



## Byron Swanson

April 22, 1930 - October 24, 2017

Dr. Byron Ralph Swanson was born on Earth Day, April 22, 1930 in Omaha, Nebraska, Byron Ralph Swanson was an enthusiastic environmentalist way before his time! He spent his life recycling, composting, saving water and picking up trash – and the world is a more beautiful place because of his care and compassion for the earth! The son of Ralph and May Swanson, and younger brother of Ellie, Byron went to Rose Hill Elementary School and graduated from Omaha Benson High School. He and his lifelong friend, Warren Buffett, had plenty of adventures in middle school – including a disastrous triple date in 8th grade!

Byron attended the University of Nebraska for one year before transferring to Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. Although he became a Viking, and graduated from Augustana in 1952, he remained a loyal Nebraska Cornhusker fan all his life. After college, Byron went to Augustana Seminary and became an ordained Lutheran pastor in 1956. He met Kathryn Segerhammar, and it was love at first sight! They were married October 26, 1956 in Los Angeles California, and began their married life in Gladstone, Missouri where Byron's first parish, St. Timothy Lutheran Church, met in the basement of the parsonage. Kim and Tim were born in Kansas City, before they moved to New Haven, Connecticut in 1960, where Byron got his Masters of Sacred Theology at Yale Divinity School. Needing an extra foreign language class before pursuing his doctorate, Byron and Kathryn moved to

Tempe, Arizona, where he worked in Campus Ministry at ASU and took a year of German! Todd was born in Mesa, Arizona. After a year in Arizona, they moved back east to Princeton, NJ, where Byron worked on his doctorate at Princeton Theological Seminary. They spent six fun years in Princeton, and their fourth child, Brad, was born in Trenton, New Jersey. During that time, the family moved to Sweden for six months, where Byron did research for his dissertation on Archbishop Nathan Soderblom and the Ecumenical Movement. With a PhD in Theology, Byron was hired as a Professor of Religion at Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, Nebraska. So, once again, the family packed up and moved across the country! Fremont was home for the Swanson family from 1968 until 1979 when they moved to Thousand Oaks, California, where Byron was a Professor of Religion at California Lutheran University. Teaching Theology, Church History and the Reformation, Christian Ethics, Environmental Ethics, and Peace and Justice were some of his favorite courses, and he was passionate about the subjects and his students. He loved his Lutheran heritage but was accepting of all religions and encouraged students to explore other beliefs and be open to other perspectives.

Byron encouraged his children and his students to find their passions and follow them. His passion and commitment to his own vocation and calling – his ministry and teaching – touched many lives. His life of love, service and graciousness was a living example for all. Byron once said, he was “Hooked on Grace!” God’s gift of grace and acceptance ran through every bone in his body and shone brightly through his huge smile! Byron never met a stranger – everyone he talked to had an interesting story, and he wanted to hear it! After retiring from CLU, Byron and Kathryn moved to Fort Collins, Colorado in 2001 to be close to their children and grandchildren and their beloved family ranch in Red Feather Lakes. He quickly developed new friendships in Fort Collins through their church – Shepherd of the Hills, the Men’s Discussion group, his special BBB (Beer, Books and Bible) group and the Exercise group

at CSU. Each time they moved -to the Worthington, New Mercer and Centre Nursing Facility – he met new friends!

Byron was a sports enthusiast – his favorite football team was the Nebraska Cornhuskers and his favorite baseball team the LA Dodgers! He was fond of anything Swedish, he loved spending time with his family, going to concerts and plays, playing racquetball and handball, gardening and composting, horseback riding, biking, canoeing, throwing frisbees and traveling. He and Kathryn traveled all over the world – both with college students and after they retired.

When he was diagnosed in 2012 with Multiple Systems Atrophy, he handled the cruel disease with strength and grace. Always active and moving, Byron's last years were confined to a wheelchair. And, although he spoke for a living as a pastor and professor, he lost his ability to communicate verbally. However, his eyes and his big smile spoke a thousand words, and no one will ever forget his thumbs-up!

Byron Swanson, Child of God, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on October 24, 2017, shortly after the Dodgers scored a homerun in the first game of the World Series! He loved deeply and was deeply loved in return by so many. Byron leaves behind the love of his life - his wife Kathryn, and four children, Kim (Dave) Guinn, Tim (Lee) Swanson, Todd (Heidi) Swanson and Brad (Mary) Swanson, six grandchildren Andy Guinn, Katy Guinn, Ben Moening-Swanson, Isaac Moening-Swanson, Kiah Swanson and Riley Swanson, six siblings-in-law, many nieces and nephews, and friends all over the world!

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to Augustana College, 639 38th St. Rock Island, IL 61201; Bethany College, 355 E. Swensson St. Lindsborg, KS

67456; or the ELCA World Hunger Appeal Evangelical Lutheran Church in America/ELCA Gift Processing Center /P.O. Box 1809/ Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

Services will be 11/11 at 11:00 am at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, 1200 S. Taft Hill Road, Fort Collins, CO.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

NOV 11. 11:00 AM (MT)

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
1200 S Taft Hill Rd Fort Collins, CO US 80521  
Fort Collins, CO 80521

# Tribute Wall

CD

“ My condolences to the entire Swanson family. My brief association with Kim via the Fremont Learning Center where we worked together for a brief time, along with our Red Feather connection, allowed us to meet her wonderful family one time. We think of you all every summer heading to our cabin when we round that one corner that exposes your beautiful ranch. Many memories were made that day. I saw each and every picture posted in your video and see a wonderful and happy family. What a lasting tribute to Byron.

*Cindy Diers  
Fremont, Nebraska*

---

**cindy diers** - January 07, 2018 at 05:45 PM

BE

“ Byron's kind spirit and ability to see the best in people was a true inspiration for a young woman attending Midland Lutheran College in the fall of 1978. He wasn't trying to inspire anyone, he was just being...Byron Swanson.

*When my wife Lori (Gnuse) came down with her second bout of mononucleosis in her freshman year, Byron told her to take care of her health and assured her things would be OK. He extended her class deadlines, which undoubtedly created more work for him. He knew Lori would finish the task, and he was right.*

*Today, Lori and I have have a special patience and understanding for those dealing with health issues. As we pay his inspiration forward, the concentric circles of Byron's God given compassion know no limits.*

*Our condolences to Kathryn, Tim, Kim and family.*

*Brian & Lori Essen  
Fremont, NE*

---

**Brian & Lori Essen** - November 21, 2017 at 03:30 PM

WA

“ I so much appreciated Byron and Kathryn during the years when my wife, Rebecca, served as associate pastor at Holy Trinity in Thousand Oaks. At some point I decided to extend my graduate school education still further by signing up for an ethics course at USC, taught by Father Charles Curran. Byron thought that sounded like a good idea, and and decided to sign up for the course too! So, we carpoled together and had opportunity to get to know one another that much better in the confines of each other's cars. Byron was a kind, thoughtful, gentle man whose friendship I enjoyed during our Thousand Oaks years. Rebecca and I send our sympathy and prayers to Kathryn and all of Byron's family and friends.

Wes Aardahl  
Cheyenne, WY

---

Wesley Aardahl - November 18, 2017 at 02:30 PM

RC

“ Our sincere condolences to the entire Swanson family on the loss of your husband, Dad, and grand-father. Byron was a 'life-long-friend' for those of us in the Capps family -- growing up together in Omaha, Nebraska, where we attended Augustana Lutheran Church. Then Byron attending Augustana Seminary at the same time that my brother, Walt, was there. Followed by their journey to the West Coast, where Byron was a professor at California Lutheran, and Walt was at UC Santa Barbara. We all 'reunited' when Byron moved back to Colorado and we had several very enjoyable visits to 'The Ranch' outside of Ft. Collins. Byron was a 'role-model' for all of us, always friendly and good-spirited -- such a wonderful gift to all of us from God! Blessings to the entire family and friends who will be gathering together in the 'celebration of his life' on Saturday in Ft. Collins.

*Roger Capps*

---

**Roger Capps** - November 09, 2017 at 11:21 AM

RI

“ 1 file added to the album Slideshow of Family Photos



---

**Riley** - November 07, 2017 at 12:27 PM

JM

“ Kathryn and family

*We reach out to you in love and sympathy as you experience deep loss, profound gratitude for life well lived, abundant memories, and embrace the sustaining hope that marked Byron's ministry, teaching and living.*

*May God bless, comfort and support you in the days ahead as you recall the good cheer that Byron always shared with those whose lives he touched, not least during our years together at CLU and Holy Trinity.*

*Jerry & Margaret Miller*

---

**Jerry & Margaret Miller** - November 05, 2017 at 01:10 AM

IK

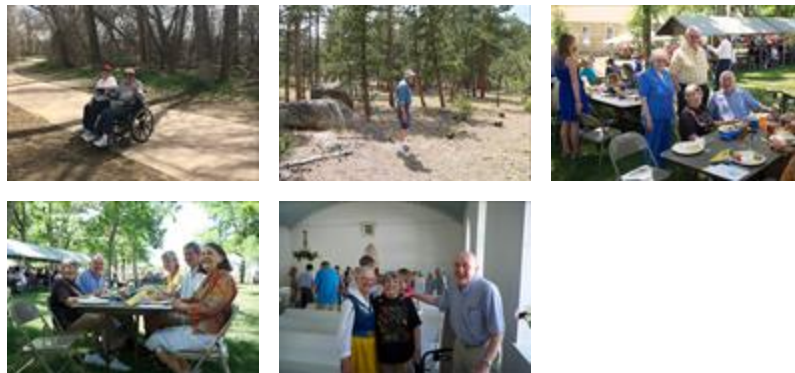
“ *Helping me mount a horse (after twenty years!), so patiently. . . and then taking me on a ride --(walk) on the horse, even though he had just returned from a ride. IlaJean Kragthorpe God bless all his wonderful family, Such love and laughter we shared for so many years~! You are all in our prayers. Ron and IlaJean Kragthorpe*

---

**IlaJean Kragthorpe** - November 04, 2017 at 05:20 PM

ET

“ 9 files added to the album *New Album Name*



---

**Erik Thompson** - November 03, 2017 at 02:29 PM

KG

*Erik, these are great pictures of the Mid-sommer and Christmas services at Ryssby! I also LOVE the one of Dad in Red Feather with his favorite hat, shorts and tall white socks - classic Byron!!*

**Kim Guinn** - November 03, 2017 at 06:56 PM

LF

*Byron was an important contributor to the Men's Discussion Group & I valued his comments. Les Fraley*

**Les Fraley** - November 04, 2017 at 02:52 PM

ET

*Byron was a dear friend and I will miss him very much as I am sure many others will. It would be difficult to find a nicer person. He was a pleasure to be with, and never had a complaint - not even during his last few years when things were difficult for him but always found a reason to give a thumbs-up. Thanks, Byron, and thumbs-up for simply being who you were.*

**Erik Thompson** - November 05, 2017 at 10:29 AM

TS

“ 15 files added to the album *More Family Photos*



**Tim Swanson** - November 03, 2017 at 09:27 AM

LH

“ Our most sincere and heartfelt condolences to Kathryn, Tim, Kim, Todd, Brad, and all of the extended family. Byron was a prince of a man by any standard...caring, compassionate, an excellent listener, a courageous and strong yet gentle presence for all of us. When we moved to California, at one point many of the Segerhammar clan were visiting those living in the area and we hosted a dinner for about 19 relatives. When it was time to clean up in the kitchen, Byron absolutely insisted he would do it alone, as he wanted me to have more visiting time with the relatives I so seldom had seen over the years, but who he had so often seen and been around. That is so typical of his personality...just a small story to share, but such a telling incident. Despite his worldly accomplishments, he shone his personal light into even the smallest everyday experiences. And as noted in his obituary, he had that joyful smile to contribute when other means of communication had been taken from him. He gave of himself unselfishly to the end, and his memory keeps on giving.

*Hugs & prayers from Linda, Larry & Ingrid Hogle and family. We can't attend the service but are with you in Spirit.*

---

**Linda Hogle** - November 02, 2017 at 05:32 PM

KG

“ 3 files added to the album Family Photos

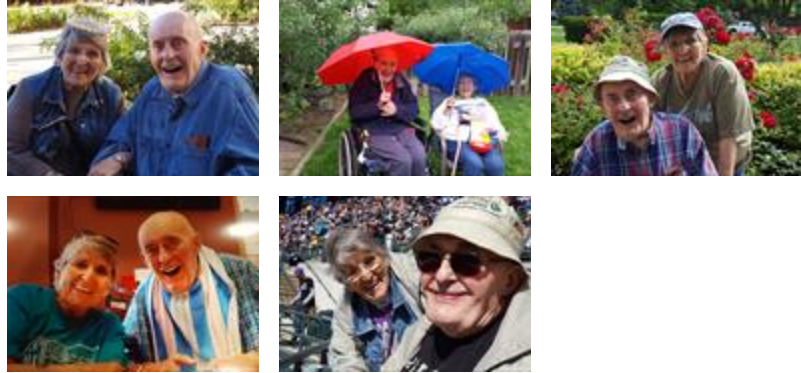


---

**Kim Guinn** - November 02, 2017 at 04:57 PM

KG

“ 12 files added to the album *A Year of Pictures of Byron and Kathryn - 2016*



Kim Guinn - November 02, 2017 at 03:59 PM

TS

“ 15 files added to the album *New Album Name*



Tim Swanson - November 02, 2017 at 01:12 PM

TS

“ 14 files added to the album *New Album Name*



---

**Tim Swanson** - November 02, 2017 at 11:42 AM

TS

“ 1 file added to the album *New Album Name*



---

**Tim Swanson** - November 02, 2017 at 11:28 AM