I first knew Don when he came to be a Campus Minister at Oregon State University in Corvallis. We developed a friendship that matured into him occasionally showing up at our cabin driving his old Volvo, bringing a sleeping bag and bottle of wine. Our connection upgraded through the years as he added wife, Beth, then son, Colin to the family that accompanied him.

Some people didn't know **Don went to seminary**. In fact he attended Claremont School of Theology for two years, earning a Master's degree. He had taken a number of courses in religion and philosophy at Oregon State University. He did not intend to be ordained, but did work for a time as a Campus Minister at Westminster House in Corvallis.

Don had it right when he said that what he really wanted to do was not to preach or run a church. **"For me ministry is more about one to one relationships, where you counsel people and help them to grow."** That's what Don did. He lived most of his career as an academic counselor. If you want you could call it **campus ministry**. Two of his many students from his days at various academic advising positions spoke briefly at his service. I cite them as examples of his whole career

Julie Larson, one of the graduate students from the UW Bothell campus, spoke of what his advising meant to her present successful career. More than that she remembered how Don came to her house when her husband died and helped her through the grieving process.

Eric Pettigrew, a giant of a man, told of meeting Don at the start of his junior year. Eric was on a football scholarship but on the way to being kicked out of school and off the team. Don's job was to help student athletes stay academically eligible. Eric was slow to accept Don's help until he learned that Don was once a student athlete himself, a three year letterman at defensive back...in fact a member of the famed **Oregon State Giant Killers** known for a defeat of then #1 rated USC. Also that he was a member of the **OSU athletic hall of fame**.

Eric said of Don, **"I thought, no way was he a player. His hands are soft, he speaks quietly, he looks wiry, has a bald head. No way was he an athlete."** He went on to tell how Don's patient encouragement and prodding saved his playing career and academic career. He started the next two years as offensive tackle. Today Eric lives in Seattle, serving as director of business development for Regency Blue Shield of Washington. He is also State Representative in the 37<sup>th</sup> legislative district. He said shamelessly that Don Whitney saved him from failure.

Not everyone has Don's kind of passion for their work. But I know many who do. Without being commissioned or ordained in any way they have a focus beyond a job description. Jesus never said a person had to be ordained to be a compassionate presence to people who need it. Don was such a person throughout his career at Oregon State University, University of Washington Seattle, and University of Washington Bothell.

— Art Morgan – September 23, 2012

(Note: Don did not care to fit into anyone's ecclesiastical or theological box. A time came when he was asked to do some weddings. He used **Moment Ministries** as his connecting link required for approval to do weddings that would be state legal. So Moment Ministries designated him as **"Associated Moment Minister"** for the state of Washington. As such he performed the first wedding held at Safeco Field where the Mariners play. He did a few other weddings and a memorial service for a faculty member the UW Bothell campus. But he never thought of himself as a reverend. His calling was to serve students as an employee of the campuses on which he worked.)

**The world headquarters of Moment Ministries, inc,** returns to Corvallis, Oregon after October 4, more or less...we think.

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