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Smokejumper Obituary: Phibbs, Raymond Curtis (Missoula 1944)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Phibbs, Raymond Curtis (Missoula 1944)

Ray, 59, died February 5, 1985, in Lancaster, PA, of an immune system disease. He was born March 26, 1925, in Pulaski, Virginia, into a family with five other siblings. After graduating from Pulaski H.S. in 1943, he went into the Civilian Public Service and was at two camps before joining the CPS-103 smokejumpers at Missoula for the 1944-45 seasons. Leaving the smokejumpers, he made three trips on the cattle ships taking livestock to Europe before his discharge in 1946.

Ray entered Bridgewater College, a small Brethren College, where graduated in 1950. He was editor of the yearbook and student body President while in school. He taught school for two years before taking a job as Supt. of Building and Grounds at Bridgewater College.

In 1955 he was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship to study Theology and entered Yale Divinity School where he graduated in 1959 and took a Pastoral job in Goshen, Connecticut. He pastored for nine years during which time he founded a Torrington Area Interfaith Commission on Labor-Management Relations.

From 1967-79, Ray was senior pastor for the United Church of Christ (UCC) in Hudson, Ohio, before moving to Brewer, Maine, where he served until 1982. Ray developed an immune system disease in 1982 just before returning to Lancaster UCC Seminary to work on his Doctor of Ministry Degree.

In his bio. Rays wife said of him, "Throughout his life, he dared to stand against injustice, ;poverty, bigotry and the prejudices which dehumanize people."

(end of excerpt)