

On May 1, 2020, Patrick D. Miller Jr., the Charles T. Haley Professor of Old Testament Theology Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary died in Black Mountain, NC following a lengthy illness. Before moving to Princeton, he served as Professor of Old Testament and Academic Dean of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia (now Union Presbyterian Seminary).

I met Pat in 1992. I had recently graduated from the Graduate School of Religion at Emory University. I was beginning my call as an assistant professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary where Pat was the chair of the Bible Department. As he had been and continued to be for countless young biblical scholars, Pat became both role model and mentor. A gifted scholar, he was also one of the most beloved professors on campus. His lectures were akin to sermons. In his deep, rich voice, he captivated students as he introduced them to the Old Testament and the various books of which it was composed. Determined to see students engage the texts in heretofore unimagined ways, he pushed them to see beyond their scriptural and theological horizons. He did not, though, only convey information; he invited focused concentration and energetic debate, using powerful lectures as invitations to think with him in preparation for later conversations. Watching him, listening to students talk about him, observing the way faculty colleagues respected him, I learned much about the craft of being a professor. And I deeply appreciated the way that he made time to help me think about course preparation, student engagement, and scholarly publication. Pat was a significant mentor whose influence I, along with many others, count as instrumental to my growth as a teacher and an interpreter of the biblical text. Like those many others, I shall miss him greatly. And I will give great thanksgiving continuously that I had opportunity to be his colleague and his friend.

Born to Dr. Lila Morse Bonner and Dr. Patrick Dwight Miller in Atlanta, GA on October 24, 1935, he spent his childhood and youth in San Antonio, Texas and Atlanta, Georgia.

After graduating from Davidson College in 1956, he enrolled in Union Theological Seminary in Virginia (now Union Presbyterian Seminary) where he met Mary Ann Sudduth from Louisville, Kentucky. Pat and Mary Ann were married in 1958. Following graduation from Union, they journeyed together to Harvard University where Pat earned the Ph.D. degree.

As many of the Union faithful have shared with me over the years, because of Pat's stellar career as a student at Union, following his Harvard graduation, the president of Union and members of the Union faculty encouraged Pat to prepare himself for a vocation in theological education by spending time in the church. It was understood that the time devoted to biblically, theologically, and prophetically shepherding a congregation would engrave within him a knowledge of and a passion for church leadership that would position him well as a professor charged with the equipping of future church leaders. It was also understood that, thus prepared, Union would call Pat back to his seminary home. Pat accepted a call to serve as pastor of the Trinity Presbyterian Church in Traveler's Rest, South Carolina where their first son, Jonathan Sudduth, was born.

In 1966 Pat and Mary Ann traveled to Israel where Pat engaged in independent research as he prepared to begin his teaching ministry at Union. He became the Professor of Biblical Studies at UTS later that year. Early in the eighteen years that Pat gave leadership to the UTS faculty, Patrick James, a second son, was born. Pat and Mary Ann both served as mentors, teachers and

friends to generations of students at UTS, and Pat's contributions to Old Testament scholarship proliferated.

Pat's twin vocations of teaching and scholarship, in and for the church, led him to Princeton Theological Seminary in 1984 as the Charles T. Haley Professor of Old Testament Theology. He served actively on that faculty until retirement in 2005. During his years at Princeton he served as editor of *Theology Today*, undertook responsibilities with numerous professional societies, continued his prodigious scholarship (sixteen books and a multitude of journal articles), while always giving heart and soul to teaching and (thereby) inspiring students year after year.

Pat devoted great energy and enthusiasm to his work for the Society of Biblical Literature. His service to the Society and his outstanding accomplishments in scholarship were recognized by the Society in 1998, when Pat was elected as the President of SBL. His presidential address to the Society was the evocation of a biblical conversation between Deuteronomy and the Psalms. The lecture, like much of his work, was an ardent exercise in building relationship between academic study, vocational calling, and faith identity. It is this combination that made his lectures, his writing, and his leadership so intellectually and spiritually provocative. "My study of the Psalms," he wrote, "began at my mother's knee, literally, in the circle of the family and with my sisters as we read and memorized some of the Psalms on Sunday afternoons. The Psalms were there long before I knew I would earn a living studying them (and that may be why I earn my living this way). Nor is it particularly surprising to find a student of the Bible whose theological and religious life has been deeply set in the Reformed tradition, with its positive view of the law in the moral life, spending much of his life in the study of Deuteronomy. Scholarship and personal formation are often deeply interactive."

For Pat, scholarship did not compete with faith; it nurtured and strengthened it. "If who we are sometimes sets our work in certain directions, then it is also the case that scholarly work may reshape us, sometimes quite radically. There are some who, having entered the world of biblical scholarship from a base of personal experience and piety, have wandered into the study of the history of religion, for example, and found themselves unable to return to their theological and religious homeland. Some of us spend our academic lives fighting the demons of our religious upbringing, while others continue to undergird and reinforce the theological tendencies that first shaped our lives." Pat's research undergirded and reinforced.

As such a biblical scholar, Pat was nurtured in and for the church, and he engaged himself in the church's life and ministry: first as pastor in South Carolina, then as an involved church leader helping to develop confessional materials and new biblical translations. Moreover, with Mary Ann he was constantly engaged in the weekly worship and ministry of local churches, notably in ministries of music to which he lent his strong voice.

Upon retirement, Pat and Mary Ann moved to Louisville, Kentucky to be close to Mary Ann's mother, and then to Black Mountain/Montreat, North Carolina in 2012. In this season of their life together, it became obvious that Pat's first and final vocation was to care for family, and especially for Mary Ann in her days of illness. His steadfastness by her side manifested the honoring of that cherished relationship as well as its extension to his sons and their partners, his grandchildren, and his great grandchild.

In the household in which he was nurtured as a child, Pat absorbed the theology he believed to be magnificently expressed in Psalm 103. In Pat's own words, "Praise responds to the experience of God's grace and power, exalts the Lord, and bears witness to all who hear that God is God." So, his life came to express the refrain of Psalm 103: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name." Knowing that God is enthroned on the praises of Israel, Pat's life joined in that enthronement.

Pat was preceded in death by his wife, Mary Ann.

In his last years and months, during illness, Pat was lovingly cared for and strengthened by his physical therapist, Jessica Risher, and by his live-in caregiver, Thembinkosi Madzimure. Each of these women became dear friends, were vital to his comfort and inspired him deeply.

Survivors include son, Jonathan, his spouse Suzy and their children Isaac and Claudia; son Patrick James, his partner Katie McWeeney, and children Jessica, Rachael, and Alex, and his granddaughter Adeline; sister Belle Miller McMaster and twin sister Mary Miller Brueggemann.

Brian K. Blount
President and Professor of New Testament
Union Presbyterian Seminary

(I am grateful to friends at Princeton Theological Seminary who shared with me the language of Princeton's obituary. It is fitting that we should share in the celebration of his scholarly ministry. Pat left a deep and valuable imprint on both UPSem and PTS.)