

# A Service of Celebration

FOR THE LIFE OF RONALD W. WALSH

21 MAY 1931 - 20 FEBRUARY 1997

4 MARCH, 1997

3 P.M.

*Page numbers refer to the Book of Common Prayer  
Please stand as the officiant enters*

## **Prelude music**

**Opening Sentences** (p. 491) *All stand.*

## **The Collect**

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

*People* And also with you.

*Celebrant* (p. 493, number 3)

**Hymn** (p. 680) St. Anne's hymn. *Sung by all.*

**The First Lesson** *The congregation is seated.*

*After the Lesson the Reader says*

Here ends the Lesson

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Psalm 23, King James version (p. 476) *Read together by all. Remain seated.*

**Music** Sheep May Safely Graze (J.S. Bach)

## **The Second Lesson**

*After the Lesson the Reader says*

Here ends the Lesson.

Micah 6:6a, 8

**Remembrances** Ed Mayer, Roy Domke, Marjorie Glicksman

**Music for Meditation** Morgenstimmung (Edvard Grieg)

Solveig's Sang

Jeg Elsker Deg

**The Prayers** The Lord's Prayer (p. 498, 504, 505)

**The Commendation** (p. 499) *The congregation will join in the responses.*

**Hymn** (p. 608) The Navy hymn. *Sung by all.*

**Closing Prayer** (p. 833)

**The Blessing** *The Celebrant pronounces God's blessing.*

**Postlude** Triumphal March from Sigurd Jorsalfar (Edvard Grieg)

OFFICIANT: The Reverend Susan Gresinger, Interim Associate Pastor  
ORGANIST: Dr. John Fenstermaker, Canon Organist and Choirmaster

*A reception in the Chapter House will follow the service.*

CHAPEL OF GRACE, GRACE CATHEDRAL  
1100 California Street, San Francisco, California 94108  
(415)749-6300

# Ronald Walter Walsh

Ron's parents met and married in San Francisco in the late 1920's. His mother, Aslaug Saether, immigrated to San Francisco from eastern Norway about 1924. His father, William J. Walsh, retired from the Royal Navy as Master-at-Arms, arrived in San Francisco around the same time from Portsmouth, England. Born in 1876, Will was a veteran of the Boer War and World War I. Ron was born in St. Francis Hospital on May 21, 1931.

His mother took her small perpetual motion machine to run in Golden Gate Park every day until he started school, and the Park remained his very special place all his life. His mom started him early on "cultural enrichment"—dancing school (not a particularly happy thought), piano lessons (a much better idea), and singing (he did a brief stint as a very young chorister in Grace Cathedral).

In 1940, he met his future wife in Sunday School. Their mothers "volunteered" them to sing duets in church programs. Since his voice was higher, he sang the melody, she sang the harmony, and they struggled over who would hold the hymnal. They both gave up Sunday School and duets at the first opportunity, but they began dating in their teens.

At Lowell High, Ron moved up from Boy Scout to Sea Scout, played tennis, took up archery (alas for the birds in the Park), and studied occasionally. He escaped from Lowell in 1949, joined the Naval Reserve and entered San Francisco City College.

In 1951, the Korean War brought him a call to active duty. During his 15 months as a Yeoman 3rd Class at Pearl Harbor, he perfected his poker skills and took up the ukulele. He won a canary yellow Buick convertible at poker, and his stateside girlfriend did not hear from him until his return to San Francisco in 1954.

He returned to City College, and he and Lesley took up where they'd left off. They got engaged in 1955, and married on January 28, 1956, while he was attending the University of San Francisco.

Ron finished his bachelor's degree at USF in 1960. By then he had already started a 33-year career in insurance, specializing in fidelity and surety claims, a field he enjoyed very

much. He belonged to the Fidelity and Surety Association of Northern California, and served as its President. He retired in 1990.

In 1959 he persuaded his wife to move from their first apartment in the Haight-Ashbury to the lower flat in her aunt's house on 44th Avenue in the Richmond, by pointing out that the "Girls" would need us as they got older. That turned out to be an understatement worthy of the Guinness Book of Records. The "Girls" were his mother-in-law Norma (surviving him at age 96), her middle sister Helen, and her oldest sister, Amanda, known to us as "Chickie," as in "Spring Chicken." And for the last two years of his life, the widowed Will lived with us; he died at 92 in 1968.

For over 30 years, the "Girls" received much of Ron's time and attention as chauffeur, handyman, dishwasher, and comforter. He was a loving caregiver for Chickie until she died in 1992 shortly before her 103rd birthday.

An attempt to list all the things Ron cared about got too long. For such a low-key person, he had very wide interests. His idea of a perfect evening was to be home with his wife, in his big chair, with a good book or a video, and a lapful of purring cat. But his interests ranged from local to English history, to archeology, to all the creatures of sea, land, and air. His musical tastes ranged from Gregorian chant to the Beatles, especially musical theatre, early blues, jazz, ragtime, and the best American popular song writers of the 20's and 30's, particularly George Gershwin and Cole Porter. And he may be the only person who ever played the World War I song, "Roses of Picardy," on the ukulele.

The organizations he supported give an idea of his favorite things: Golden Gate National Park, the California Academy of Sciences, the California Marine Mammal Center, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the SF Zoological Society, and the California Historical Society. The Fine Arts Museums were favorite weekend haunts; he rejoiced in the newly reconstructed Palace of the Legion of Honor, and worried about the DeYoung's future. He enjoyed membership in the SF Ballet Association, and was knowledgeable about the Diaghilev Ballets Russes, some of which he saw reconstructed by the Oakland Ballet. A devout non-dancer himself, he enjoyed performances of the Ethnic Dance Festival, and he was addicted to Fred Astaire musicals.

Central to his happiness was life in San Francisco in all its variety. He treasured its parks, beaches, and waterfront, and was at home in many of its neighborhoods. He detested oversized, ugly new buildings, but on the whole, life here was all he wanted, with parts of the rest of Northern California thrown in. Like Herb Caen, I'm sure he's told St. Peter, "It ain't bad, but it ain't San Francisco."