

Remembrances of Shirley Snelling, February and March, 2016

addressed to members of the Order Ecumenical and Institute of Cultural Affairs network listservs

Catherine Welch, Denver

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Our dear friend Shirley Snelling (Heckman) passed away late Tuesday night. David Dunn spent some time with Clarence and other family members yesterday morning as they were thinking through arrangements for a service. Tentatively, the service may be held at Park Hill United Methodist at 1:00 on February 28, however we are awaiting confirmation. Claire Nord, Clarence's daughter has been very present to Clarence and Shirley over the past year+ as they settled into Brookdale Assisted Living and worked through getting an appropriate level of care.

I think of Shirley in her colorful African garb . . . her great appreciation for her colleagues . . . her love of having a challenging assignment . . . her delight at being Clarence's bride in "Phase IV". Please share this news with others who knew Shirley. Grace and Peace.

Jack and Louise Ballard, Fallston, MD

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To Shirley's dear family, We read the lovely obituary of Shirley's life and were reminded of how she enriched our lives at the Washington DC House and at the Kemper Building. Somehow Shirley was always very serious about what she was saying or doing and yet, she was always smiling her beautiful smile. She was a pioneer and we are so glad she served with us in the order. We support you now and send our love and concern.

Lynda (and John) Cock, Greensboro, NC

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From our Denver colleagues, I have received word of the passing of colleague Shirley Heckman Snelling. A number of us remember this remarkable woman in other locations, so I wanted to pass this on to our larger community. I met her at the Washington, DC House where she sojourned with us while working with the Church of the Brethren denominational headquarter on church curriculum. I recall her traveling montage that she set up in that little room to claim it as her space. Her positive energy and attitude was a gift she brought to every situation where I encountered her. I recall vaguely that her influence was helpful in negotiating with the Brethren on the 3444 property. Her marriage to Clarence Snelling in her later years, a professor at Illif School of Theology in Denver who also had had connection with EI, brought additional wisdom and support to the movement. Many of you may have met her at summer programs and councils. With care and celebration of a fully lived life of service.

Dawn Collins, Denver

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Dear beloved community, I share your sorrow at the passing of Shirley Snelling, whom I met again at the Park Hill United Methodist Church in Denver when she was in better health. I remember Clarence preached the sermon that morning as a stand-in for the regular pastor. I was in better health then and attended the earlier gospel service. Both Clarence and Shirley delivered warm handshakes with a smile as they greeted each of us and sent the congregants into the morning and the rest of the day. The Snellings were a significant duo in the life of PHUMC and symbolized to all the meaning of servant/leadership following in the footsteps of our Exemplar. Someone mentioned in their remembrance of Shirley that she paid attention to sacred space. Well, she certainly did carry that characteristic within her imposing selfhood. I may not be able to attend services for Shirley in March yet I can certainly sing the gospel tune "Oh When the Saints Go Marching In" which I hummed tonight and will sing again on that day of celebration of her full and completed life. Her life was a gift to the church, her family and the world. May she be remembered fondly and deeply in her transition to angelhood.

Doug and Pat Druckenmiller, Davenport, IA

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Thanks for this news. Sorry for the loss of your mother. I remember Shirley at a summer program, lugging large cases full of then - very edge video equipment. We watched a Russian space vessel lock onto an American one. Soyuz, I think. It was amazing to be able to see it in, I believe, real time. Now we could watch on our phones. What a time she lived in.

Walter Epley, Clarksville, IA

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I was delighted to get the email, but broken-hearted at the news. I was impressed a while back. [Shirley] mentioned she had all her "business" handled. And her favorite story about being in an African village with the villagers trying to figure out how to get a bridge built. Take Care.

Ann and John Epps, Kuala Lumpur and Denver

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We are sorry to have to miss Shirley's service and reception as we'll be in Singapore that day. What a woman! Shirley certainly blazed a lot of trails in the church, human development, and in education. Our prayers are with Clarence as he journeys another phase in his life. Have a great celebration.

George Holcombe, Austin, TX

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This has been a sad year with the death of our son, Chris. There appears to be no bounds for grief. And then followed by the loss of Gordon, Slicker, Lela and Shirley. Such magnificent lives all.

Ellen and Dick Howie, Altamont, NY

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Dear Everyone, Shirley was my model for embracing all types of situations, from the most stark to the luxurious! Her expertise with curriculum spread widely, and as a current member of the Reformed Church in America was used by our denomination as well.

Our prayers for one and all as we celebrate her wondrously completed life,

Barb Sample, Denver

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Catherine, thanks so much for managing a way for all of us to contribute to Shirley's memorial service. I will be there, I'll sing as well as I can, and I will also bring a dessert. Unfortunately Bob won't be able to attend. He's very disappointed to miss her service, but instead he'll be in Abu Dhabi for the Microcredit Summit, working with the retreat team to take action to bring the end of extreme poverty. As Sherwood says, it's something we know Shirley would approve of.

Eunice Shankland, Denver

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Thank you, Catherine. It is with sadness that I read your news. I, too, think of Shirley as a "spirit giant" whose heart is big and imagination, expansive. She is a woman whose love and care for others was stronger than fear. Yes, I will hold her memory in bright colors and wonderful encounters. Will talk later today or this weekend. Grace and peace.

Sherwood Shankland, Denver

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Dear Colleagues, On the 17th, I will be in the Mideast facilitating a retreat to End Extreme Poverty...I suppose Shirley would approve. I'll sing as loud as I can...y'all enjoy the desserts, Blessings all around.

Now, Soar Shirley Soar!
Rise up on wings like an eagle;
Run and be not weary;
Walk and do not faint;
Thank you Lord, Thank you Lord, all the way.

Jim Slotta, Denver

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[writing to Carl Larson], I don't see your name on Catherine's email list, but know she intended to include you. [Shirley's death] is a sad moment for all of us; I say that with a deep appreciation for the understanding of life that we are all so fortunate to share. Blessings.

Cynthia and Bob Vance, Venice, FL

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Thank you John for the notice of your mom's passing. Such a wonderful biography! Both Bob and I remember Shirley fondly.

Jaime Vergara, Saipan (CNMI, USA) and Shenyang (China)

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Thanks, John. I am sure I ran into Shirley in the Order though I spent more of my time outside of Chicago; am grateful for your narrative of her bio.

Sunny Walker, Denver

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[Shirley] was truly quite the feisty old gal when I knew her best...as the obituary said, an inspiring role model.

Kate Ward, Phoenix, AZ

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Hi to all and thanks for the news. Someone needs to witness to the transformative gift that Clarence was in Shirley's life. I was with Shirley at the ICA Phoenix Complex for a number of years. There was definitely a before Clarence and after Clarence for Shirley. Her transformation through their union is proof that we are never too old to grow and change and that it doesn't always have to be painful. Peace.