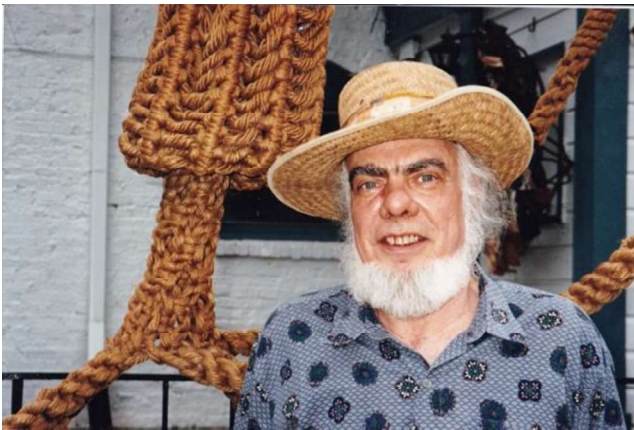


First E Founder, Rev. R. Lanier Clance



In Memory of ...R. Lanier Clance (1938-2013)*

The Rev. R. Lanier Clance died on April 15, 2013, at the age of 74.

Rev. Clance was born in Jacksonville, FL on December 18, 1938, to Henry and Eloise Clance. He attained his Bachelor of Arts degree from Lynchburg College in 1965. He also earned a Bachelor of Divinity from Lexington Theological Seminary in 1965.

Rev. Clance was ordained at the First Universalist Church in North Olmstead, OH on February 20, 1966. He was called to serve the First Universalist Church (now the Olmstead Unitarian Universalist Congregation) in 1965, and he stayed there until 1974. He then went on to found the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, GA in 1976. He continued to serve there (as well as the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Riverdale in Atlanta, GA from 1996-1998) until his retirement in 2001. He was given the honor of being named Minister Emeritus of the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta in 2001.

Rev. Clance worked hard to uphold peace and justice in his community and beyond. Being a feminist, humanist, and all-around political activist, it comes as no surprise that his beliefs led him to work with the National Organization of Women (N.O.W.), the American Civil Liberties Union (A.C.L.U.), and various other community organizations.

A practitioner of Gestalt and existentialist therapies, Rev. Clance also counseled couples and individuals, and "was a compassionate and forthright companion through his clients' suffering and joy."

In 1976, Rev. Clance and eight other people joined together to form the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta. They would eventually build its membership to 450 members by 1981. As one of the founders, Rev. Clance helped form a congregation which was intentionally diverse, bringing together folks from many different communities and helping them view life through a more expansive and generous lens. "As a speaker and leader, he was known for his spontaneity, honesty, and gift of being present in the moment. His legacy includes both a profound acceptance of others as they were and his dedication to urging his congregants to become more fully themselves."

In "An Existential Ministry: Theory and Practice," Rev. Clance speaks on his ministerial approach:

"I consider my preaching to be Life-Centered. Intellectual concepts are drawn from philosophy, theology, psychology and other disciplines of study. I do not present lectures on these subjects. I do use these areas

of knowledge to illuminate and illustrate my particular responses and reactions to life problems of human existence as well as the joys. I believe such preaching creates a dual response. The initial response is to my particular answers and analysis. A more profound response is created by providing individuals with a few concrete answers which they can accept or reject. Namely, they can then work out their own position or faith. I am personally more excited when an individual states something I said started him thinking about an issue or increased his awareness of his own feelings and ideas than when I hear another repeat what I have said as if it were the truth."

A friend noted, "Lanier will be remembered for his gift of engaging others in opening their spirits to know and celebrate the depth of human experience in each moment."

Rev. Clance is survived by his life partners, who have both cared for him for the last 40 years, Pauline Rose and Nancy Zumoff.

The memorial service was Sunday, May 12, 2013, at 3:00 p.m. at the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, 470 Candler Park Dr. NE, Atlanta, GA 30307.

*from the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association

<https://uuma.org/remembering-the-living-tradition/in-memory-of-r-lanier-clance-1938-2013/>