

Biography

F. Wesley Walls liked big ideas, the bigger the better. He was a life-long student of world religions and political systems. In conversations with students, friends and Sunday School classes, he explored mind-expanding political, religious and philosophical issues. What are the ways of knowing? What is the relationship between beauty and spirituality? What is the basis of morality? In hospice he was asked if he wanted more "talking books." "Yes," he said emphatically, "I want to continue with my studies on Confucianism, Buddhism and the Indian Vedas." He found joy in learning and he loved to share it.

Wesley lived to be 96 but he started life on a farm near Yale, Oklahoma. He sold Rockyford cantaloupes from the back of a truck with his father, a minister, in Ponca City. Wesley attended Central College where he met Elizabeth Pickering. He graduated from Greenville College. Wesley and Elizabeth were married on October 17, 1937 at Waterloo, Iowa. Soon after, Wesley was ordained as a minister. He had a pastorate for several years before he decided to become a teacher.

Developing the mind of a scholar took time and effort. He began to teach at Seattle Pacific College (now SPU) in 1941. This was interrupted by World War II. Wesley volunteered for the Army as a Chaplain. He served in the Asian-Pacific theatre from 1945-1947 in Okinawa, the Philippines and Japan. During the Korean Conflict, 1950-1952, Wesley served again as a Chaplain on the front lines.

After returning from war, Wesley could focus on his studies and teaching. He obtained a doctorate in Political Science in 1955 from the UW. At SPU, he was honored a number of times. He had a Danforth Fellowship, and a Fulbright grant for a lengthy visit to India with other educators in 1965. He was Dean of Liberal Studies in 1970-72. He was the first director of the SPU School of Business, Administration and Management. He retired in 1981 after 40 years of teaching. Then, Wesley and Elizabeth had time for more world travels, RV caravans and mission work in Mexico. He continued to ponder big ideas until the day before he died. He was gentle, courtly, intellectual and thoughtful.

Wesley is survived by Viola (widow of son, Forrest), son, Burton (Ralene), and daughter, Francine. His grandchildren are Ryan, Aaron (Renee), Chris (Abby), Preston (Ashleigh), and Anne (Nick). His great-grandchildren are Riley, Keira, Luke, Camden and Meryl. Wesley is predeceased by Elizabeth, his wife of 69 years who died in 2005. His son, Forrest, died in 2009; his daughter, Sylvia, died in 2008. Donations may be made to the F. Wesley and Elizabeth Walls Scholarship Fund at Seattle Pacific University, 3307 3rd Ave West, Seattle WA 98119, (206)-281 2000.