



## Leland Madison Park

October 21, 1941 - February 13, 2019

Leland Madison Park, Ph.D., 77, died on Wednesday, February 13, 2019, at The Pines at Davidson. He was born October 21, 1941, in Orlando, Florida, to Rebecca Leland Park and Arthur Harris Park, who provided his earliest example of civic engagement. A 1959 graduate of the McCallie School in Chattanooga, Tennessee, he entered Davidson College in 1959. Often referring to Davidson as a “way of life based on things of the mind, tempered by manners and morality,” Dr. Park quickly made Davidson the way of his life after his graduation in 1963. Apart from Army service and acquiring advanced degrees from Emory and from Florida State, and a stint on the staff of what was then called the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County; Dr. Park devoted the rest of his life to Davidson College.

“Devoted” is, indeed, the right word. When he retired in 2006, Dr. Park concluded nearly 40 years of service as Director of the Library – the third person in Davidson’s history to hold that position. He also was the Library’s most entertaining and authoritative reference source. He welcomed many generations of students, faculty, and staff with presentations of Davidson’s history and with emphasis on the most enduring and admirable of its values and traditions. He also welcomed new presidents and others with tours beyond campus. As Carol E. Quillen, Davidson’s current president relates, “Leland gave me a tour of the town, complete with a history of who had lived in each house for the past fifty years and some pretty incredible stories.”

Others might add that the “incredible stories” were always seasoned with anecdote and, when appropriate, spiced with gossip.

Like any master storyteller, Dr. Park told stories with a point: he sought to make newcomers welcome and to lead them to find the best in both the past and present of what had become his chosen home.

As Dr. Quillen notes, Park’s stories were “punctuated by his joy-filled, one-of-a-kind laugh.” That laugh led to free tickets to comedies in the early days of the Davidson Community Players; his joyful laughter could help bring together the Davidson community beyond the campus boundaries. One of the leaders instrumental in preserving the town’s branch of the Charlotte Mecklenburg library, and a supporter of many other community efforts, Dr. Park was honored in 2011 by the Town of Davidson with its G. Jackson Burney Community Service award, which he treasured perhaps even more than the state’s Order of the Long Leaf Pine bestowed on him at the time of his 2006 retirement – because the award from Davidson represented the mutual devotion of a person and his chosen community.

Having no children of his own, Dr. Park leaves many heirs: friends and colleagues, to be sure, but first and foremost the students for whom both colleges and libraries exist. Dr. Clark Ross, former Dean of the Faculty, has described Dr. Park as a “supportive, but candid, adviser and friend” to everyone from entering first-years to experienced presidents. He advised countless students over the years, either officially or unofficially, and was an enthusiastic supporter of Wildcat basketball. In 2007, a group of alumni whom he had influenced established a scholarship in his name. At least one former advisee gave his son the middle name “Madison” in tribute to Dr. Leland Madison Park.

Park will be remembered as a gateway and a bridge to the institution he

loved, whether for students attempting to navigate scholarly life or new staff and faculty enjoying a tour of campus led by one of the few people who could gracefully walk the path between the college's past and present.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Leland M. Park Scholarship, Davidson College, Box 7170, Davidson, NC 28035-7170 and to St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 115 W. 7th St., Charlotte, NC 28202.

A service to celebrate the life of Leland Park will be held at 4 p.m. in the sanctuary of Davidson College Presbyterian Church on Sunday, February 17, with a reception to follow in the Lilly Family Gallery.

Cavin-Cook Funeral Home & Crematory, Mooresville, is serving the family of Dr. Park. Condolences may be made to the family at [www.cavin-cook.com](http://www.cavin-cook.com).

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

FEB 17. 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (ET)

Davidson College Presbyterian Church  
100 N Main Street  
Davidson, NC 28036

## Reception

FEB 17. 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (ET)

Davidson College Presbyterian Church  
100 N Main Street  
Davidson, NC 28036

# Tribute Wall



“ *Leland Madison Park*

February 14, 2021 at 11:24 AM



“ *Leland Madison Park*

February 14, 2021 at 11:04 AM



“ *Leland Madison Park*

February 14, 2021 at 11:03 AM



“ *So sorry to discover the death of a cousin by way of an obituary search. Leland was a wonderful person who helped me in preserving our families heritage. He will be missed, R.I.P. dear cousin. Richard McLester Leland III, 2nd cousin.*

**Richard M. Leland** - May 27, 2019 at 01:25 PM



“ *We are so sorry to hear of Leland's passing. He was a kind and gentle soul who never hesitated to lend his knowledge. God Bless the entire family.*

**Cotton Ketchie** - March 07, 2019 at 11:27 AM

ES

“ *My mother and Leland’s mother were friends...the Parks lived in a stately old home with an elevator near downtown Orlando. I was a little girl...10 years younger than Leland...he was always nice and very kind to me...I have never forgotten him...*

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**Emily Schirmer Singleton** - February 17, 2019 at 08:47 PM

SH

“ *My godfather, Dr. Leland M. Park, was "Uncle Leland" to us. He made family out of friends. Our Christmas tree was covered in ornaments he sent annually to my siblings and me throughout our childhood. I have loved, and will remember, his storytelling, stacks of books in his living room, way of spreading joy, his scrawling handwriting, and excitement about projects and people at Davidson. My heart breaks for the loss but rejoices in his life among us. Certainly, the angels are enjoying some good tales and good laughs.*

*-Susan Oehler Herrick, Phoenix*

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**Susan Herrick** - February 16, 2019 at 11:13 AM

DA

“ *My sincere condolences to your family. God promises to fortify you and hold your hand during this difficult time Isaiah 41:10,13. Continue to rely on Him for comfort and strength.*



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**Darnell** - February 16, 2019 at 07:12 AM

MB

“ *Leland Park was (and still is - in Heaven) the most wonderful, kind, funny, smart and thoughtful man. He was always ready with a bit of wit and a big grin and was a stalwart at Charlotte Rotary every Tuesday. He will be greatly missed but surely the angels in Heaven are enjoying the new life he's brought to them.*

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**Marilynn Bowler** - February 15, 2019 at 07:38 PM

KH

“ *Leland was not only "Mr. Davidson," he also was "Mr. North Carolina" in the library world for many years, making it a point to welcome newcomers to the state, visit them, and offer his own hospitality. I was one of the grateful (and amazed) recipients. His leadership roles at the statewide level focussed on cooperation among all types of libraries, and our state was much changed for the better.*

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**Kate Hickey** - February 15, 2019 at 06:55 PM



“ *Enduring Grace was purchased for the family of Leland Madison Park.*



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February 15, 2019 at 05:10 PM

SL

“Most merciful Father, who hast been pleased to take unto thyself the soul of this thy servant Leland Madison Park; Grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith, that having served thee with constancy on earth, we may be joined hereafter with thy blessed saints in glory everlasting; through Jesus Christ our Lord.” BCP

----Stewart Lillard, friend and fellow librarian

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**Stewart Lillard** - February 14, 2019 at 09:51 AM

LH

Leland Park was a valued colleague and dear friend. I will always remember, as will many of our colleagues, the resolutions for many he composed in honor of the hosts of the Oberlin Group meetings. His graciousness, good humor, and Southern gentleman style will long be remembered. For many of us, he ws the face of Davidson College for many years. He will be missed.

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**Larry Hardesty** - February 14, 2019 at 04:52 PM

JG

I got to know Leland after his father died. His father was the one that initiated the annual Capt. Henry Wirz Memorial Service in Andersonville in 1976. Leland attended several of the Annual Capt. Wirz Memorial Services, and visited in our home. When I talked with him, he was always so gracious and friendly. He loved his heritage, and was a true Southern gentleman. My wife and I will greatly miss him. Our prayers are with his family.

James Gaston

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**James Gaston** - February 15, 2019 at 09:00 AM

AB

Leland was a true friend and neighbor. He was an especially generous long time donor to The Spokes Group and helped the group pedal much joy over the years. Andy Beard

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**Andy Beard** - February 15, 2019 at 02:12 PM

SF

*I will miss Leland Park very much. He was a very kind and gentle soul and made us laugh. May you have a peaceful journey friend.*

*Steve Fritts Class of 1980*

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**Steve Fritts** - February 18, 2019 at 06:24 PM