



Jeffrey Meyer

September 5, 1938 - December 17, 2020

Davidson - Jeffrey F. Meyer, professor of religious studies, emeritus, at UNC Charlotte, died at home on December 17, 2020, at the age of 82. He was born on September 5, 1938, to Elsa and Walter Meyer of Cincinnati, Ohio.

After high school, Jeff earned a B.A. in philosophy at the Franciscan Monastery at Duns Scotus College and an M.A. in English literature from the University of Dayton. He then pursued graduate studies in the History of Religions at the University of Chicago where he received both the M.A. and Ph.D. It was at the University of Chicago that Jeff developed his passion for Chinese religion, culture, and languages. He taught Asian religions, and his studies focused on Daoism and Buddhism, which required proficiency in both ancient and modern Chinese. He spent a year in Taiwan to immerse himself in the language and culture.

Jeff came to UNC Charlotte in 1973 where he taught for 35 years. He served as chairperson of the Religious Studies Department from 1992 to 1998. He was chosen as International Faculty Person of the Year for 2005-2006 and was awarded several Fulbright Scholarships for research and travel abroad. Jeff taught for a year as an exchange professor at Kingston University in London and for a semester at Beijing Normal University. A former chairperson of his department said "Jeff was the epitome of an outstanding professor: a master teacher, a nationally recognized scholar, and a colleague who made major contributions to the development of international studies at the University."

Jeff found his spiritual home with the Charlotte Friends Meeting (Quakers), where he was a member for 40 years and served in many capacities. An amateur naturalist, Jeff combined love and awe of nature with study of it for many years. He enjoyed thinking about the relationship between science and religion, and found no conflict between the two. Even more than a teacher, he was a lifelong student, took time to learn about what he was curious about, and often changed his mind and life because of what he learned.

Throughout his life Jeff supported many humanitarian and environmental causes. He volunteered at the Crisis Assistance Ministry, Room in the Inn, Urban Ministry, Friendship Trays, and Habitat for Humanity. In retirement, he continued to enjoy art, music, travel, reading, gardening, drawing, and writing novels. His first novel, *A Call to China* (2016), won the IBPA Benjamin Franklin Silver Award for excellence and his second novel, *Crooked Lines* (2020), was just published.

Jeff is survived by his wife of 38 years, Catherine Mowry; children Joel, Jonathan, and Julia; and sister Linda Sedgwick and their families. Loved by many, he will be remembered as a careful and loving listener, and a truly kind and gentle man. He lived by the following verse written by the poet Mary Oliver, which he always kept with him:

Let me keep my mind
on what matters
which is my work
which is mostly
standing still and
learning to be astonished.

The family wishes to thank all of the caring healthcare professionals who attended Jeff, especially Sherri Bentley who was Jeff's nurse for years, and his pulmonologist Dr. Richard Pomerantz.

Memorial donations may be made to Charlotte Friends Meeting at PO Box 561793, Charlotte, North Carolina 28256, or UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens. A celebration of Jeffrey's wonderful life will be held at a later date.

Comments



“ 9 files added to the tribute wall



Julia Meyer - January 03 at 12:40 PM



“ Some of these photos are my favorites

Linda Sedgwick - January 06 at 08:00 AM



“ I was saddened to learn of Jeff's death. Jeff was a kind and gentle person who was a scholar and a champion for social justice. I was privileged to have him as a friend and colleague. Carol and I extend our deep sympathy to Jeff's wife Kathy and daughter Julia and the rest of his family. Bill and Carol Gay

Bill Gay - December 26, 2020 at 12:28 PM



“ I am so happy, blessed, and privileged to have the opportunity to get to know Jeff and I learned so much from him. His patience, calmness, and compassion for everyone is something I try to emulate every day. The unconditional love he shared is something the world could use a lot more of right now. I'm so grateful to have known such an amazing friend, father, husband, and human being.

Justin Gould - December 24, 2020 at 09:03 AM



“ Jeff was one of the most interesting people I've ever known. His studies and his travels were truly incredible. Although being a younger cousin, I talked to him only occasionally in earlier years, but we did communicate after I read his book Call to China, which I really loved. I learned a lot about Jeff by reading that book: his understanding of cultural differences and the effect of religious differences on shaping the development of a person. He was also a kind and gentle soul. He will be greatly missed.

Diane Breier

Diane Breier - December 22, 2020 at 02:07 PM



“ 4 files added to the tribute wall



Steve W. Mowry - December 22, 2020 at 11:34 AM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



The Marsh family - December 21, 2020 at 09:26 PM



“ We will miss Jeff and treasure the times our families and friends spent together. Jeff was always fun to be with and made every occasion better. His kind and wise words will always be fondly remembered.

The Marsh family - December 21, 2020 at 09:25 PM



“ I am so saddened to hear that we have lost this great man, a teacher in every phase of his life to all us graced to have known him. I was fortunate to have been a student of his at UNCC. My heartfelt sorrow goes to his dear family. A great light is shining somewhere else and he will be missed here.

Kate (Gordon) Green - December 21, 2020 at 05:24 PM



“ Jeff was always a pleasure to speak with over the last 14 years. He will be missed by many. Thoughts and prayers are with you Catherine.

Dianne Hager - December 21, 2020 at 04:40 PM



“ Jeff Meyer was a saint as child, teenager and adult. All of his younger cousins like myself looked to him as our leader on Berger Hill. He was very interested in the history of religion in China conducting tourism travels. He is heaven now where he will see all those whose lives he enriched. Rick Rooney 2nd cousin

richard rooney - December 21, 2020 at 01:04 PM



“ Such a wonderful and kind person his entire life! So glad I was able to spend some time together again a few years ago cousin Jeff! My heart goes out to your whole family as I know how they will grieve so deeply no longer having you with them! Keeping all in my prayers! Cousin Sue Berger

Susan Berger - December 21, 2020 at 11:54 AM



“ I'm incredibly grateful for the kindness, wisdom, and joy cultivated through my and my family's interactions with Jeff at Davidson Friends Meeting in the past few years, and will miss those interactions dearly. My cup was always more full, and often overflowing, after these interactions and I am heartened, and not surprised, to see and hear other stories of warmth, joy, and love from our Quaker community and from friends and family.

~ Jason Parker & the Parker Family

Jason - December 20, 2020 at 03:20 PM



“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Joel Meyer - December 19, 2020 at 07:57 PM



“ 16 files added to the tribute wall



Catherine Mowry - December 19, 2020 at 11:19 AM



“ Cathy your photos of Jeff are beautiful. What a wonderful remembrance of a life well lived and shared with all.

John Heatherman - December 19, 2020 at 12:19 PM



“ Cathy, we are so sad to learn of Jeff's passing. Thank you for sharing the photos. Your family will be in our prayers. Tim and Carol Taylor

Carol Taylor - December 23, 2020 at 06:22 PM



“ 6 files added to the tribute wall



Julia Meyer - December 19, 2020 at 09:40 AM



“ Dear Cathy, Julia, and family.

Michael, Mackenzie, and I have so many fond memories of times during the years. We are grateful to have known Jeff. I especially remember Jeff's patience when Mackenzie, as an eighteen-month-old, was eager to ride a horse. She and Julia enjoyed time on the horse as we walked along beside them crossing your yard. He probably had numerous papers to grade but maintained such a calmness in the moment. He displayed the same demeanor in talking with me about staying at UNC Charlotte as a new faculty. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Cheryl Brown

Cheryl Brown - December 18, 2020 at 05:41 PM



“ I was a student of Dr. Meyer in the seventies at UNCC. Although I haven't seen him since or talked to him, I have thought of him occasionally. His intellect, teaching style, and personality made him one of my favorite professors. He was kind and inspiring and his classes were very interesting. I liked his classes so much that I took several of them and feel fortunate that I had that opportunity. My condolences to the family.

David Blanton

David Blanton - December 18, 2020 at 10:13 AM



“ Jeff's kindness and gentle nature were an inspiration. It was a joy to know him. Peace, John & Kimbrell Frazier, Linville, NC

Kim Frazier - December 18, 2020 at 09:08 AM



“ Jeff was a wise and gentle friend. I will miss him deeply, but I believe I will continue to feel his spiritual presence in my life.

Bob Oberg

Bob Oberg - December 17, 2020 at 07:56 PM



“ Farvel dear Friend. You were an inspiration to us all, a loving father and a weighty Friend. I feel privileged to have known you, and I will miss you. Holding your dear family in the Light that binds us all. See you on the other side.

Shelia Bumgarner - December 17, 2020 at 06:10 PM



“ A kind and inspiring professor. I'm headed to have had Dr. Meyer in my life and grateful for his knowledge, wisdom, and guidance.

Elliott McCarter - December 17, 2020 at 02:46 PM



“ In Peace Rest Abuelito Jeff with all the love Elia and Dani



Victoria Arrivillaga - December 17, 2020 at 02:40 PM



“ Sweet Grandfather and father in law.
Victoria



Victoria Arrivillaga - December 17, 2020 at 02:00 PM



“ Kathy and I have so many memories of time spent with Jeff, Cathy and Julia ! Breaking bread, sipping wine, sharing a hearty meal, and discussing good books we have read ! This memories will endure no matter where life's journey takes us in the days, months, and years ahead. Thank you, Jeff for bestowing your superb gifts of patience, tolerance, intellect and gentle wisdom on others.

With gratitude, much love and affection.

Martin and Kathy Zimmerman - Christmas Day

Martin Zimmerman - December 25, 2020 at 09:19 AM