

Deaths

Donald James Tolle

CARBONDALE — Dr. Donald James Tolle, 75, of 907 Skyline Drive died at 5:34 p.m. on Aug. 9, 1993, at home. He was born May 29, 1918, in Roxbury, Kan.

Dr. Tolle is survived by his wife, Mary Alice (McNeill) Tolle; his three children, Donald MacDavid "Dave" Tolle, (Forough Danesh) Louise Margaret Tolle Huffman (Terry Huffman), and Theresa "Terry"



Tolle

Love Tolle Pohlman (Stephen Pohlman); and four grandsons, Cody McNeill Huffman, Jeffrey Stephen Pohlman, Hunter Tolle Huffman and Robert Cameron Tolle. Other survivors include his sister, Genevieve Tolle Rambo of Lakeland, Fla.; and his brother, Edgar Earl Tolle Jr. of Crystal River, Fla. He was preceded in death by his parents, Sarah "Sadie" (Lott) Tolle (1887-1967), and Edgar Earl Tolle Sr. (1885-1965), and brothers, Kendall and Carroll.

Dr. Tolle was a professor in the department of higher education at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale from 1967 until his retirement in 1985. Before World War II, he taught junior and senior high school English in Florida, but after Pearl Harbor was attacked he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He served as a staff sergeant with the 47th Bombardment Group in England, Italy and Africa for 3½ years.

On July 24, 1945, he married Mary Alice McNeill in Tallahassee, Fla., and continued his teaching career. He was principal and superintendent in Monticello, Fla., before becoming an instructor at St. Petersburg (Fla.) Junior College. He also served as dean of men and dean of instruction there from 1951-64. As dean of academic affairs, he helped start Florida Junior College at Jacksonville, Fla., before coming to SIUC in 1967 as associate director of the Community College Cooperative Internship Program. When the Ford Foundation Project ended, he continued at SIUC as a professor of higher education and then professor emeritus from 1984 until his death.

He was active in education all of his adult life, and served on many commissions and accreditation teams. He co-authored a book and contributed articles to numerous professional journals.

Dr. Tolle was the recipient of the John E. King award from the Post-Doctoral Academy of Higher Education, SIUC, in 1989. He also received the Distinguished Commendation Award from the Educational Council of 100, SIUC, in 1989. He was listed in Who's Who in the World and Who's Who in America since 1962.

Visitation will be at Huffman-Harker Funeral Home from 4 to 7 p.m. today, Aug. 11, 1993. A memorial service will be held at the First United Methodist Church on Thursday, Aug. 12, 1993, at 11 a.m., where Dr. Tolle was a member. The Revs. Don Carlton and Vallerie King will officiate. His body will be donated to science through the medical school at SIU-Springfield. Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society.

DONALD JAMES TOLLE
May 29, 1918 -- August 9, 1993

It is a great honor to be asked to make a few remarks about a fine educator and family man at his memorial service. This is a person who has known sorrow and joy; one who has learned to persevere against a number of health problems. Just this week I learned that Donald had polio as a child and started his exercise program early in life to overcome this dreaded disease. He has followed an exercise program these many years and even recently commented about not being able to keep up his exercises while in the hospital.

Donald came from a home where honesty and fair play were stressed. His early Kansas roots were transferred at an early age to Florida. He set his sights on education and received his A.B. degree from Florida Southern College, the only campus where the original buildings were designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. He then spent a year and a half as an English and Social Studies teacher at Palmetto, Florida. He interrupted his teaching to join the Army Air Corps in January, 1942, before there was a U.S. Air Force, along with his younger brother, Ed, affectionately called Junior. Both served with the 97th Bomber Squadron with service in North Africa, Malta, Italy, and France. It is interesting to note that Donald flew his last missions just fifty years ago--almost to the day. He wrote a most interesting diary, when such was forbidden, but this diary has been well received by his buddies in recent reunions, the most recent of which was this spring. The entire Tolle family was able to join Donald at this event in St. Louis.

After the war and his marriage to Mary Alice McNeill, Donald continued as a model Southern Gentleman in the very best sense of the word. He was a loyal, loving and devoted husband. He completed his M.A. in English at the University of Florida and returned to his role as English teacher. Later he was a Principal and then Dean of Instruction at St. Petersburg Junior College while also completing his Ed.D. in Educational Administration and Guidance at Florida State University. In 1966-67 he was made Dean of Academic Studies at Florida Junior College at Jacksonville. O yes, he also helped Mary Alice raise three lovely children--Donald MacDavid (named after three very close army friends), Louise, and Terry. Family traditions started then have continued to this day. However Christmas has been celebrated at the Tolle home at Thanksgiving for the children, their spouses, Forough Danesh Tolle, Terry Huffman, and Stephen Pohlman and the special group of grandchildren: Robert Tolle, Cody and Hunter Huffman, and Jeffrey Pohlman. Let me parenthetically add that Donald was most proud of this family and they have been most supportive and helpful during these recent months. We all thank you.

Although I had come to SIU 16 year before Donald Tolle, I transferred to the Department of Higher Education just a few months after Don arrived from Florida. He headed the Community College Teaching program and I headed the College Student Personnel program; we each had several common concerns. During his career prior to his

retirement in 1985, he advised and graduated 101 master's degree students in the Community College Teaching Program. He also directed 20 doctoral dissertations. He was very much concerned about the commitment of graduate applicants to graduate education and evidence of their **current** ability to perform well in Graduate School. One of his doctoral graduates who is President of a community college in Wheeling, West Virginia, called and shared the thought that he would not be in his important leadership position today had it not been for Donald Tolle. All of his doctoral graduates are either still in important positions in higher education or retired, including several college presidents. Don was very proud of all these students. He took his work as professor, teacher, and educator very seriously. He was very concerned about the availability of library resources and published three Bibliographies relating to the resources of materials in Morris Library in the area of higher education. His book, co-authored with Michael Luck, relating to raising funds for community colleges is an outstanding example of the importance of such activity and the many resources available to administrators responsible for seeking out such funds.

He set high expectations for his students and read carefully all papers, theses and dissertations. I know that he spent many an evening carefully reading these--and this was often difficult due to failing eyesight. His background as an English teacher showed in the many red marks on these papers. I was concerned whenever I knew that Don would be reviewing any item that I had written and hoped I would not have too many errors for him to find. I am sure that students had mixed feelings about his careful screening and yet full appreciation for his willingness to take the time to refine these theses and dissertations.

He worked creatively with a wide range of international students. The greatest challenge was a young teacher of native folk dance in Sabah, Malaysia. It was most difficult for Don to go over and over a number of fundamentals related to correct English and clarity of writing. The clash of the Malay culture and the University research culture was almost too great; he attempted to make his point by speaking louder and louder. What an interesting time for those of us in nearby offices.

He defended our graduate programs in Higher Education to anyone who would listen. Outside reviewers of our Graduate Programs have expressed high approval of the leadership of Donald Tolle and the quality of the Community College Teaching program.

Loyal alumni have been most appreciative of his leadership over the years. He was honored several years ago by being given the John E. King Award by the Post Doctoral Academy of Higher Education--the most prestigious award of this organization.. He was also honored by the Southern Illinois Council of 100.

Don was a very strong supporter and leader of the community college movement across the United States. As a former academic dean of two community colleges and as Associate Director of the Ford Foundation Community College Cooperative Internship Program with the Community College District of St. Louis, he had an extensive grasp of the opportunities and of the unique problems of these educational institutions.

But there are important characteristics of Don outside the classroom. Don has written some poetry. He could be encouraged, even though reluctantly at times, to write a poem or words to a familiar tune to give a special greeting to a faculty member leaving our group. He even sang in the Choir of this Church and we almost organized a quartet among the Higher Education faculty with Don as the lead tenor. He did sing solos at his daughters' weddings.

He often expressed special words of wisdom for the faculty. And some of these he would write down and copy for his friends. The photo-copier was Don's favorite form of modern technology. This along with his trusty typewriter and magnifying glass helped him in his many tasks in the realm of writing. We fellow faculty members were appreciative of Don's insistence on having a copying machine available when we were housed in College View Dorm on Mill Street. This second-hand machine of an early vintage helped all of us on many occasions. He has also made very good use of another copying machine in his home.

Don was also a very good cook. He frequently invited students, faculty, and friends to his home where Mary Alice and he were the most gracious hosts. Don took an active role in the cooking these dinners. Don also believed in promptness -- for classes, faculty meetings, choir practice, and being picked up for dinner. He also believed in honesty and integrity, and demonstrated these qualities over and over again.

The mark of Donald Tolle has positively influenced the lives of many. He was most courageous in setting forth his convictions and standing by them in word and deed. The memory of a kind, gentle man--one willing to help in so many ways will be an important part of each of us. We have lost a great friend this week. He will be missed by all of us -- his dear wife, his children and their spouses, the grandchildren, his professional colleagues, his students, and his friends and neighbors.

In his diary he spoke of learning the importance of appreciation of things he had always taken for granted. Under the topic of *Lessons from War* he wrote, "Of this I'm sure--I'll never lack appreciation for life's ordinary little joys ever again. And Lord, make me stick to that!" Those who knew Donald realize that he did stick to this conviction and he set an example for all of us to follow.

May Donald Tolle's example of interest in family and students, his support of open access to education, and his professional concern for excellence in education at all levels be continued by those of us who follow in the path he has blazed.

-- Jack W. Graham, Professor of Higher Education,
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
for Memorial Service, August 12, 1993
First United Methodist Church of Carbondale