



Bennie Gene (Ben) Stallings

December 5, 1950 - October 16, 2024

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Chaplain (MAJ) Ben Stallings (USArmy, RET) passed away Wednesday, October 16, 2024, at 73 years of age from complications related to dementia. He was born December 5, 1950, in Tampa, Florida, to Eugene Zollie Stallings and Sarah Myrtice McMillan Stallings. He attended elementary and middle schools in Tampa, after which the family moved to Lake Panasoffkee, Florida. Ben graduated from South Sumter High School, Bushnell, Florida. He continued his education, graduating from Lake Sumter State College, Leesburg, University of Central Florida, Orlando, and received the M.Div. degree from Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina. Throughout his seminary studies, he realized his call to the ministry of pastoral care, eventually completing five units of clinical pastoral educational training in hospitals from Butner, North Carolina to Staten Island, New York. In 2004, he became a board-certified member of the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC).

Upon graduation from high school in 1969, he was drafted into the US Army and served in Vietnam from 1970-1971, first as a radio operator, then, with help and guidance from a chaplain, Ben's MOS (military occupational specialty) was changed to that of chaplain's assistant. From then on, Ben proceeded to pursue his calling to the ministry of military chaplaincy. It would

be a long process with college and seminary degrees to be earned as well as two years of experience pastoring a church. He was undaunted. This was his calling and he pursued it with fervor, completing the basic chaplain course in 1982, receiving his commission as a second lieutenant, and reporting to his first assignment at Fort Rucker, Alabama (Aviation).

From there, he went on to serve as Family Life Chaplain for the Base Support Battalion, Leighton Barracks, Würzburg, Germany. Then in 1988, he completed the Advanced Chaplain Course at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and headed to Fort Riley, Kansas, to serve the Big Red One, including deployment with the 234th Armor Battalion for Dessert Shield/Dessert Storm, 1990. Upon return from Dessert Storm, Ben completed the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and was promoted to Major in 1992. Katterbach Community Support Battalion was the next duty station at Ansbach, Germany, where Ben was the 235th Support Battalion Chaplain. Following that four-year assignment, Ben returned to Fort Riley, Kansas, and, after three years there, he reported to Fort Hamilton (Brooklyn), New York, to serve as Command/Post Chaplain, where he completed his military career in December 2000.

Ben earned numerous medals and ribbons throughout his service as enlisted soldier and military officer.

Ben then had the opportunity to further pursue the clinical pastoral ministry when he was named Director of Pastoral Care at Lutheran Medical Center, Brooklyn, NY. After a rewarding five years of ministry in that position, Ben took a position as protestant chaplain with Metropolitan Jewish Hospice in Brooklyn, where he remained until relocating to Terre Haute, Indiana, in December 2012. Ben served as chaplain for several hospice organizations based in Terre Haute until his retirement in 2016.

During the Brooklyn years (twelve), in addition to his full-time hospital or, later

hospice chaplaincy, he also served five different Lutheran congregations (ELCA) in Staten Island and Brooklyn, as transition pastor, each usually a two-year, part-time assignment. He thrived on pastoral care within the congregations who needed guidance and mending as they prepared to call a new pastor.

Throughout Ben's professional ministry career, he remained committed to his family. He was always there to cheer Susan (Outlaw) on as she pursued graduate studies, ordination, and culinary training. With a 53-year marriage, it is apparent they were life-long (forever) sweethearts, and an example of what a fulfilling marriage looks like. Ben's favorite birthday treat was Susan's pineapple upside down cake, a tradition of many years.

Ben enjoyed fishing trips with son Jordan from the first experience of teaching Jordan how to fish through fly fishing trips after he began his teaching career; Ben and Jordan spent time in the home workshop, and together, learned and shared the challenges of home construction. From the time Jordan began playing basketball in third grade (German traveling team), Ben could be found in the stands patiently watching and cheering; even living in Brooklyn, New York, where Jordan attended Xaverian High School, Ben (and Susan) were not deterred from attending games taking place in the five boroughs of New York City. And, sharing together a baseball game with the New York Yankees in Yankee Stadium, The Bronx, brought extra joys to father and son. After Robert, Raj and Rafi joined the family, Ben enjoyed Robert's organ and choral concerts, and attending Rafi's various school programs. Later, as Ben's health was compromised, he delighted in the personal home concerts by Robert (piano) and Rafi (violin). Ben's humor was showered on the entire family—laughs came easily, jokes and harmless pranks were generously dispensed; so much so that the family had to get with the program to give Ben a bit of his own laughter's medicine.

Travel was definitely a favored hobby of Ben's, spending dedicated time in all 50 states as well as numerous foreign countries. He continued physical training following his military retirement, running and walking; he enjoyed gardening, reading, and playing his Baroque alto recorder until his health situation prevented those activities. Ben was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church. He also attended the Church of the Immaculate Conception with the Sisters of Providence, and Central Presbyterian Church.

As the stars cover the heavens, poignant moments spread twinkling rays throughout Ben's life. A tiny representation of many includes: The privilege of baptizing son Jordan, years later baptizing his soon-to-be daughter-in-law, MaryAnn Havener; singing (with Susan) at Jordan and MaryAnn's wedding; arriving in the hangar at Ft. Riley where the troops were being received and welcomed home from Desert Storm, finding his family, Susan, Jordan and Robert ready to receive him with open arms. There were the various military assignments in which Ben always found deep ministry opportunities, however, he was particularly honored to be chosen for serving as the 235th Base Support Battalion Chaplain at Katterbach.

Ben is survived by his adored and adoring wife, Rev. Susan Outlaw-Stallings, son Jordan and princess daughter-in-law MaryAnn of Paris, IL, and family members chosen later in life—son Dr. Robert Bozeman (DMA), son-in-law Raj Shah, and grandson, Rafi Shah-Bozeman of Louisville, KY. Additionally he is survived by his sister-in-law, Dr. Mary E. Outlaw (Ed.D) of Armuchee, GA, brother, Rick Stallings and sister-in-law, Martha Bunch Stallings of Fruitland Park, FL, two nephews, and one grand nephew. He is predeceased by his parents, sister Lelia Mae Everett Walters, and brothers Tommy Everett and

Ken Stallings. Long-time friends in Germany and across the United States, and former USArmy chaplain and civilian colleagues, now scattered throughout the States, mourn the loss of their gentle friend. Ben leaves many loving friends in the Sisters of Providence Congregation.

The Wake is Tuesday, October 29, 2024, Church of the Immaculate Conception, Sisters of Providence, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, with visitation beginning at 2:30 p.m. followed by the Vespers Service at 4:30 p.m. The Mass of Christian Burial is on Wednesday, October 30, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. with the Rev. Fr. Terry Johnson presiding. Rev. Frances Browne (faithful friend and colleague of Ben's from seminary days), and Rev. Mike Riggins, Pastor, Central Presbyterian Church, Terre Haute, Indiana, will participate. Burial at Florida National Cemetery, Bushnell, Florida with full military honors is Monday, November 4, 2024, 10:00 a.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to the Sisters of Providence, <https://spsmw.org/donate/>, mailing address: 1 Sisters of Providence Road, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana 47876. Arrangements are under the direction of Callahan & Hughes Funeral Home, 605 S. 25th Street, Terre Haute, IN.

Tribute Wall

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“ Again, we are not to question our good Lords workings, but this was one of the best true souls ever placed in our lives. He was one of my husbands best friends growing up in Lake Panasoffkee. They are both now in Heaven catching up. Bennie was a wonderful big hearted Man. His beautiful wife helped him become this wonderful Man by standing at his side and saying, Yes, you can do this. Well, he did but, he excelled and has been an inspiration to many others. Class of 1969 has lost one of our BEST!

Beverly Kinard - October 26, 2024 at 08:58 PM