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# REMEMBERING SEMINARY BOARD MEMBER EMERITUS ALFRED WISHART

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is mourning the death of the Rev. Dr. Alfred (Burr) Wishart Jr., longtime Seminary Board member and former CEO of The Pittsburgh Foundation. Wishart died April 20, 2023, at the age of 91.

From 1971 to 1980 and again from 1981 to 1990, Wishart served on the PTS Board of Directors, including service on the Development Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Steering Committee for the Seminary's 199th Year Campaign. Most notably, he also served on the search committee that identified and recommended the Rev. Dr. Carnegie (Sam) Samuel Calian to be hired as the Seminary's president starting in 1980. He was granted Board emeritus status in 1996.



Originally from Washington, Pa., Wishart was an ordained Presbyterian minister with a master of divinity from Union Theological Seminary. From 1956 to 1960, he served as assistant pastor at Shadyside Presbyterian Church. He then became pastor of Arlington Avenue Presbyterian Church in East Orange, N.J., near Newark. While there, riots broke out in Newark during the summer of 1967 and again after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968. According to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, the day after King's assassination Wishart led a racially diverse march of 1,200 people through the streets of Newark as a show of solidarity. This experience led him to leave the church in search of a "larger agenda" as he wondered if racial harmony was truly possible.

He found his calling to a vocation of service as the CEO of The Pittsburgh Foundation from 1970 to 2001, during which time he grew The Foundation's reputation into a justice-seeking organization with the ability to bring various groups together to address a problem and opportunity. "Burr was an early champion of justice, working with board members and with the tools he had at the time to combat systemic racism and provide opportunities for those being held back to thrive. It was difficult work, then as now, but he took it on willingly," said current Foundation President and CEO Lisa Schroeder in a *Post-Gazette* obituary.

During his 31 years at The Pittsburgh Foundation, the organization went from an entirely white and male staff to a racially-diverse and mostly female staff. The Foundation's endowment also grew from \$17 million to \$548 million in this time, due not only to wealthy donors but also because Wishart inspired ordinary, everyday Pittsburghers to make small yet meaningful donations to help their neighbors in need.

In a message on the Pittsburgh Foundation's website, Schroeder said: "Burr's methods and manner, including his commanding baritone, inspired trust. A Presbyterian minister, he was guided by an unshakable faith in God and respect for all people. He will be remembered always for his integrity, and for his bold vision for a connected and giving community."

Wishart is survived by his wife, Barbara; his children Kathryn A. Disco (Mark B. Disco), Craig C. Wishart and Scott S. Wishart; grandchildren Garrett M. Disco (Candace Disco), Connor S. Disco and LeAnne C. Disco, and two great grandsons, Daniel G. Disco and Jesse E. Disco.

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