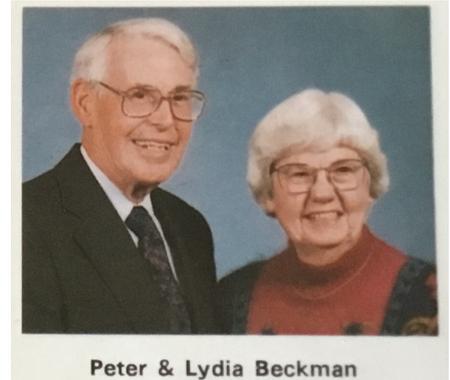


Dr. Peter T. Beckman

Peter Theodore Beckman, Jr., 93, passed away peacefully at home on Thursday, September 6, 2018. He was born on October 12, 1924, in Portland, Oregon, the son of Peter and Bernice Beckman. He graduated from high school in 1942 and served in World War II as a SeaBee in the South Pacific. After the war he attended Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, where he met and married Lydia Larsen in 1948. He was ordained as a Lutheran minister and served parishes in Needham, Massachusetts, and Great Falls, Montana.



In 1959 Peter began a Ph.D. program in theology at the University of Chicago; he subsequently returned to Augustana as a member of the religion department faculty for more than thirty years. He was a widely respected leader at the college as well as an active voice in broader ecumenical campaigns for civil rights and social justice.

Peter and Lydia were members of St. James Lutheran Church, Rock Island, until 1998. The photo above was taken in 1993 for a church photo directory.

After retiring, Peter and Lydia moved to Tucson, Arizona, and, in 2005, to Bainbridge Island. They traveled extensively, visiting five continents. They relished island living and particularly valued their social and spiritual community at Bethany Lutheran Church.

Growing up in the shadow of Mt. Hood, Peter enjoyed a lifelong love of hiking, camping, and kayaking. For many years he led students on spring backpacking trips in the Grand Canyon. He was an award-winning orchid grower, proud owner of a backyard greenhouse housing hundreds of orchid plants. He was also an accomplished woodworker, making a cherry dining table and buffet as well as many smaller pieces. After learning to facet gems at an Elderhostel, he embraced the hobby and created many pieces of gemstone jewelry for family and friends. And throughout his life he was a curious, inventive, and much-appreciated cook.

A strong competitive runner for decades, Peter rarely missed Iowa's famous Bix 7 (mile) Road Race. He continued his running in Arizona and Bainbridge, where he joined friends for a weekly track workout and ran his last race, the Fourth of July 5K, at age 88.

In later life Peter returned to one of his English-major pleasures, writing poetry. He was honored to have poems selected three times for the annual Poetry Corners celebration sponsored by Arts and Humanities Bainbridge.

Peter was preceded in death in 2015 by his wife of 66 years, Lydia. He is survived by son Pete (Jan) of Ottawa, Illinois; daughter Megan (Paul Benton) of Bainbridge Island; daughter Laura (Chris Bjornson) of New Albany, Indiana; grandchildren Kate, Mike, and Maggie Beckman and Marie and Marta Bjornson; four of seven siblings, and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held Sunday, October 7, at 2 p.m. at Bethany Lutheran Church. In lieu of flowers, remembrances may be made to Lutheran Community Services Northwest, 645 4th Street, Bremerton, WA 98337, or Compass Housing Alliance, 77 S. Washington Street, Seattle, WA, 98104.