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Dr. Herlocker set a pace in more ways than one

04/16/08

By *Kevin E. Dayhoff*

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This evening, folks from throughout the mid-Atlantic region will descend upon Westminster's historic Main Street for a traditional rite of spring -- the annual Westminster Road Runners Club Main Street Mile.

Main Street will be closed to traffic for the run at 7 p.m. The Main Street Mile attracts 700 runners and hundreds of cheering spectators and family members who come out in support.

Dr. Dave Herlocker was one of those who organized the first Main Street Mile back in 1981.

However, this evening, for the first time in the history of the event, he will not be there.

Dr. Herlocker, 67, a well-respected chemist, McDaniel College professor, runner, community leader, fellow member of Grace Lutheran Church and a good friend, passed away peacefully, but unexpectedly on March 21, 2008.

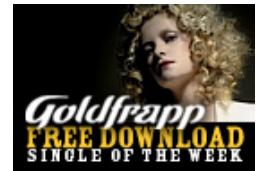
Raised in Peoria, Ill., he graduated in 1962 from Knox College and earned his doctorate in inorganic chemistry from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in 1966.

He immediately embarked upon a 40-year teaching career that changed many lives at McDaniel College. He served as chair of the Chemistry Department for many years before he retired in 2006.

Dr. Herlocker was as an avid runner. His dedication to the sport continued after an accident in 1995 which essentially ended his running career.

He was a voracious reader, sports enthusiast and loved history and trivia.

He was known as a dedicated father to his children, Caryn and



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Daniel. He was also a member of the parent organizing committee that founded the Westminster Montessori School in 1974.

Others knew him as a steadfast member of Grace Lutheran Church, where on March 25 hundreds attended a memorial service in his honor.

"It was a lovely service, full of good memories, chuckles, a few hearty laughs and some tears about the man we came to admire and respect over the years," wrote Beth Weisenborn, a fellow runner and Westminster Road Runners Club race director.

The Rev. Kevin Clementson said he appreciated Dr. Herlocker's "practical nature," how he was a Christian "who walked the walk" and was active in Ardent Folk, a ministry that provided meals to those in need.

Fellow McDaniel Professor Sheila Law had many fond memories, in particular noting that Herlocker may have been the youngest Ph.D. to teach at McDaniel when he joined the faculty in 1966.

Colleague Dr. Sam Case recalled that he had "first met Dave and Helen in 1966 at the faculty dinner that opened the academic year," and in the many years that followed "spent many hours running and walking together. ... Dave had tremendous drive for any task and a great work ethic.

"In looking through my diaries, I estimate that, along with Sam Alspach, we logged almost 41,000 miles together in our almost 37 years of running and walking -- that's almost two times around the earth at the equator."

Dr. Case recalled fondly that among the things that Dave liked were the TV show, "Jeopardy," and dogs. More often than not, he usually knew the final Jeopardy answer. "He had more facts stored away than anyone I know," said Case.

"He was also dedicated to the college and to his students. He worked hard at his classes and cared deeply about his students and the college," emphasized Dr. Case.

Dave Roush praised Dr. Herlocker's dedication to the community.

He also sadly remembered that fateful morning at 6:45 a.m. on Aug. 10, 1995 when a car struck his running partners, Dr. Herlocker and "Terry" Burk, 48, owner of the Treat Shop, a family candy business located in Westminster.

Roush's other running partner that morning, Don Myers, had left the group earlier and Mr. Roush had just parted when a car struck Mr. Burk and Dr. Herlocker at Route 97 at Kalten Road.

Terry Burk subsequently died from his injuries and Dr. Herlocker was left injured for life.

This year's race will hardly be the same without Dr. Herlocker.

His passing leaves us sad beyond words.

Yet we can take solace, in spite of our sadness, that Dr. Herlocker

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is no longer in pain. He's in heaven with his good friend Terry Burk, and the two are probably organizing running events and watching "Jeopardy" together.

Kevin Dayhoff writes from Westminster. E-mail him at: kdayhoff@carr.org.

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