

Memorial Minute for Bruce Dahlberg
Read by Karl P. Donfried, Faculty Meeting May 17, 2012

For forty-one of his 87 years, from 1956 until 1997, Bruce Dahlberg taught in the Department of Religion and Biblical Literature. Bruce was one of the College's most indefatigable and determined advocates. His wide ranging responsibilities integrated service as Secretary to the Faculty and Faculty Parliamentarian with membership on College Committees including Tenure and Promotion, Lecture, Social Responsibility, Academic Freedom, the Advisory Committee for the Minor in Jewish Studies, Chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee for the Archaeology Minor and, for many years, Chair of the Department of Religion and Biblical Literature.

Bruce served as pastor of the Lefferts Park Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York, prior to entering the joint Columbia-Union Theological Seminary program from which he received a Ph.D. in Old Testament studies as a result of his creative research on the biblical book of Malachi. During his long tenure as a member of our Smith faculty, his teaching responsibilities ranged broadly but always giving particular emphasis to his Bible I course on the Hebrew Scriptures as well as to colloquia and seminars that exemplified his particular strength in the field of archaeology and the literatures of the Near East. Bruce's expansive interests in these areas of biblical study are well documented in his publications.

Although we were colleagues in the field of biblical studies at Smith for some thirty years, it was really through a chance meeting early on in the Atlanta Airport with Bruce and an archeological colleague of his that really allowed me – especially through their animated and lively discussion - the opportunity both to recognize and to appreciate more intensely his profound passion for archeological work in Jordan and

Israel as well as his deep commitment to the American Schools for Oriental Research. Some of you may have heard about Bruce's first archaeological journey to the Near East with his family in 1964! Assisted by their Nash Rambler station wagon and a Sears Roebuck umbrella tent, they traveled across Europe, the Balkans, Syria and Lebanon to Jerusalem and Jordan. From Jordan trips were taken to the Dead Sea and Jericho and, on horseback, to the ancient ruins of Petra.

In subsequent years a major area of archaeological concentration for Bruce was the ancient site of Tell el-Hesi, a 25-acre archaeological area in Israel some fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem for which he served, at various points in his academic career, as Area Supervisor, Director of Publications, Financial Director and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors. This dedicated and sustained archaeological study and field-work would indeed have a clear impact at Smith: it increased our focus on archaeology both in terms of individual courses as well as in the creation of an inter-departmental program on archeology. In addition, extensive field-work opportunities were initiated under his leadership and guidance, including his great success in securing appropriate financial aid for participating students. Bruce's lively interest in Near Eastern archeology influenced not only colleagues such as Jochanan Wijnhoven and myself, but also dozens of students who would regularly accompany Bruce to participate in active archaeological digs.

Bruce leaves his wife Janet and four adult children. For his many contributions as well as his rock-solid integrity and his graceful way with words, we remember our distinguished colleague Bruce Dahlberg with much gratitude and admiration.