



Dr. Gerhard E. Spiegler

December 4, 1929 - August 24, 2015

Gerhard Spiegler

The words that come to mind, in thinking of Gerhard, are thinker, reader, intellectual, collegial leader, a teacher who could and did take any student willing to put in the effort of the journey on a path into a far deeper, more penetrating, more appreciative understanding of the thought and culture in which our own culture exists and from which it evolved. And dear friend.

Born in December 1929 in the interwar Republic of Lithuania in the German-majority city of Memel (Klaipeda in Lithuanian), he spoke, Lithuanian as well as German, at least in his youth. He witnessed the annexation of Memel from Lithuania by Hitler's Germany on 23 March 1939. He was too young to be drafted into the Second World War but managed later to escape from Memel and the advancing Soviet forces as a refugee to Oldenberg, Germany. After World War II, Gerhard came to America as a refugee from Germany. In Chicago, he met and married his wife of 62 years, Ethel Maldonado of Guatemala, who survives him to date.

Gerhard received his Ph.D. in theology from the University of Chicago, in 1961, with a dissertation on Schleiermacher. He was offered a faculty position at Chicago, but chose instead to come to Haverford College, where in the Fall 1961 semester he joined other young scholar teachers who were beginning a new generation in the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences.

In his first years at Haverford Gerhard taught a wide range of courses, all of which were characterized by a keen focus on original texts, reading them to

learn what was being said, in what historical and cultural context, and with what consequences, both immediate and in the decades and centuries that followed. In the company of fine teachers and penetrating thinkers Gerhard stood out.

He was a legend among the students – for the rigorous compassion of his teaching and for his obviously penetrating knowledge of a wide range of intellectual history –by the end of his second year at the College. In 1967, he authored *The Eternal Covenant: Schleiermacher's Experiment in Cultural Theology*. He also served as Provost and Interim President at Haverford after the retirement of President Hugh Borton in 1967 and before the installation of John R. Coleman.

After his work and service at Haverford Gerhard, came to Temple U. as Provost; left that position after about four years and came to Temple University Department of Religion (TUDOR) as Professor, and was after a couple of years elected as Chair of TUDOR. He was deeply appreciated by all of his colleagues. Gerhard served as Provost at Temple University, In 1985, Gerhard accepted a position as President of Elizabethtown College a liberals college in southeastern Pennsylvania. His success could be measured in numbers, such as, the \$35 million in campus improvements, the \$24 million endowment, the No. 3 ranking among private liberal arts colleges in the North.

At Elizabethtown, Gerhard was responsible for the creation of the High Library, the Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups, the Bucher Meetinghouse, the Leffler Chapel and Performance Center. Among his colleagues, he was known as an excellent administrator and politician.

Several awards and accomplishments include: The Distinguished Teaching Award from the Danforth Foundation in 1968; Award for Distinguished Research from the University of Chicago; Doctor of Human Letters from Elizabethtown College; PhD from University of Chicago 1961, and various contributions to religious scholarly works. His major contributions however

were as a teacher and a colleague.

Gerhard leaves behind his beloved wife, Ethel Maldonado of Guatemala, his three adult children, Karin E., Eric J., and Mark D. Spiegler, his sister Hanna Elledge, and his granddaughters, Sarah M. and Emma C. Gordon.

His Service will be held on Saturday August 29th. at 2PM in the Auditorium of Rosemont Presbyterian Village, 404 Cheswick Place, Rosemont, PA 19010. Burial will be private in Haverford Friends Meeting.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Salvation Army, American Heart Assn., or US for UN Refugee Agency (www.unhcr.org).

Previous Events

Memorial Service

AUG **29**. 2:00 PM (ET)

Rosemont Presbyterian Village Auditorium
404 Cheswick Place
Rosemont, PA

Tribute Wall



“ Dear Mrs. Spiegler and Family,

I was very sorry to read of Dr. Spiegler's death, and offer you my sincerest condolences. I considered him my mentor, benefactor, and friend. I met him when he taught at Temple University, took one class in Continental Philosophy with him, and was hooked! I will never forget his intellectual rigor or his kindness, as he opened the worlds of Heidegger and Whitehead to me. As a poor graduate student, he made sure that I had a teaching or research assistantship each year, and when he left for Elizabethtown College, he offered me my first job in development, which has led to a very happy 29-year career.

I cannot thank Dr. Spiegler enough for all he did for me, and so many other hungry minds.

*Joseph S. Burman
University of Michigan*

Joseph Burman - August 31, 2015 at 07:56 AM

JS

“ *Ethel and Family:*

My deepest sympathies to you and yours. Although he will be sorely missed, I hope that fond memories will give comfort to you during this period of mourning.

I have always considered Gerhard to be a mentor and friend. I treasure my memories of him during my student and alumni association with Elizabethtown College. He was a remarkable scholar, teacher, friend and gentleman. It was a joy to have known him.

With prayers of comfort and peace, I remain

Sincerely yours,

John N. Snader

John Snader - August 27, 2015 at 09:57 AM