



DSM

Closing portion of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem

ULYSSES

Though much is taken, much abides; and though

We are not now that strength which in old days

Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are—

One equal temper of heroic hearts,

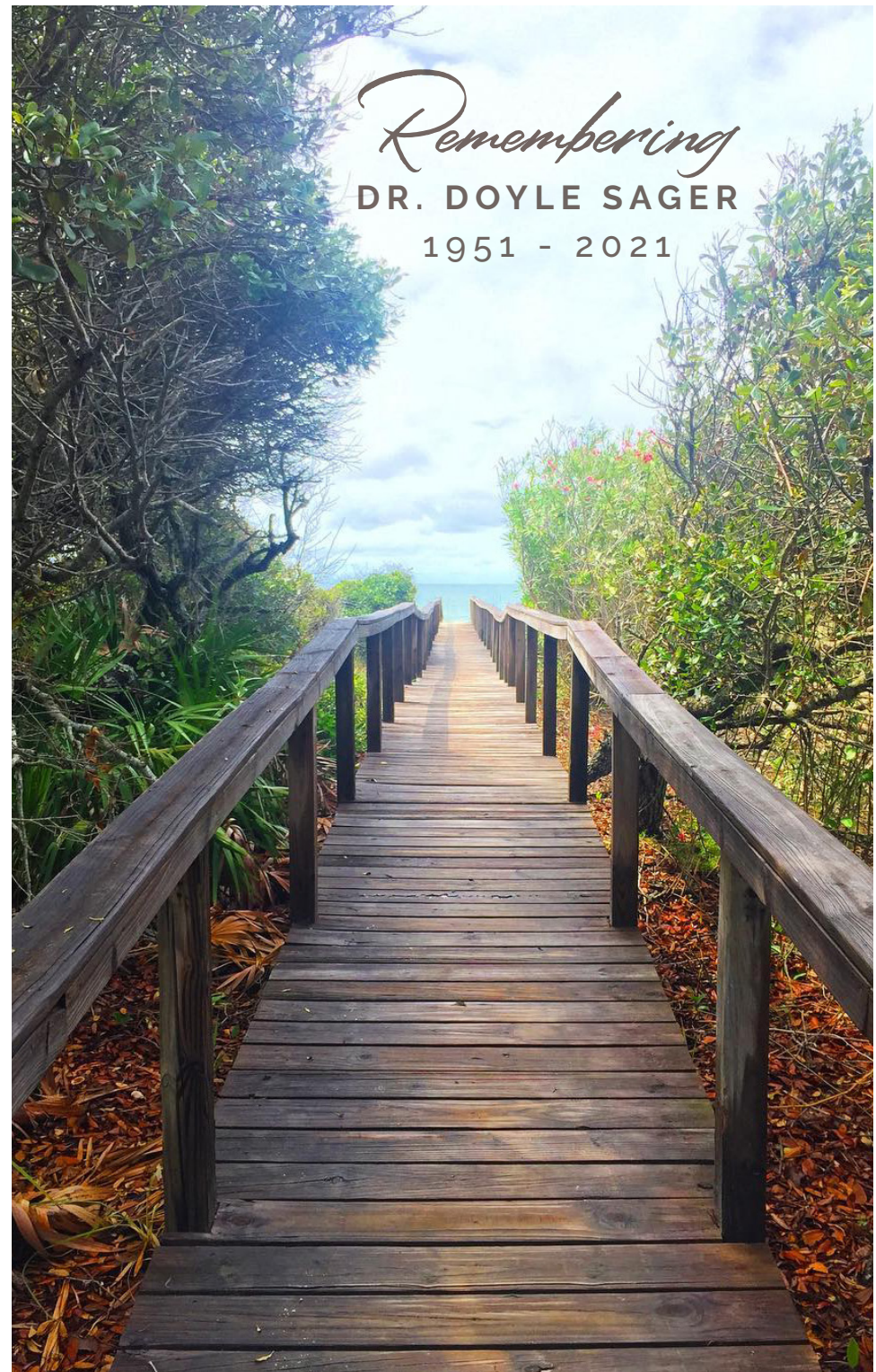
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will

To strive, to see, to find, and not to yield.

Doyle's life text was Galatians 5:22-23

*The fruit of the Spirit is
love, joy, peace, patience,
kindness, generosity,
faithfulness, gentleness
and self-control.*

**Cover photo taken & edited
by Joel Sager:** walkway to St
George Island beach - Doyle's
favorite place on earth.



Remembering
DR. DOYLE SAGER
1951 - 2021

Remembering Dr. Doyle Sager

1951 - 2021

WELCOME

Jim Hill, Pastor & Friend

CONGREGATIONAL SONG

Morning Has Broken - Alice Satterfield, accompaniment

SCRIPTURE READING & PRAYER

Hannah Coe - 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1; Psalm 31:1-5, 14-16

SONG

Be Thou My Vision - solo by Rod Maples

REFLECTIONS ON FBC JOURNEY

Melissa Hatfield

INTERLUDE & QUIET REFLECTION

"Ashokan Farewell"

from Ken Burns' "The Civil War" documentary

SCRIPTURE READING

Hannah Coe - Luke 24:1-5

REFLECTIONS

Russ Plasterer, nephew, mentee & pastor
City Fellowship, Jackson, TN

MESSAGE

Jim Hill, Pastor & Friend

SONG

"Hymn of Promise"

pre-recorded by Tamara Sager Everly, Kristen Sager & Joel Sager
Natalie Sleeth, composer

CLOSING PRAYER

Jim Hill

Obituary

Reverend Dr. Doyle Max Sager, age 69, of Jefferson City, MO, passed away peacefully Friday, January 22, 2021 at home surrounded by his loving family.



Doyle was born on December 31, 1951 in Bethany, MO, the son of Norlin Max and Barbara Ellen (Hedges) Sager. Doyle married his high school sweetheart, Janet Summa, on April 14, 1972 and they have three grown children and eight grandchildren, all of them the absolute pride and joy of his life.

Doyle grew up on a farm near Maple Grove Baptist Church, where he made his profession of faith in Christ and later received his call to vocational ministry. After graduating from high school in Albany, MO, Doyle completed his B.S. Ed. degree from the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, MO. He graduated Master of Divinity (1981) and Doctor of Ministry (1991) from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, MO.

Doyle was ordained to the Gospel ministry June 7, 1970, by the McFall Baptist Church. Doyle served the following churches: McFall Baptist Church, McFall, MO, from 1970-1972; Calhoun Baptist Church, Calhoun, MO, from 1972-1975; King Hill Baptist Church, St. Joseph, MO (Associate Pastor, 1976-1977 and Senior Pastor, 1977-85); First Baptist Church, Sedalia, MO, 1985-1997; and First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, MO, 1997-2021.

Doyle served as president of the Missouri Baptist Convention (1995-96) and president of Churchnet (Baptist General Convention of Missouri; 2011-13). He was co-founder and president of Mainstream Missouri Baptists (1999-2002), an organization committed to preserving historic Baptist principles and distinctives in the face of fundamentalism. These include those which church historian, Walter Shurden, called the "four fragile freedoms" — Bible freedom, soul freedom, church freedom, and religious freedom for all people. He also served a three-year term on the national coordinating council of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Doyle was a member of the board of trustees of William Jewell College, Liberty, MO, for 19 years. He served as adjunct faculty at Midwestern Baptist Seminary and Golden Gate Seminary. For the past several years, Doyle wrote a monthly column for both Baptist News Global and Word and Way, a Missouri Baptist journal.

Doyle's life mission statement expressed a desire to live God's grace and to build bridges of understanding and love, and his life text was Galatians 5:22-23: "By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things."

Doyle passionately advocated for social justice. His justice advocacy work included Bread for the World and Missouri Faith Voices, and addressed issues such as predatory lending, immigration, racial justice, Medicaid Expansion, city transit needs, voting rights, environmental justice, and global food security. In June, 2015, Doyle received the Lift Every Voice For Justice Award at the Juneteenth Celebration in Jefferson City, MO.

Doyle was active in Baptist World Alliance and served a five-year term on its Commission of Social and Economic Justice. In July of 2020, he was elected to serve as Vice-Chair of the BWA's Commission on Creation Care. In July of 2018, he presented a paper at the Baptist World Alliance in Zurich, Switzerland, on biblical perspectives of justice for children.

Because so many pastors helped Doyle when he accepted God's call to vocational ministry at the age of 15, he counted it a privilege to pour his life into others through mentoring and discipling. For many years, he served as a peer group leader for doctoral seminarians and he personally mentored countless ministers and lay leaders.

For relaxation, Doyle followed Major League Baseball, collected old books, watched movies (especially old black and whites), and read poetry and presidential biographies. Doyle enjoyed nothing more than spending time with his wife, loving on his grandchildren, or voraciously reading books.

Doyle is survived by: his wife of 48 years, Janet Sager; his three children, Tamara Everly (Tim), Kristen Sager (Zach McCall), and Joel Sager (Zoe Hawk); eight grandchildren, Campbell, Maryn, Quintin, Oliver, Finneas, Sebastian, Ellen, and Cecilia; one brother, Rod Sager; one sister, Leslie Kerns (Ken); and many loved extended family members.

The Sager family has requested that, in lieu of flowers or other gifts, a donation be made to the Doyle Sager Memorial Fund at First Baptist Church, Jefferson City, MO, to help fund First Baptist's investment in future Christian leaders. Donations may be given online at fbcj.org/give (select "Doyle Sager Memorial Fund" from the menu) or by check, payable to First Baptist Church, 301. E. Capitol Avenue, Jefferson City, MO, 65101. Please write "Doyle Sager Memorial Fund" in the memo field.



Reflections

from
Tamara, Kristen & Joel

DOYLE MAX SAGER, our father, was a lover of words, of hanging them together to inspire, to make meaning, to honor mystery, to articulate the indescribable. We – his children – find ourselves inclined to attempt the same today, as we reflect on the beauty of who Dad was to us.



One of our father's most defining characteristics was his love for reading, which he pursued both to expand his knowledge about the world and to satiate his endless curiosity about the human condition. Our father loved the eloquence, efficiency, and depth of a well-written poem or story. He collected and consumed books like treasured pieces of art, diving into topics that ranged from presidential history, to baseball, to organizational leadership, to theology, to political commentary, to humorous essays. Dad could always – and we mean ALWAYS – be seen toting a book around the house. He deftly maximized the pauses in each day, relishing quiet corners to duck into his latest book of interest, then popping out again to join the conversation. He toggled so easily between his inner and outer worlds.

Our father's curiosity also informed his approach to other people. Dad treated his fellow humans like the miraculous, interesting, and valuable beings they are. Imagine your last conversation with Dad, and it is likely you walked away feeling truly seen and ultimately cared for. You mattered to Dad. When in his presence, you never doubted that you were loved.

What a privilege it was to experience this unconditional interest and love as his children. Dad would be the first to tell you he was not a perfect father (we think he was pretty darn close), but he was a very

present one. It has been said the purest form of love is attention. Dad paid attention to the details of his children's lives with meticulous care and obvious forethought, regularly pursuing conversations that centered on our unique personal or professional paths and the overlapping interests he had with each of us. He and Tamara could talk for hours about church ministry, Missouri Baptist politics, and her work as an educator. Dad and Kristen frequently exchanged ideas on social justice issues, psychological topics, and poetry. Joel and Dad waxed long about politics, art history, and leadership. His most enduring legacy for his children is how he loved us in this very attentive, intentional, "what and who you are matter to me" sort of way.

While Dad's intellectual and emotional rivers ran deep, he was also our family clown. His witty comebacks and keen ability to laugh at himself kept us in stitches. He had impeccable comedic timing, and could masterfully deliver a punch line, or a corny dad-joke, with a childlike ornery-ness and a twinkle in his eye. One of his silly classics, when we told him he looked sharp, was to strike a pose and flick his non-existent hair out of his eyes.

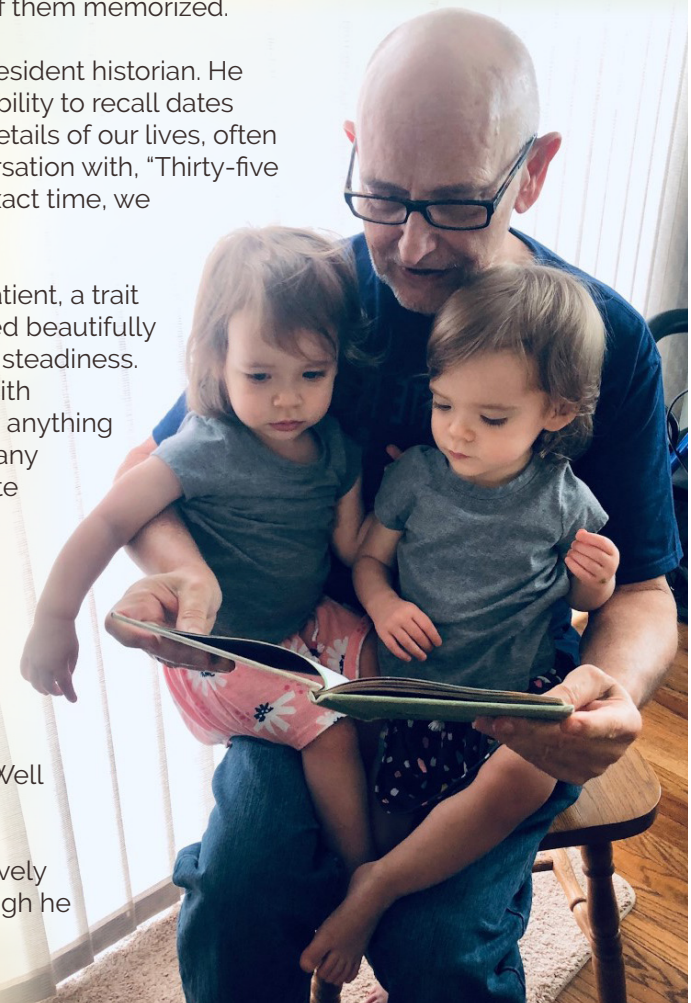
Many of you know of our father's ministry and his public service. Here are a few lesser known - but equally treasured - details about the man we called Dad, Daddy, and Papa:



- He hated spicy food and had strong opinions about dishes with excessive garlic. He always described himself as a "meat and potatoes" kind of guy.
- Until August 2020 when the cancer and his treatment altered his taste buds, Dad was almost evangelistic about a strong cup of black coffee. Drinking coffee with our father in the morning was a treasured ritual for all of us.
- Dad wrote poetry, including several beautiful pieces about his children, life transitions, and his love for Mom.
- Our father had chronic insomnia and rarely got long, restful nights of sleep.

However, he always seemed to be awake - and the most chipper person in the room - by 5:00 a.m.

- Dad was shameless about his allegiance to the Kansas City Royals and he provoked Cardinals fans any chance he got. The roots of his fandom reached back to his childhood following the Kansas City A's and collecting baseball cards. Some of our sweetest childhood memories include Royals games with Dad when he would - almost giddy in his excitement - cling to his printed scorecard, recite the statistics for each batter on the mound, and work his way through his favorite concession stand snacks with each passing inning.
- Our father most likely had a photographic memory. In his 50 years of ministry, he delivered well over 5,000 sermons, each timed precisely to 20 minutes, all of them memorized.
- Dad was also our resident historian. He had a frightening ability to recall dates and very specific details of our lives, often beginning a conversation with, "Thirty-five years ago at this exact time, we were..."
- Dad could be impatient, a trait that mom countered beautifully with her grace and steadiness. We saw this a lot with technology, or with anything requiring a tool...of any kind. Many-a remote control received a strangling by Dad in our house, and we had a running joke that every technological venture ended with Dad's desperate cry of, "Well Janet!"
- Our father had a lovely singing voice. Though he



could rarely be heard soloing, he traveled to State Competition as a high school baritone with a men's quartet. He nurtured a life-long appreciation for music and his car radio was always tuned to NPR's classical station. Our father would pore over the concert notes of our many choir performances. Each Christmas morning of our childhood, he woke everyone by blasting at ridiculous decibels the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah.

- Dad had extremely ticklish feet. During his hospice care, when he was no longer responsive, he would still flinch when anyone touched his toes.
- Our father was passionately committed to social justice and issues of equality. Some of his favorite moments of activism included protesting at the Missouri Capitol for Medicaid reform and traveling to Washington D.C. to speak with members of Congress about world hunger.



- Our father had very distinctive but nearly illegible handwriting. We loved his cursive script, and will miss seeing his almost daily post-it notes for Mom on the kitchen counter.

- Dad was quick to correct our grammar. (We proofread this document twenty-five times.)

- Dad's morning ritual – for as long as we can remember – included coffee, prayer, Bible reading, and journaling. He had several tattered copies of The Book of Common Prayer affectionately patched together with duct tape.

- Our father made it a point to be equitable and never show favorites among his children. (Although Joel still thinks he's his favorite...let's not tell him the truth.)

- Dad loved watching The Twilight Zone, Frasier, The Golden Girls, and British mysteries. In his final months he watched a lot of Jeopardy.
- Our father enjoyed drinking wine with his children, a bonding ritual we established with him later in life. He also loved desserts, especially Raisin Cream pie.

- Dad's favorite color was butter yellow. And he loved seeing Mom wear anything in baby blue.

Dad's final months and days were heartbreaking. We say that not because his cancer or his death were exceptional, but to share part of our pain with you. Dad and Mom had dreams of retiring soon, with hopes of spending their remaining years together loving on their grandchildren, traveling, and soaking up a slower pace of life. So, Dad's cancer diagnosis - quite literally - took our breath away.

Dad grieved deeply to not have professional closure at First Baptist Church Jefferson City after 23 years there, and 50+ years in ministry. His heart ached as he wished to affirm, hug, and say a proper goodbye to the congregation, friends, and people he loved...LOVED dearly. He felt deep sadness to miss the retirement years he and Mom had so excitedly anticipated. These are the types of heartaches Dad so often validated and soothed for others through prayer, ministry, and his presence. While all of these losses felt heavy, we also know how the thousands of cards, acts of care, prayers, and words of affirmation from friends, family, church members, and colleagues across the world, conjured deep feelings of



gratitude and peace in his final months and days. We also know that Dad's deep and abiding faith in God remained his ultimate sustenance.

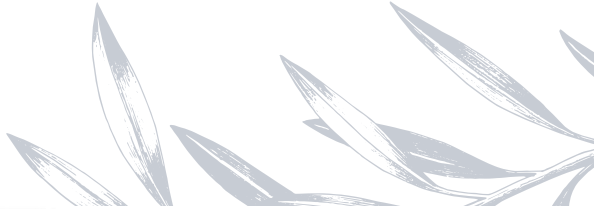
While heartbreaking, Dad's cancer deepened our compassion for disease, suffering, and the process of dying. It also opened our eyes to the tremendous physical and emotional strength our father possessed to endure his cancer and its relentless treatment. We are so very angry at cancer, while simultaneously being so grateful that it no longer controls Dad's physical being.

The world feels fundamentally different without our father in it. Our hearts are heavy and we know we will not ever be the same. We will grieve well. We will miss him so.

Dad loved the poet Mary Oliver, so we end with one of our favorites below.

Please accept our gratitude for honoring and loving our father with us today and always. -

Tamara, Kristen, and Joel



IN Blackwater Woods

BY MARY OLIVER

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars

of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,

the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders

of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is

nameless now.
Every year
everything
I have ever learned

in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side

is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.
To live in this world

you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it

against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

*"In Blackwater Woods" by Mary Oliver,
from American Primitive. © Back Bay Books, 1983.*