Larkin

The Reverend Dr. Robert Hillard Rigstad

March 8, 1938 ~ June 30, 2019

The Reverend Dr. Robert Hillard Rigstad died June 30, 2019 at 81 years of age in Salt Lake City, UT. He was born March 8, 1938 in Detroit, Michigan, and grew up in Duluth, MN, from the age of 8 until graduating in 1955 from Denfeld High School, where he was on the debate team and played flute in the marching band. He earned his baccalaureate in 1959, double majoring in Greek and History, at Whitworth College in Spokane, WA. It was there that he met the love of his life, Anita Joanne Crall. They were married at her home church, United Bretheren of Walla Walla, WA, April 8, 1960, and remained together and deeply in love for the rest of his life. After attending Dubuque Theological Seminary, he was ordained and called to serve as Pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Roseburg, OR (1962 -1966), Jacksonville, OR (1966-1968), Salt Lake City, UT (1968-1972), and Van Nuys, CA (1972-1980). During his years in Van Nuys, he successfully integrated both the local Anglophone and Hispanic communities in a dual language congregation. He also presented the case for the ordination of openly gay and lesbian pastors at the 1977 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. He then served as the chief Executive of the Presbytery of Utah from 1980-1988, while simultaneously heading up Shared Ministry in Utah, a protestant ecumenical organization. During that time he earned a Doctorate in Ministry (DMin) at San Francisco Theological Seminary. He also served as Executive Presbyter in Seattle (1988-1992) and Philadelphia (1992-2000), before returning in retirement to Salt Lake City, where he could enjoy the company of family and old friends, as well as the natural beauty of Utah. He liked to spend his leisure time fishing, gardening, and playing cribbage. He was preceded in death by his father, Hillard Rigstad, and his mother, Mildred Rigstad. He is survived by his loving wife, Anita Rigstad, his three brothers, Paul, John, and James Rigstad, his two sons, Peter and Mark Rigstad, and his two grandchildren, Ryan and Natalie Rigstad. He will be remembered as a loving husband, father, grandfather, and brother, as well as a spiritual and civic leader in the communities that he served.

A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, July 20, 2019 beginning at 2PM at the Wasatch Presbyterian Church, 1626 South 1700 East in Salt Lake City.