

Obituary for Rev. David Steffenson

Rev. Dave Steffenson, PhD of Madison Wisconsin passed away on April 15, 2016 following a long illness. Born in 1937 in Moline Illinois to John and Ester (nee Conrad) Steffenson, he grew up in Illinois and Iowa graduating from High School in Atlantic Iowa. His professional education started at the University of Denver and Iliff School of Theology focusing on social science, journalism, theology, ethics, and the sociology of religion. He went on to earn a Masters of Sacred Theology with a focus on political social ethics from Yale University, and a PhD in Ecological Ethics through the Union Institute and University, Cincinnati Ohio. He has taught at the University of Wyoming, the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay, and Cardinal Stritch University.

Rev. Steffenson dedicated his life to activism and social justice, starting with participation in voter registration demonstrations in Hattiesburg, Mississippi in April 1964 where he was among many arrested for exercising their Constitutional Rights. As an early environmental activist, he combined his passion for ecology with his faith background as a United Methodist Minister, to deliver an important message about ethics as the guiding principle behind many environmental issues. One of the two original Ministers to serve at the Ecumenical Center at the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay, he spent 17 years working with students to deepen their spiritual quest while also teaching environmental ethics, religion and social change. Upon his departure from the Ecumenical Center, he was a local pastor in Oshkosh and Columbus Wisconsin, and continued his ecological ethics work becoming the Founding Director of the Wisconsin Interfaith Climate and Energy Campaign and serving as the Consulting Director of the Upstream Institute for Ecological Ethics in Madison, Wisconsin.

Survivors include sons Mark (Celeste) Steffenson of Andover, MA and Kevin (Rita) Steffenson of Xenia, OH; daughters Stacy Steffenson, of Adams, WI and Kyla Forst of Green Bay, WI; brother Dan (Carol) Steffenson of Albion, MI. Also surviving are 12 grandchildren Maddie, Cora, Alianne, Elyssa, Lillia, Joella, Christopher, Kayla, Kelly, Cory, Ashley and TJ; four great-grandchildren; two nieces and a nephew.

Burial will be a private ceremony at the Natural Path Sanctuary at the Linda and Gene Farley Center for Peace Justice and Sustainability. A memorial service is planned for a later date.

In lieu flowers memorial donations for the Reverend Dr. David Steffenson Endowed Scholarship for Environmental Policies & Ethics can be sent to Mauthe Center, 2420 Nicolet Dr., Green Bay, WI 54311.