



Dr. James Bennett Pugh

December 20, 1926 - June 18, 2012

Dr. James B. Pugh

of Bryn Mawr, the former superintendent of schools in Lower Merion Township and Greenville, DE, died Monday at Bryn Mawr Hospital. He was 85.

Dr. Pugh was born in Edwardsville, PA but grew up in Chester, PA where he attended public schools, graduating from Chester High School on June 6, 1944, D-Day. He tried to enlist in the Army the following day only to be rejected for being underweight. With the assistance of his uncle who knew the local recruiters in Wilkes Barre, he completed his enlistment two weeks later and was sent to Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, VA to study engineering under the Army Specialized Training Program. His enrollment at VMI was short-lived, however. In November, 1944 he arrived at Camp Wheeler in Georgia to prepare for the final surge into Europe. Shortly thereafter, he was on a troop transport ship headed, not for Europe, but the Philippines in the Pacific. Dr. Pugh was among the first Americans to enter Hiroshima after the surrender and remained there for three months as part of a small contingent sent to accompany scientists and other military inspectors, and to destroy

ammunition depots. Reassigned to the MPs during the Occupation, he served in Kobe, Nagasaki and Tokyo.

After the war, Dr. Pugh attended West Chester Teachers' College where he earned a degree in elementary education. He worked as an elementary classroom teacher and elementary principal in Huntington Station, NY and entered the graduate program at Teacher's College, Columbia University, where he earned his master's and doctoral degrees. As part of his doctoral thesis, Dr. Pugh conducted one of the first studies evaluating the relationship between class size and learning. Following appointments as a Research Fellow and Senior Research Associate, he taught a graduate course and worked on a broad range of educational issues from public school finance and recruiting to selecting a quality teaching staff.

Dr. Pugh left Teacher's College in 1965 to serve as the superintendent of schools for the Midland Park Public Schools, Midland, NJ. In 1971 he accepted the position as superintendent of the Alexis I. DuPont School District in Greenville, DE, and in 1978 became superintendent of the Lower Merion School District in Ardmore, PA. After leaving Lower Merion in 1991, Dr. Pugh returned to his alma mater, now West Chester University, first as a supervisor of elementary student teachers and then as Coordinator of the Secondary Education Field experiences and Director of the Teacher Education Center. He retired in 2002.

Dr. Pugh was a member of the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr, a former member of its Vestry and actively involved in coordinating its Food for Friends program and other volunteer efforts. He was also a past president of the Main Line Chapter of the American Cancer Society, and a former board member of The Episcopal Church Club of Philadelphia, and the Interfaith Hospitality Network – Main Line. An avid cyclist at one time, he loved classical music, opera, gardening, his Welsh ancestry and afternoons spent at the dog park with "Casey".

Dr. Pugh is survived by his wife of nearly 35 years, Dee Lafferty Pugh and three children: Jenni Pandak (Dr. Michael) of Richmond, VA; Pamela Gill (John) of Middletown, DE; and James B. Pugh III (Leah) of West Grove, PA, eight grandchildren: Philip, Nicole, Christopher, Samantha, Ty, Ali, Emily and Victoria, five nieces and nephews, and Casey. Dr. Pugh was preceded in death by his parents, James B. Pugh Sr. and Fay Jones Pugh, and by a sister, Edith Beauchamp, and a brother Thomas Pugh.

His Memorial Service will be held on Saturday June 23rd, 11 AM in Church of the Redeemer, corner of Pennswood and New Gulph Rds., Bryn Mawr PA. Interment Private.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that contributions be made to Aid for Friends, a faith-based association which provides free daily home-cooked meals to needy, isolated shut-ins, primarily the frail elderly, in the Greater Philadelphia area. Contributions can be sent to Aid for Friends at 12271 Townsend Rd, Philadelphia, PA 19154-1288.

Previous Events

Service

JUN **23**. 11:00 AM (ET)

Church of The Redeemer
230 Pennswood Road
Bryn Mawr, PA

Tribute Wall



“ Dee,
*I am so sorry, I had no idea. I just came across the obituary.
Melissa###imported-begin##Melissa Benca###imported-end##*

July 23, 2012 at 12:44 PM



“ Dee and Family Our deepest sympathy and love. Love always, John
and Carol###imported-begin##John and Carol Jones###imported-
end##

June 21, 2012 at 11:12 AM



“ I am so so sorry that Dr Pugh has died
I am keeping you in my prayers###imported-begin##sarah
morris###imported-end##

June 20, 2012 at 09:06 AM



“ Jim,
*My sincerest sympathies for you and your family. He is now in a
better place.*

*Larry.
(class of '84 A.I. High)###imported-begin##Larry M.
Wright###imported-end##*

June 20, 2012 at 07:15 AM