



Dr. John Hauser Roark

November 5, 1938 - April 11, 2024

The Rev. Dr. John Hauser Roark was promoted to the Church Triumphant on April 11, 2024, after a lengthy illness. Dr. Roark was born on November 5, 1938 in Atlanta, Georgia, the son of Earl Woodliff Roark and Ethel Hauser Roark. He was a graduate of Southwest Dekalb High School and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Georgia in 1960. He earned a Master of Divinity degree in 1964 and a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1985, both from Columbia Theological Seminary.

While at the University of Georgia he met Margaret “Peggy” Head. They were married in 1962 until her death in 2017. He was also preceded in death by his sister, Alice Roark. He is survived by his daughter, Margaret Roark McAskill, son Scott Roark (Amy), grandchildren George, David and Will McAskill and John (Ashley) and Mary Grace Roark, and his brother Robert Earl Roark, and numerous family members and treasured friends.

He was gifted in music from an early age, becoming a church organist at Ousley United Methodist Church at age 14. While a student at UGA, he served as organist and choir director at First Baptist Church of Athens, Ga. He studied organ under Hugh Hodgson at UGA, for whom the music department is named. He also played French horn in the Redcoat Marching Band. He won first place in a national American Guild of Organists competition at age 19 and then studied under renowned organist Flor Peeters at the Conservatorium in

Antwerp, Belgium. Throughout his life, he shared his musical talents both professionally and personally, as a guest organist at many churches and piano accompanist for various choirs and organizations, including renowned British composer John Rutter.

He was ordained in the Presbyterian Church as a Minister of the Word and Sacrament in 1964 and served Courtland Presbyterian Church in Courtland, Alabama, First Presbyterian Church of Athens, Georgia, Covenant Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, Virginia, Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Stone Mountain, Georgia, and Buford Presbyterian Church in Sugar Hill, Georgia. Following his retirement in 2008, he served as the Associate Organist at Peachtree Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia and also was a frequent guest organist at Peachtree Christian Church in Atlanta, Georgia and Dunwoody United Methodist Church in Dunwoody, Georgia.

His ministry gifts were centered on preaching and teaching, and he was known for his lively Bible studies and related etymology. His preaching was shaped by his treasured mentor, Dr. Fred Craddock. His doctoral dissertation focused primarily on the study of grief, enabling him to conduct meaningful grief seminars. He was also a fabulous pastor and cared greatly for his church family. He and his wife Peggy were known for hosting their entire congregations in their home at annual Christmas open houses and other joyous gatherings. Many times, he would entertain guests by playing the piano and taking requests. While he was trained in classical and sacred music, he also played many types of music by ear, and people loved to be entertained by him.

John Roark loved people and never met a stranger. He made friends easily and kept up with people throughout his life. He and his wife were always there to help people in need and lived out the Biblical mandate to “love your neighbor as yourself.” While church and family were the center of his life, he

also grew beautiful roses and hydrangeas, built furniture, and was a poetry and opera enthusiast. For more than 20 years, he owned a vacation home in beautiful Montreat, North Carolina, for which he was very grateful.

For the last five and a half years, he was a well-loved resident of Towne Club Windermere in Cumming, Georgia. During his time there he entertained the residents weekly at the piano and also conducted grief seminars and Bible studies. No matter what his stage of life, he found a way to serve others through his music and pastoral leadership.

His family would like to thank the staff at Towne Club Windermere and Gentiva Hospice for their wonderful care of him.

A memorial service will be held at Buford Presbyterian Church, 1242 Buford Highway, Sugar Hill, Georgia on Saturday, June 1st at 11 a.m. with a reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, gifts can be sent to Buford Presbyterian Church.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

JUN 1. 11:00 AM (ET)

Buford Presbyterian Church
1242 Buford Hwy
Sugar Hill, GA 30518
<http://www.bufordpres.com>

Tribute Wall

DH

“ Margaret and Scott, Scott and I regret being unable to attend your father's memorial service. We are so sorry for your huge loss and send you our most sincere condolences. Our family first arrived in Georgia in late 1993 and shortly afterwards we lost our 17-year-old son, Joshua. Pastor John was a huge support to our family, which we will never forget. We will forever be thankful for the many years he served as our Pastor. Diana & Scott Hawkins, Lawrenceville, GA.

Diana Wakefield Hawkins - June 02, 2024 at 12:40 PM

RP

“ Margaret and Scott, I am so sorry for the loss of your wonderful father. I was your Mom's physical therapist at DeKalb Medical Center when she broke her shoulder. Both of your parents were so special. They provided the catering for our PT Department Christmas party that year and welcomed me as a friend for life. We were all blessed to have experienced their kindness and love.

Ronald Porter - May 31, 2024 at 05:19 PM

PP

“ John was a good and special friend to me and my family for many years. He shall be greatly missed. Pat Patrick

Pat Patrick - May 29, 2024 at 07:58 AM

SP

“ Bill and I shared many years of friendship with John and Peggy which were treasured.

Sara Powell - May 28, 2024 at 08:39 AM

DW

“ I see John as I knew him at Southwest DeKalb High. I was saddened to learn of his passing. We were friends and he will always be with me. He has my respect and admiration for his contributions to all of our lives. In that regard, he will never die.
Don Weissman

Donald Weissman - May 26, 2024 at 10:28 AM

CH

“ The Rev. Dr. John Roark was the epitome of a musician, friend, mentor and pastor. It was an immense honor to be his friend and colleague.
Blessings and Peace to the family, and please know we are here for you during this tender time.

Love,
Charles Higgs

Charles Higgs - April 25, 2024 at 09:13 AM