



Darrel Walter Amundsen

December 15, 1942 - September 12, 2024

Darrel Walter Amundsen was born on December 15, 1942, in Rugby, ND and passed away in Bellingham, WA on September 12, 2024 at the age of 81. He was the second son of a Lutheran pastor, George Amundsen, and Esther Amundsen. Darrel was raised in North Dakota, Bellingham and Minnesota where his father held pastorates. After graduating from Bellingham High School in 1960 he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was stationed in Germany for three years. In 1963, upon his return to Bellingham, he was reunited with the sister of his childhood friend, Jean Ferngren. They fell in love and were married in March of 1964. Their daughter Kimberly (Kim) was born in 1965 and son Scott in 1973.

He graduated from Western Washington University in 1965 with a B.A. in History and Classics. He then attended the University of Washington, from which he graduated with an M.A. in Classics. He returned to Western, where he served as an instructor in Classics. While teaching at Western he simultaneously pursued graduate work at the University of British Columbia, from which he received a Ph.D. in mediaeval history in 1974. During his long and active academic career he received awards for his teaching and served two terms as Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages. He retired in 2002.

In his senior year as an undergraduate at Western, Darrel was encouraged to

write a seminar paper on ancient medicine by his professor, Dr. Herbert Taylor. The assignment led to his co-authoring with Carol Jean Diers three articles, which were published in a well-known journal of the history of medicine. The assignment led him into the field of medical history, which was at the time enjoying rapid growth as an academic specialty. Darrel went on to make it his special field. He was to devote his entire academic career to studying medical history in the ancient and mediaeval periods. His fluency in Greek and Latin allowed him to use the original sources in examining the evidence. Over a lifetime he published dozens of scholarly papers and several books. The latter include *Medicine, Society, and Faith in the Ancient and Medieval World; Caring and Curing: Health and Medicine in the Western Religious Traditions *(with Ronald Numbers*); The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia *(with Gary Ferngren); and *A Different Death: Euthanasia and the Christian Tradition. *His scholarly reputation resulted in many invitations to lecture at leading universities in North America, Europe, and Israel. His scholarship made a significant contribution to the study of early Christian medicine and he was respected around the world for these achievements.

Though raised in a Christian home Darrel was only a nominal Christian until his early 30s. However, he started feeling like something was missing from his life, so at the end of 1976 he gave his heart fully to His Savior and his life was forever changed. He became very involved at Immanuel Bible Church where he served as an elder, taught Sunday school, and sometimes preached. His faith was the most important part of his life, followed by family and, of course, his love of books.

Darrel is survived by his wife of 60 years, Jean, daughter Kim (Rod) Koenig, son Scott, grandchildren Kara (Justin) Gudde, Dustin Koenig, Micah (Lexi) Koenig, Celina Amundsen and great-grandson Logan Gudde.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Darrel's name to Immanuel Bible Church, Red House project.

A memorial service will be held at Immanuel Bible Church in Bellingham on September 30th at 3:00

Tribute Wall

JD

“ A precious friend, mentor at WWU, and forever our dear Christian brother. Darell loved Steamship Pie! But not more than Darell loved Charles Spurgeon. Peace to his memory and prayer for Jean.

Jan David DeWitt - December 30, 2024 at 12:00 AM

EL

“ I’m so sorry to see this news. I enjoyed knowing Dr. Amundsen during my college years at WWU in the 1980s. He talked me into taking his intensive Koine Greek one summer as it would be “fun” — and I needed one more class as I edited the summer paper. After learning the alphabet in ONE hour, we proceeded to translate. Oh my.

For someone so far ahead of so many intellectually, he was truly a man of God who enjoyed teaching, preaching, and being there for his family.

My condolences to all of you at this time with his loss.

Elisa Claassen

WWU – 1982-1986

Elisa - October 01, 2024 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ Dr Amundsen,
I remember you and your reputation well. Thank you for all you contributed to students, academia and research. You always had a smile. My deepest respect for your legacy and prayers and much comfort to your family.

Christina Van Wingerden

WWU

Christina Van Wingerden - September 29, 2024 at 12:00 AM