

S. Dean McBride, Jr. Obituary

S. Dean McBride, Jr. passed away on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at his home in Kilmarnock, Virginia. His wife, Judith A. McBride, and other members of his beloved family were at his side. Dean was a retired professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Interpretation at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond. Over the course of his long career, he also taught at Garrett Evangelical Seminary and the University of Chicago, at Yale Divinity School, at Brown University, and at his own undergraduate alma mater, Pomona College.

Dean McBride was born in Los Angeles, California on February 2, 1937 to the Reverend S. Dean McBride, Sr. and his wife Frances. Dean and his younger sister Michal grew up in San Diego, learning at local public schools, playing beach volleyball, and attending their father's services at Point Loma Presbyterian Church. Dean entered Pomona College in the fall of 1954, where he met and fell in love with Judy, a fellow Californian. At first, he was more enthusiastic on the football and rugby fields than he was in the classroom. However, by the time he graduated, he had developed a passion for biblical studies. He won a Rockefeller scholarship to attend Harvard Divinity School beginning in 1958, and after they were married in December of that year, Judy joined him in Cambridge, where they lived in a small apartment above a girls' school. They spent a memorable summer as newlyweds working at a boys' camp on Echo Lake in coastal Maine and they continued to live and work in Cambridge while Dean earned his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Languages and Literature with a focus on the book of Deuteronomy.

Although his father and grandfather were both Presbyterian ministers, Dean chose academics rather than the ministry. He and Judy returned to California so that he could accept a faculty position at Pomona College. After a year at Pomona, they returned to the east coast for Dean's new position at Yale. They raised their three daughters in Hamden, Connecticut and then in Evanston, Illinois, spending many enjoyable summer weeks camping in state and national parks in Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Wisconsin. One memorable year was spent on sabbatical in Cambridge, England, where Dean and Judy bought a Volkswagen microbus to tour France on spring break, a trip enlivened by the presence of three young girls, one in diapers.

Dean loved teaching, and he poured his intellectual and spiritual energy into his hefty syllabi, his prayers before classes, his lectures, and his mentoring of students. He and his colleague Sibley Towner, whom he first met as a new faculty member at Yale, collaborated to lead students on tours of the Middle East. They believed in the importance of understanding the context – both past and present – of the biblical literature which they assigned to their students. Dean also spent two summers working as an archaeologist with the Meiron Excavation Project in Israel.

Dean was a meticulous, analytical writer and a generous editor and collaborator. He was part of the team of scholars who translated and provided the commentary for the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. He served on the editorial boards of the Fortress Press *Hermeneia* series and the journal *Interpretation*. He co-edited an honorary publication of essays, known as a Festschrift, for his mentor and teacher Frank Moore Cross and another for Sib Towner, his lifelong friend and collaborator.

Dean remained active in the church as a congregant, elder, and Sunday school teacher for his entire life. He taught a Sunday school class via speaker phone just two days before his death. He served in many roles in his final congregation, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Kilmarnock. He loved to spend time with his children and grandchildren: eating delicious family meals, talking about books and ideas, singing on the screened porch, and smoking the occasional cigar. In addition to Judy, his wife of 61 years, his survivors include Elissa and her children Isaiah and Ross Silvers; Sharon and her husband John Hancock and daughter Sarah; and Doran and her husband Curtis Mills and children Hillary and Lucas. We will all miss him very much.