

***Ringing in the New Year***  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Vancouver  
December 29, 2024

***Ritual of Remembrance: Tolling of the Bells -***

On this Sunday, we honor our past by Tolling of the Bells in Remembrance of five of our congregants who added richness to our lives at UUCV and the greater community while they were among us. We had services for some of them this year but wish to honor them once more. They are Earl Gunther, David Cowles, Del Allen, Belle Weninger and Gene Rouleau.

**Earl Gunther** was born April 29 in the depth of the Great Depression in 1932 in Bradford, Penn. and died April 8 of this year. He and his late wife Alice had been members since 1999. Alice passed away in October of last year. We welcomed Earl into the 90s Club in 2022. Earl and Alice were very active in the congregation. They renewed their wedding vows on their 40th anniversary conducted by a UU minister in Arkansas. Earl considered himself the luckiest man on Earth, taking nothing for granted. He came a long way from that scrappy neighborhood in Baltimore having enjoyed good health for most of his life, financial security, four thriving children and a loving wife for many years. He died just three weeks shy of his 92nd birthday.

This bell tolls Earl Gunther

**David Eugene Cowles** was born on June 19, 1943 to Alice and Laurence Cowles in Houston, TX. David graduated from St. John's School in 1962 and Oberlin College in 1966. He received a PhD in mathematics from the University of Michigan in 1972. While attending Michigan, David met his future wife, Sally Rollefson, and married in September, 1969. Sally and David had two sons, Christopher, born in 1971, and Brendan, born in 1977. David was a kind, loving, patient, and smart man of many talents. He was resourceful around the house, and he had a great sense of humor. David loved to cook, and he raised his two sons while Sally worked. He also taught math at several colleges. David died unexpectedly on May 2 this year. His ashes will be divided for burial between Carson, WA and Bourne, MA. He is survived by his older brothers, his wife, his two sons, and five grandchildren. He will be dearly missed by all.

The bell tolls for David Cowles

**Del Allen** was born in 1939 and raised in Michigan. After college, he taught science for several years in Greenville, Michigan. Later Del worked for the Department of Defense Dependent School System in Germany. While living in Germany he met Carolee Baker, and they were married in 1970. After teaching, Del worked as an optometrist for Kaiser Permanente for 25 years before retiring and pursuing a third career as a farmer and Allis-Chalmers tractor collector. Del passed away May 14th on his 85th birthday from cancer complications with his children and sister by his side. Del was preceded in death by his parents Henry Allen and Viola Allen, sister Donna Monroe, brother-in-law Virgil Balagot, and his beloved wife of 47 years, Carolee Allen. He is survived by his sister Judy Balagot, his brother-in-law Doug Monroe, a son Duane and daughter-in-law Andie, a daughter Lara and daughter-in-law Alyssa, and 4 grandchildren.

The bell tolls for Del Allen

**Belle Weninger** had been a Unitarian for somewhere close to 70 years, a member of this church for nearly 30. She joined this congregation in 1996 and entered the 90's club in February of this year - well, we welcomed her in April, but she turned 90 in February. She had been receiving hospice care in an adult family home nearby, so her death on May 30th was not unexpected though very sad. Belle was a wonderful conversationalist: bright, well-read and educated, utilizing both degrees in social work and law in her professional life. She was proud of her unitarian heritage and involvement, beginning in college at the University of Washington at University Unitarian in Seattle, continuing at the UU Church of Lubbock in Texas and First Unitarian of Portland across the river. We were fortunate to have her among us for the last 28 years of her life.

The bell tolls for Belle Weninger.

**Gene Rouleau** was born on September 19th, 1940 in St. Paul, Minnesota, and died on August 25th this year at the age of 83 here in Vancouver. Gene attended the University of Minnesota where he met his wife, Judith Ann. They were married in 1961. Gene and Judy welcomed their son Marc Eugene in 1962 and their daughter Amy Lynn in 1966. Gene served in the USMC achieving the rank of Captain. After four years of military service, he continued to support and honor veterans wherever possible. During their 62-year marriage, Gene and Judy's travels were filled with fun and adventure. From 1990 to 2000, Gene took on the proud title of Grandpa eight times. In 2023 and 2024, Gene became Great-Grandpa to Piper Lynn and Rowan Eugene. Gene enjoyed fishing and swimming with his family and was a steadfast leader in the Kiwanis, a service organization making a positive impact through scholarships, and donations to those in need. Gene will be greatly missed, and always remembered.

This bell tolls for Gene Rouleau