

Steve A. Alford

Aug 12, 1920 - Oct 18, 1990
AAFA #0190

Obituary: Judge Steve A. Alford, 1920—1990

Compiled by Gil Alford

Judge Steve A. Alford, Jr., AAFA member #190, died Thursday, October 18, 1990, at 7:40 PM in Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center in Baton Rouge, LA. Judge Alford underwent major surgery to repair an aneurysm three weeks before his death. Complications and setbacks from that were responsible for his death.

Judge Alford was active in his community, church and family affairs and will be sorely missed in each. His death is also a great loss to the Association. While at the AAFA meeting in Houston in 1990, Steve said that as soon as he retired in 1991 it was his plan to become very active in the Association and do all he could to get the Alfords of Louisiana informed and enlisted.

Steve, the son of Steve A. Sr. and Joyce Powell Alford, was born 12 August 1920 in Orange, Texas. He traced his family back through the Alfords of Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana, to Jacob Alford who moved to the area in the early 1800's from North Carolina via Georgia, where he resided a few years.

Steve Alford, Jr. married Kate Peatross of Morgan City, LA, and they had three children: Steve III, Timothy L., and Paralee Francis. He was a grandfather of four. He was survived by three sisters, Jane Sims, Lynchburg, VA; Joyce Vorman, Great Barrington, MA; and Brownie Jean McElmoyl, Chandler, AZ; and all were present at the AAFA meeting in Raleigh the weekend before Steve's death. Many of Steve's very close cousins are also members of the AAFA.

Captain Steve A. Alford, Jr. served in the United States Army Air Force in World War II as a pilot of the B-17 Flying

Fortresses. He was a member of the American Legion.

Steve graduated from Lake Charles High School, University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1942 and the LSU Law School in 1948. He was a graduate of the Institute of Court Management and the National College of State Judges.

He practiced law in Baton Rouge in state and federal Courts from 1949 to 1971. He took oath of office as judge for the Nineteenth Judicial District Court on 1 February 1972. He served as chief judge of that court from 1979 to 1982. He was elected to a ten year term on the Court of Appeal with service starting 1 January 1983.

Judge Alford served on state district and appellate courts in Baton Rouge for 19 years. He announced in July that he was retiring from his seat on the 1st Circuit Court of Appeal at the end of the year. He had served there since 1983. He said then that health considerations prompted him to step down. He and his wife, Kate, planned to travel as much as possible after his retirement.

According to an article by Tim Talley in the Baton Rouge *Morning Advocate*, Judge Melvin Shortess, an appellate court judge, said, "I served with Judge Alford for almost 19 years. He loved the law and lawyers. The people who came to his court always got his full attention and fair and impartial consideration. He will be deeply missed by me and I'm sure the entire community." Grover L. Covington of Hammond, the 1st Circuit's chief judge, said that Judge Alford was a hard worker and that he would be missed. "I've known the man for 40 years. He's had a distinguished judicial career, both as a trial court judge and appellate court judge." Decisions written by Judge Alford

have been cited as precedent in many cases returned by other appellate courts, according to Covington. Alford volunteered to tackle difficult cases "that perhaps others would not have," Covington said.

Steve Alford, Jr. was past master of Capitol Lodge No 399 F&AM Baton Rouge; Council and Commander of the York Rite; Scottish Rite Consistory of Baton Rouge and coroneted a 33 degree Mason (I. G. H. in 1973) and a Shriner in El Karubah Shrine. He was presently serving on several committees of the Grand Lodge of Masons of the State of Louisiana. He was a holder of the Demolay Legion of Honor Award.

Judge Alford was active in Kiwanis International for 30 years, having served as President of the Baton Rouge Downtown club; Lt. Governor of Division 8; Governor of the Louisiana - Mississippi-West Tennessee District, 1962; international Trustee; and Vice President, International, 1969-70.

Steve Alford, Jr. was a member of the Grace Baptist Church where he served as an adult Sunday School teacher, Chairman of the Board of Deacons, and member of the Board of Trustees. He was ordained a deacon 15 March 1953.

In the memorial service conducting by Dr. Kelly Fitzgerald and Rev. John Harris, they said: "In Steve's life we see a remarkable blend of toughness and tenderness. Some of his pronouncements were as final as a unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of our land. You just didn't question him about those. But a minute later, or an hour later, he

would be marshmallow soft. I suspect his toughness was tied to his high standards He had strong convictions about what was right and what was wrong and he was determined to stand for the right. Those who had spent much time with him knew his tender side surfaced when he was around people who were hurting and needed a boost.

STEVE A. ALFORD, JR

Sent by Member #38 Glenn Alford

No source

JUDGE STEVE A. ALFORD, JR. MEMORIAL LIBRARY DEDICATED

At an open meeting on August 22, 1991, more than 130 brethren and guests that included members of Judge Alford's family, the Grand Master, past Grand Masters and several other Grand Lodge officers, gathered at Capitol Lodge No. 399, Baton Rouge, La. for the dedication of the Judge Steve A. Alford, Jr. Memorial Library.

"The Master of Ceremonies, M:W: Robert L. Kleinpeter paid tribute to Bro. Alford, describing him as "a loving and devoted husband, an affectionate and concerned parent, soldier, courageous citizen, church worker and leader extraordinaire, Freemason, successful and dedicated attorney, and an admired and respected member of the judiciary." He continued, "Such designations typify the main streams in the full, complex and beneficial life pattern of Judge Alford, a man who was the epitome of a gentleman, respected, honored, and truly loved by his friends, professional associates and his family."

Following his remarks, Bro. Kleinpeter presented the Library to Capitol Lodge. The Grand Master, M:W: Roy McDuffie, praised Judge Alford for his many years of service to the Grand Lodge and then formally dedicated the Library to the use of all Masons.

Responding for the family, Tim Alford recited many witty and touching anecdotes about his father.

The library was a dream that evolved years ago with the dedication of the Thomas W. Sharp, P.G.M., collection of Masonic material. Bro. Sharp wanted a library that Masons might be enlightened about their craft and the history of Capitol Lodge No. 399....

Article printed in Maarch 1992 AAFA ACTION



Steve A. Alford Jr.:
Served courts for 19 years

Steve A. Alford 0190
b. Mar 11 1921 & d. Oct 18 1990
Lived in Baton Rouge, LA
Family JOH807LA/JAM687VA
Attended 1 meeting(s).

Steve was still busy as a Circuit Judge when he died. At the meeting in Houston in 1989 he confided in the AAFA leadership that he was retiring in just little over a year and it was his intention to then get the Alfords of Louisiana organized. He had planned to make the North Carolina meeting and most of his siblings and close cousins were registered. His death prevented his participation but the siblings and cousins were there.

Visiting and funeral are scheduled here for Judge Steve A. Alford Jr.

Visitation will be held at Welsh Funeral Home this afternoon and Saturday for Judge Steve A. Alford Jr. of Baton Rouge, the district and appellate court judge who died Thursday of complications from major surgery. He was 70.

Alford, who served on courts in Baton Rouge for 19 years, announced in July that he would be retiring from his seat on the 1st Circuit Court of Appeal at the end of the year. He underwent major surgery three weeks ago to repair an aneurism, said his widow, Kate Peatross Alford.

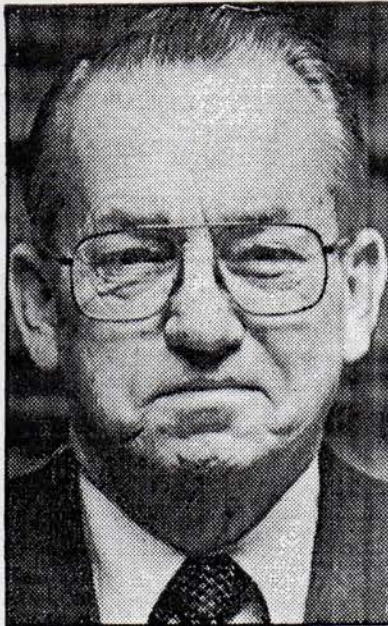
He suffered a series of setbacks from which he never recovered, his widow said late Thursday. He died at 7:40 p.m. at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center.

Visitation is scheduled at Welsh Funeral Home from 5 until 9 p.m. today with masonic services at 7:30 p.m. Visitation will continue Saturday from 10 a.m. to 12:40 p.m., according to the funeral home.

Services are scheduled at 1 p.m. Saturday at Grace Baptist Church with the Rev. Dr. Kelly Fitzgerald and the Rev. Johnathan Harris officiating. Alford will be buried in Resthaven Gardens of Memory.

Alford's death was mourned by his fellow judges on the appellate court, where Alford had served since Jan. 1, 1983.

"I served with Judge Alford for almost 19 years," said appellate court Judge Melvin Shortess. "He loved the law and the lawyers. The people who came to his court always got his full attention and fair and impartial consideration. He will be deeply missed



Steve Alford Jr.

by me and I'm sure the entire community."

When he announced his retirement from the bench three months ago, Alford said health considerations prompted him to step down.

"I'm not that terribly young," he said. "I feel good about the decision." He said then that he and his wife planned to travel as much as possible.

Alford took office as a District Court judge in 1971. He ascended to the appellate court position after the retirement of former Judge Elmo Lear. Alford maintained a private law

practice before he was elected to the bench.

Alford was born in Orange, Texas, and reared in Lake Charles. He graduated from the University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1942 and the LSU Law School in 1948.

He was a veteran of World War II and flew B-17 Flying Fortresses for the U.S. Army Air Force. He was discharged with the rank of captain.

Alford practiced law in state and federal courts from 1949 until he was elected to the District Court bench in 1971. He served as chief judge of the District Court from 1979 to 1982.

Alford was a graduate of the Institute of Court Management and the National College of State Judges.

Alford was a member of the Downtown Kiwanis Club. He served as the club's president and held various district offices. He also was on the Kiwanis International Board of Trustees for four years and served as international vice president for one year.

He was a past master of the Capitol Lodge of the Order of Free and Accepted Masons and was a 33rd-degree mason as well as a shiner. He held the Demolay Legion of Honor Award and was a member of the Grace Baptist Church, where he was a deacon.

He is survived by his wife and three children: Steve Alford III, Timothy L. Alford and Paralee Francis Alford. He had four grandchildren.

State District Judge Doug Gonzales ran unopposed to serve out the remainder of Alford's term, which expires Dec. 31, 1992.

SAA
#190

STEVE A. ALFORD, JR.

COURT OF APPEAL, FIRST CIRCUIT

Judge Alford's first judicial oath of office was February 1, 1972 as judge for the Nineteenth Judicial District Court.

Subsequent judicial oaths: January 1, 1983, Court of Appeal, First Circuit

Date and place of birth: August 12, 1920, Orange, Texas

Education: B.A. degree, S.L.I. (now University of Southwestern Louisiana), 1942
LL.B. (now Juris Doctor), Louisiana State University School of Law, 1948
Graduate, Institute for Court Management
Graduate, National Judicial College for State Judiciary



Steve A. Alford, Jr.

Judge Alford is married to the former Kate Peatross of Morgan City and is the father of three children: Steve, III; Tim; and Paralee and the grandfather of four. He served in the United States Army Airforce for forty-five months during World War II as a pilot and was discharged with the rank of Captain. He practiced law from 1948 until elected Judge.

Judge Alford is a member of the local, state and American Bar Associations; past Master, Capitol Lodge 399, F. & A.M., Baton Rouge; Council and Commandery of the York Rite; Scottish Rite Consistory of Baton Rouge and coroneted a 33rd degree I.G.H. in 1973; El Karubah Shrine; recipient Legion of Honor Order Demolays.

Judge Alford has been active in Kiwanis International for 30 years: served as President, local club; Lt. Gov. Division 8; Governor, Louisiana-Mississippi-West Tennessee District, 1962; International Trustee; and Vice President, International, 1969-70.

Judge Alford is a member of Grace Baptist Church, Baton Rouge and teaches an adult Sunday School class; presently serves as Chairman of its Board of Deacons and of its Board of Trustees.

IN MEMORY OF STEVE A. ALFORD, JR.

AUGUST 12, 1920 -- OCTOBER 18, 1990

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus, speaking to his brokenhearted disciples in the first century, and in all succeeding centuries, said:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27).

With faith, hope and love we have gathered as God's people to celebrate the goodness of God and to rejoice in the victory that is ours through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead as we conduct a service to the honor of God in memory of Steve A. Alford, Jr., who completed his pilgrimage on earth on Thursday, October 18, 1990, having received the mercies of God for more than seventy years.

The great God we love and serve is the God of all comfort. He's with us today to secure us in his love and fill us with his peace. Let us with strong trust and settled hearts worship him in Spirit and in truth as we look to him for comfort and lean on him for strength. Let us bow together for the invocation.

INVOCATION

Our Father of eternal love and infinite patience, be pleased, we pray, to receive us in mercy as we bow before you to recognize your presence with us and your goodness to us all the days of our lives.

We are comforted to know that you are always near the brokenhearted, that you understand how we feel and where we hurt, that you love us just as we are, and that your mercies are as sure as the morning sun.

We bless your holy name for our hope of life after death through the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. We thank you for the life, the love, the work and the spirit of your servant Steve, and for all the blessings you have bestowed on his family and friends through him.

Bless all those who feel a void in their hearts because of his death, and give them the precise help they need on this sad day and on all the days that lie ahead.

Grant to them deep inner peace as they approach your throne of grace, sure in their hearts that you will hear their prayers and take good care of them.

With humility and with love we would offer you our prayers, our longings, our pains and our needs in the name, and in the spirit, and for the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

On behalf of the Alford family, I want to thank all of you for your every expression of love, kindness and concern. All the members of the family greatly appreciate and will long remember the love you have shown for Steve and for them through your visits, calls, and cards; through your floral offerings, memorial gifts, and words of consolation; and through your presence with them and prayers for them today. May God bless you all for opening your hearts to this family and sharing your love with them.

WORSHIP LEADERS AND HONORED GUESTS

All your worship leaders today are identified in the order of service, and all count it an honor to be able to share the love of God and our hope through Christ with you.

I am pleased to welcome Brother John Harris to this house of God and to this pulpit. For more than ten years he was the pastor of this church, and was a loved and trusted friend of the whole Alford family. He will share some reflections of Judge Alford, and then will read from God's Word before leading us in a pastoral prayer.

Seated behind the family today are the deacons of the Grace Baptist Church and members of the judiciary. We appreciate the support and encouragement of them all.

And now Brother Steve Nelson, our Minister of Music, will sing "He Touched Me."

WORDS OF MEMORIAL FOR STEVE A. ALFORD, JR.

On this day of relentless, agonizing sorrow, we would reach out in faith to the great God whose grace is always sufficient; and we would resolve in our hearts to begin this day taking the steps we must take to endure our grief and to find the fulness of life God has in store for us.

For three weeks this family has been traumatized as they witnessed a man whom they loved being victimized by a siege of complications which followed his surgery on September 25. During this time, their days and their nights have been filled with anxious waiting, uneasy watching and hoping against hope. They treasured every response Steve could make. As the days turned into weeks, the family recognized that most of the options they had hoped for had slipped away. The final option was to demonstrate self-giving love to a man who had no chance to survive. The love they showed this dying man was a thing of beauty.

I commend Kate and the whole family for the way they have demonstrated their faith, hope and love under circumstances which drained them of strength and kept them in travail.

The death of a loved one inflicts on us a torturous pain. It reduces our resistance and triggers feelings we don't know how to handle. It makes us feel empty, helpless, frustrated and confused. It hurts us all over.

We feel broken today, and we should; but in our brokenness we can take hope in the assurance that the great God who gave us life stands by us and wants to put all the pieces of our shattered lives back together again. He can do it, and he's the only one who can. He'll put all the pieces back in the right places, because he does not want our lives to become a pointless puzzle. He wants us to be whole again, to find peace and joy again, and to function according to his master plan.

I would urge all of you to place yourselves lovingly in the hands of God, to stay in touch with him, in tune with him, and in step with him as you face the struggles and trials of every day, assured of his presence with you and of his high plans for you. With unwavering faith in God, hang on to your happy memories and your sure hope, for God will use both to help you see life in perspective and get on your feet again.

May the God of all comfort use the promises of his Word and the encouragement given by the servants he has sent you to bless your minds with light and steady your hearts with hope.

Now I want to share with you the passage in the New Testament which appears to be the swan song of the Apostle Paul. The scripture is 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

These are Paul's words: "For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing."

In that short paragraph Paul made it clear that he was ready to die and that he looked forward to what lay ahead.

Those who knew Judge Steve Alford well knew that he also was ready to die, and that he also anticipated with delight the future God had prepared for him. That does not mean he was anxious to die. He loved life and yearned to keep on sharing his love, joy and enthusiasm for life with his family and friends. But in his head and in his heart he knew that according to the plan of God it was appointed for man to die. And Steve had carefully and continually heeded the instructions God gave about preparing to die.

Briefly, I want us to explore Steve's readiness to die. Then I'd like for us to consider what his readiness should mean to us.

In what ways was Steve ready to die? First, and most important of all, Steve was ready to die because he had been confronted by Jesus Christ and had committed his life to him, for time and for eternity. He knew that Paul's answer to the Philippian jailer was God's directive to us all: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). He knew well the condition of salvation Paul had set forth in Romans 10:9, "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." He knew that salvation was by grace. That well-known, often-quoted passage from Ephesians 2 assured him of that. There Paul wrote, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God -- not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Steve had been faithful to his church. He had given generously of his time, his money, and his leadership to the church; but he knew that none of the good things he had done would make him right with God and win him a place in heaven.

In another important sense, Steve was ready to die. He had served Christ faithfully all his Christian life. Like Paul, he could say: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Steve had several consuming loyalties, which kept him involved in a string of meetings and activities. I don't know how he squeezed them all in. His primary loyalty was to Christ. His other consuming loyalties were related to that #1 loyalty. He wanted Christ to be honored in all his relationships, associations and daily activities.

What were those consuming loyalties? His family, his church, his work, Kiwanis, his lodge, and his love of sports.

Steve loved his family and was deeply committed to every member of his family. He and Kate were married in June of 1942. Just this week Kate said to me, "I didn't know forty-eight and a half years could go by so fast." Steve's concern for Kate was warm and genuine. He wanted to please her, and he wanted to make sure nothing bad ever happened to her. Before Kate had surgery in Houston in January of 1982, Steve had a heavy heart. In the final weeks of 1981, he talked to me several times about his uneasiness regarding the unknowns of her upcoming surgery. I remember his saying, "I don't want a mark put on her that is not necessary to save her life."

Their three children and four grandchildren brought Steve and Kate a great cumulative joy, and their joy was matched with a tremendous and justifiable pride.

Steve loved his church. When he got into the church as an adult, he took it seriously and put soul and body into it. Through the years, he has taught children, young adults and senior adults. He wanted people to know God and follow him. On March 15, 1953, Steve was ordained to serve as a deacon in the Grace Baptist Church. Since that time, he has served faithfully and well, for many years as the chairman of deacons. For Steve and Kate, the church was the center of their lives. It was the hub into which everything else had to fit. Their influence has been powerful and immeasurable. Not many days pass when I do not hear young and middle-aged adults recall what joy they had with Steve and Kate when they were children in Sunday School.

Steve's work was another consuming loyalty. He practiced law in state and federal courts from 1949 until 1971. He served as a District Court judge from 1971 through 1982, as chief judge from 1979 until 1982. He has been a judge on the First Circuit Court of Appeal since January 1, 1983. Always Steve was concerned for justice to prevail and for the law to be interpreted and administered fairly. He was dedicated to doing his part in achieving those noble goals.

Then there was Kiwanis. There Steve found boundless joy and received well-deserved recognition. He offered his strong leadership to Kiwanis. He served as President of the Downtown Kiwanis Club, as Lieutenant Governor of Division 8, as Governor of the Louisiana/Mississippi/West Tennessee District, as chairman of international committees, as an international trustee and an international Vice-President.

A verse from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 12, was used when Steve was being inducted into an important office in Kiwanis; and that verse reminded him how great was his responsibility in God's world. The verse reads, "Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required; and of him to whom men commit much they will demand the more" (Luke 12:48). Steve treasured that verse, often reflected on it, and sought to regulate his life in keeping with its demands.

Steve's lodge was another consuming loyalty. He was a past master of the Capitol Lodge, a 33rd degree mason, and a shriner. He believed he was a better man because of his association with his lodge, and he took pride in all he did in and through the lodge.

Steve was an unashamed patriot, who as an Air Force pilot flew the B-17 Flying Fortresses in World War II. He was proud of our country's flag, proud to be an American, and anxious for our country to be all our founding fathers dreamed for it to become.

If you knew Steve well, you know he was an avid sports fan. He backed LSU, the Saints and the Astros with impassioned fervor.

No doubt about it, Steve had many consuming loyalties. He gave himself freely to what he believed in. He fought the good fight, he finished the race, he kept the faith. His readiness to die was all tied up with the character of his life and the quality of his devotion.

Looking back, Steve knew he had responded to the call of Christ in the best way he could. He, therefore, had confidence and a feeling of fulfilment. But Steve knew there was more to his future than to his past, for he had received eternal life as a gift of God. He looked forward to the fulfilment of his faith. That leads us to the final way Steve was ready to die. He was ready to die because he knew his best days were ahead.

In his swan song the Apostle Paul had written: "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but to all who have loved his appearing." Steve was one who loved Christ's appearing. He believed Christ would return. He knew with Paul that "our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body" (Philippians 3:20-21).

Steve knew that life on earth was brief, and that God's special kind of life was eternal. He looked forward to that life beyond the grave. He loved the old gospel song entitled "Beulah Land." The refrain to that song goes:

"O Beulah land, sweet Beulah land,
As on the highest mount I stand,
I look away across the sea,
Where mansions are prepared for me
And view the shining glory shore,
My heaven, my home forevermore."

This man who loved life and lived it with gusto was ready to die. What should that mean to us? What should we feel and do because we knew Steve was ready to die?

First, we should rejoice for him. His suffering is over, and that gives us great relief. He's been released from all the heartaches and troubles associated with this earthly life. Now he's with Jesus.

Chrysostom has reminded us that tenants don't weep when the owner of an old house tears it down if they know he is going to replace it with a mansion. We have the promise of God that he's going to do that for us. Our future with him will be in a perfect place where there are no limitations, and it will endure forever. We rejoice for Steve that all his sorrows and heartaches are over and that he is now with Jesus and all the children of God who have gone to be with him.

Of course, we take comfort in the knowledge that Steve is now in the nearer presence of God. We know in our hearts that before long we shall join him. The parting we have experienced with Steve's death is only temporary.

While we rejoice for Steve and take comfort in God's promises, we also want to thank the Lord for him. We thank the Lord for his faith and his friendship. We thank the Lord for the lessons he taught us with his lips and with his life. In your bulletin you will notice Edgar Guest's poem "Sermons We See." Steve kept that poem in his heart and close to his side. It reminded him that he needed to live out his faith with a worthy life. On many occasions he referred to that poem as he beckoned others to demonstrate their righteousness with righteous living. We thank the Lord for the stands Steve took for righteousness and justice. We thank the Lord for his leadership in his church, in this community, and beyond.

In Steve's life we see a remarkable blend of toughness and tenderness. Some of his pronouncements were as final as a unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of our land. You just didn't question him about those. But a minute later, or an hour later, he would be marshmallow soft. I suspect his toughness was tied to his high standards. He had strong convictions about what was right and what was wrong, and he was determined to stand for the right. Those who had spent much time with him knew his tender side surfaced when he was around people who were hurting and needed a boost.

Steve was quite a man, and we ought to learn from him. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in "A Psalm of Life," wrote,

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time.

"Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again."

What footprints Steve left for us!

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The memory of Steve's life should challenge us to trust Christ, to be faithful to him through the church, to be people of integrity, to use all our gifts from God to magnify his name, and to be and do the best we can until God calls us home. The memory of his life should inspire us to plow, plant, cultivate and reap when we don't feel like getting out of bed. During the last couple of years, Steve on many days put forth his best, without complaining, when he was seriously ill. He challenges us to live nobly in tough times.

Like Paul, Steve had fought a good fight. He had finished the course. He had kept the faith. He had put body and soul into everything he did. He had rounded out his life in a magnificent way, completing his God-given assignments on time and with excellence. He had kept the faith. To the end his faith was vigorous, vital and growing. He was ready to die because he had been ready to live and had lived with integrity and with an exalted purpose. He was ready to die also because he was sure in his heart that Christ would keep all his promises. He knew he was safe in the arms of Jesus.

Steve Alford's life is a powerful sermon to us all, one we should hear with appreciation and heed with delight. I'm condensing it into four words: Go and do likewise.

PARTING PRAYER

Our Father, we pray that you in majesty and in mercy will bless, preserve and protect these who sorrow, granting them grace that is sufficient to help them through this difficult day and all the days that lie ahead. Assure them that they and their loved one are safe in your hands and that all is well. Give them guidance from above and strength from within as they face their days of loneliness and seek to rebuild their lives. Help them to believe your magnificent promises and to find peace in their hearts as they wait with patience for the fulfilment of your promises. Let them know that nothing can ever separate them from your eternal love, manifested perfectly to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Fill their lives with all the blessings that flow out of your love, dear Father, and walk with them day by day, step by step, the rest of their journey on earth. And then in your own good time unite them with this loved one and with all the rest of your children who have gone on before, that together they may share with joy the full inheritance of the children of God prepared and provided by Jesus Christ our Lord, unto whom be glory and praise both now and forevermore. Amen!