



Rev. Dr. Robert Tobias

August 17, 1919 - October 6, 2010

The Rev. Dr. Robert Tobias, 91, transitioned from this life at United Hospital Systems, Kenosha, on Wednesday, October 6, 2010. Robert was born August 17, 1919, in Lyons, Kansas, to Edward Arthur and Pearl Brothers Tobias. On July 3, 1942, Robert married Gertrude Wells, of Lyons. He graduated from Lyons High School, 'Class of 1937' and from Phillips University in Oklahoma and Union Theological Seminary in New York. Robert earned a doctorate in theology at the University of Geneva in Switzerland. From 1946 to 1953, Robert was Assistant Director of the Department of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees of the World Council of Churches with special responsibilities for East Europe and the Orthodox churches. He was a WCC observer of the Geneva sessions led by Eleanor Roosevelt in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For his work in Greece, Professor Tobias was decorated by King Paul of Greece as Commander of the Royal Order of Phoenix, and in Yugoslavia he was decorated by patriarchs German and Pavel with the Order of St. Sava. In Geneva, he was awarded the 'key to the city.' Upon returning to the United States in the 1950s and through the 1980s, Robert was a professor of theology, first at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, and later at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. During that time, Professor Tobias continued his contacts and visits with the Orthodox in East Europe and served on numerous commissions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and other ecumenical and international organizations. Beginning in 1983 Robert co chaired the sessions

of the second round of Lutheran-Orthodox dialogue in North America and has written books and articles related to his work, including *Heaven on Earth: A Lutheran-Orthodox Odyssey*.

At various times in his life, Robert was an avid pilot, sailor, skier, and gardener, and he loved spending time with the many children that came into his life.

Robert is survived by his wife of 68 years, Trudy of Racine, children, Jan David (Joy) Tobias of Virginia, Kathryn Tobias of Maryland, Mark (June) of Colorado, Paul (Kari Kittermaster) of Racine, Anne (James) Tobias-Becker of De Pere, grandchildren Laura (Richard) Gruss, Valerie and fiancé Jason Bentley, Erin, Vincent, Austin, Lindsay and Eric; great grandchildren Brianna, Rosalind, Lillian, Gavin, and Daniel. He is also survived by a brother James (Mary) Tobias, sister, Mariella Sawin and, sister-in-law, Elma Tobias, as well as 17 loved nieces and nephews and their families along with many fellow church members neighbors and friends. He was preceded in death by one daughter, Carol Lyn in 1947, one son, Philip in 1971; a sister, Helen Long and two brothers, Cecil and Raymond Tobias.

Funeral services for Rev. Dr. Robert Tobias will be held at Holy Communion Lutheran Church, 2000 w. 6th Street, Racine on Sunday, October 10, 2010 at 5 p.m. with Bishop Jeff Barrow of the Greater Milwaukee Synod and Rev. Walter Hermanns officiating.

Visitation will be held at church from 2p.m. until service time at 5 p.m. Robert will be laid to rest next to his son, Philip at Sunset Ridge Memorial Park in a private ceremony. Memorial gifts may be directed to Holy Communion Lutheran Church or Church World Service.

His words of gratitude were transcribed recently by his wife, Trudy: 'Pilot,

pastor, professor, there've been great touchdowns from Canada to Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with students, pastors, family, friends, and fellow explorers in the magnificent panorama of heaven on earth. Thank you all.'