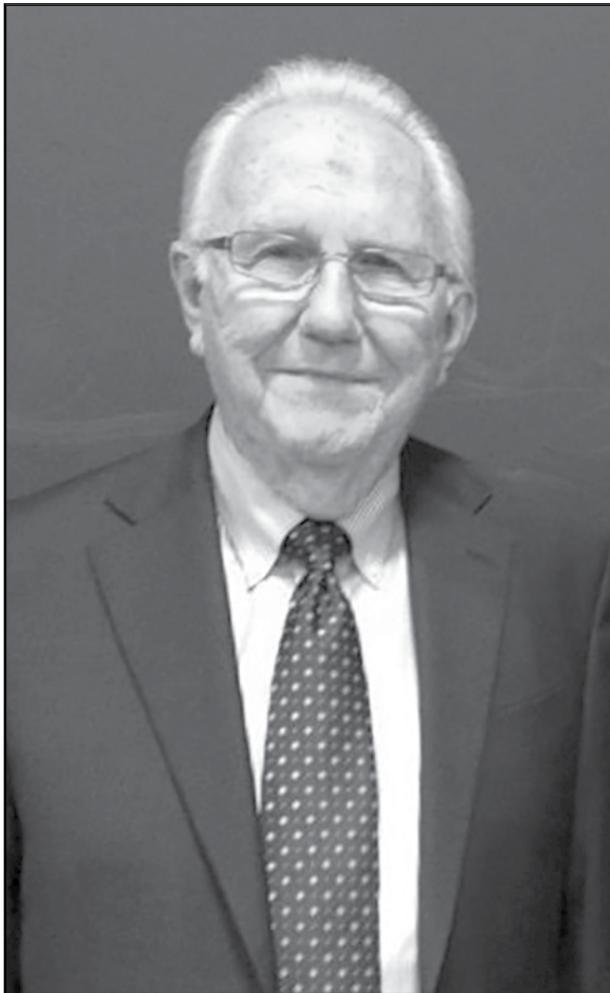


Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).



Ronny F. Wade

April 4, 1936 - January 7, 2020

FINALLY MY BRETHEN, FAREWELL

By RONNY F. WADE

When I first started traveling with Brother Homer A. Gay he preached a sermon by the above title in almost every meeting. Using Paul’s wording he emphasized the necessity of spiritual completeness, being of one mind, and living in peace. It was a very powerful reminder of the blessings we all have in Christ, and the necessity of working to maintain peace and unity. In no way do I compare myself with the great apostle or Homer Gay. But currently I am confronted with saying goodbye to a brotherhood of which I have been a part for over seventy years. When I obeyed the gospel in 1949 I had no express intent to become a preacher. Time and events changed that and I soon found myself moving about various churches carrying the gospel message. I am indebted to a host of brethren for that privilege: Homer Gay, Homer L. King, Ervin Waters, Paul Nichols, Fred Kirbo, Barney Welch, Clovis Cook and a host of others. I grew up in the old Vaughn Blvd. church in Ft. Worth. Sitting at the feet of J. B. Spradley, Mick Studer, E.O. Evitt and others whose teaching equipped me far greater than any bible college I could have attended. I am indebted to hundreds of brethren who opened their homes to me allowing me to eat at their tables, sleep in beds and grant me privileges I could never have found anywhere else. The Old Paths Advocate came to our home every month in Fort Worth when I was young. I remember looking through the paper reading about faraway places a boy of ten had never heard of. A casual happening soon became a habit and each month I couldn’t wait to read about the men and their traveling, meetings, debates etc. It was through this experience that I thought how great it would be to be a preacher. The ensuing years allowed me to travel widely and work with the finest people on this earth. I shall soon make my departure. I trust that in some way I have brightened the lives of those people with whom I had the honor of working and glorified the name of our risen Lord.



RONNY F. WADE, A LIGHT MOVED ON
By RANDY CANTRELL

Yeats wrote, “Think like a wise man but communicate in the language of the people.” Ronny F. Wade was a wise man accomplished in language of the people. He was the brightest light among the older men in my life. Safe, wise, knowledgeable, insightful, experienced. He blessed the Cause and those of us who occupied this time and space alongside him.

Working in the Kingdom was always at the forefront of Ronny’s life. He was a constant encourager, challenger and supporter. Life was always about doing what we can for the Cause for as long as we can. John Steinbeck wrote this line in *The Winter of Our Discontent*, “It’s so much darker when a light goes out than it would have been if it had never shone.” Ronny’s light didn’t go out. It moved on. Now we must continue to work to be the light...because Eternity changes everything.



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REMEMBERING RONNY WADE

By WAYNE FUSSELL

The first time I saw Ronny was at the Sulphur meeting when he and I were just boys. He gave a talk entitled, "Flee, Follow, and Fight". Ervin Waters was so impressed with him that he stood up in the assembly and said, "I want that young man to travel with me!" Ronny and I had the same ambition - to preach the word. We held one of our first meetings together in Stamford, TX. The first week of the meeting, Ronny was graduating from High School. He joined me the second week. We have many happy memories of that experience.

Ronny and I were among a large group of young preachers who started out at the same time. So, we had many interesting and enjoyable experiences together. He and I talked recently about attending one of the first Oklahoma New Year's meetings in Sentinel, OK. I was 15, he was 14. (He always liked to tell people when I would attend his meetings, "Now I want you to know that Wayne is older than me!")

In addition to his exceptional ability as a preacher, Ronny eventually became the champion debater for our brotherhood, debating some of the most powerful men who held erroneous positions. I am happy to announce that I moderated for him in his first debate. It was both an emotional and rewarding experience. The truth was ably defended by this well-

prepared young defender of the faith.

Ronny has been an important person in our brotherhood. I told him recently that he had followed in the footsteps of Homer Gay as a "balance wheel". He was always fair in his assessment of any situation and was able to settle many problems that could have seriously affected our brotherhood. He was truly a "peacemaker" who could rightfully be called a "son of God".

I shall ever be thankful that I got to talk to him just a few days before he passed away. He told me, "Wayne, I am not doing well. It could only be days or perhaps weeks." It was only days. We were able to express our love for one another. We recounted some experiences that caused us both to laugh. Ronny always had a great sense of humor.

Sadness fills my heart as I write these words. It is difficult to think that I can never see him or talk to him on time's side of eternity. But I will see him again "over there". That is my hope, thank the Lord.



This note of appreciation from Alfreda Wade

I spoke with Alfreda Wade by phone today. She expressed her profound appreciation for the many letters, cards and phone calls from all across our Brotherhood. She said she is still receiving them. She seems to be doing as well as could be expected under the trying circumstances. Her thanks to all everywhere. —DLK

RONNY FOY WADE

By DON L. KING

Words fail to adequately express my love and appreciation for Ronny Wade. We worked together in harmony for almost 44 years on the Old Paths Advocate. We spoke often by phone regarding the paper and brotherhood we both loved. We visited at meetings and in our homes. He held meetings for us here, and we all were happy and benefitted from his being with us and his great preaching. I held meetings at both congregations in Springfield as well as nearby congregations. At the Labor Day meeting in Ozark, Mo last September, he and Alfreda were with us every night. It was wonderful to be together. We always enjoyed laughing together about one thing or another. However, as his health declined we had a

bit less to laugh about, and our conversations became more serious though we still laughed. In one of our last phone visits before his passing, he spoke of his rapidly declining health. He said, "It won't be long now, Don. I'm about washed up." I said, "Ronny, people like us have a lot to look forward to." He answered, "Oh, I know, we do have a lot to look forward to." Now, he is gone and it is difficult to accept and fully realize. However, as I remember that conversation now, I think about what the apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:1-11. The Lord allowed him to see and hear some things from the other side of this life that were very exciting to him. He apparently was not allowed to specifically detail what he saw and heard but he did say, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." Paul said he asked the Lord three times "that it might depart from me." The Lord's answer was simply, "My grace is sufficient for thee." As much as we wish we could know, it will just have to wait. So, as I sit and ponder Ronny's departure, I can't help but wonder what wonderful times and reunions he may be enjoying right now? The older we become the more we seem to have calling to us from the other side. So many we have known and loved through the years are over there now. As the old song says, "Won't it be wonderful there?" Just imagine as we all gather around the throne together! My, what wonderful times those will be and it will be forever. All we can say now is, "So long, old friend and Brother, we'll be together again on the glory shore someday."

FOOTSTEPS ON THE SANDS OF TIME

By KEVIN W. PRESLEY

A dark shadow fell over our brotherhood on January 7, 2020 as Ronny F. Wade departed this world. He lived a long and fruitful life of 83 years. He died at home after a near seven-year battle with cancer. When his diagnosis was announced in 2013, it was difficult to accept that the day of death would eventually come. As that time drew closer, it still seemed as though that appointment was surely a long way off. Since he remained as active as he had always been in the preaching field, surely the prognosis could not be true. But it was true. The years we had to prepare proved not to be enough when the day finally came. As the phone rang early that morning and Alfreda told me that Ronny was gone it still came as a shock and it yet seems surreal. I suppose this is a testament to the profound place he occupied in our lives and in the history of the church. Born April 4, 1936 in Cleburne, TX and reared in a Christian home, Christ and the church were Ronny's life and his greatest delight. He obeyed the gospel in 1949 under the preaching of H.E. Robertson and one year later, delivered his first lesson at the Vaughn Blvd. church in Fort Worth. The next summer, Bro. Homer A. Gay invited this promising young man to travel with him and encouraged him to devote his life to the preaching of the gospel. This began a 68-year ministry that spanned the United States and had an enormous impact on churches across the nation and around the world.

In 1955, he married Alfreda McKeand of Huntington, WV. Together, they reared three children: Jeff, Karen, and Kathy and shared the many joys and sorrows of earthly life. Holding

a doctoral degree, he enjoyed a long and successful career in school teaching and administration. The greatest of his accomplishments, however, was in his service to Jesus Christ. He was one of the most capable and impactful preachers of the past century. With "a word fitly spoken", he always rose to the occasion and challenged our souls and touched our hearts with his preaching. He conducted nearly 800 gospel meetings, baptized hundreds and hundreds of souls into Christ, and remained fully engaged in the work of preaching until the last phases of his illness limited him at the very end. With a quick mind and a rare eloquence, he met some of the Goliaths of preaching in oral and written debate, powerfully defending the truth dozens of times. He authored numerous books and tracts and served as Assistant Publisher of this journal, *Old Path's Advocate* for decades. In 1963, he became a pioneer among our preachers, being the first to utilize the medium of television to spread the truth. His groundbreaking work with the telecast *Let the Bible Speak* was one of the most rewarding parts of his ministry. Only eternity will reveal the good the Lord accomplished through his preaching on television stations across the country. His many contributions to the cause of Christ can hardly be measured. He served well as a diplomat for the kingdom of heaven and a leader among our people.

On a personal level, Ronny's passing has been difficult to accept. He was a mentor, a wise counselor, a role model, and a close friend. Other preachers encouraged and helped me as I set out to preach nearly 30 years ago but none opened more doors of opportunity for me or taught me more about preaching than he did. I will miss his graceful and powerful preaching; his friendship; his humor; and his encouragement as long as I live. It was a snowy and bitterly cold day as hundreds of brethren, family members, and friends gathered in the funeral chapel in Springfield, MO to pay respects to this great soldier of the cross. It was this writer's privilege to conduct the funeral service for this great man along with Bro. Randy Cantrell. The singing was beautifully led by Bro. Kendall Cook and letters written by his children and grandchildren warmed our hearts with many memories as they were read at the service. The tears of a brotherhood testify to the loss we have suffered but we can rejoice in the hope he had in Christ and be grateful that he lived and brightened our lives.

In his book chronicling the history of other great men who went before us in the struggle for truth and right, he quoted Longfellow: "Lives of great men all remind us we can make our lives sublime, and, departing leave behind us FOOTPRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME." There is now another set of footprints left before us: footprints of our brother who also trod the paths of righteousness. May they ever help to lead us all one day to the throne of God.

RONNY WADE TRIBUTE

By CARL M. JOHNSON

I always felt a special affinity for Ronny Wade for several reasons. He was only 23 years old when he baptized my brother Benny and me into Christ during a gospel meeting in Ada, Oklahoma. During the same year he baptized a girl

in Healdton, Oklahoma named Phyllis Smith who would eventually become my wife. Years later in 1976, I had the honor of baptizing Ronny and Alfreda's twin daughters Kathy and Karen.

From the beginning, I had great respect for Ronny's preaching. Any time I was in Missouri or northern Arkansas I watched Let the Bible Speak, the television program he pioneered out of Springfield. I marveled at the consistent quality of excellence he maintained for many years on the program, and I also marveled at his skill in the arena of public debate. I eventually became an associate of Ronny's and worked with him for years as an editor and columnist of the Old Paths Advocate.

In addition to the OPA, Ronny and I shared a number of passions. We both enjoyed searching for good books in old bookstores across the country, and we would anxiously call each other to brag if we made a great find. We assisted each other in searching for and collecting all of the issues of The Truth, a journal published by J.D. Phillips from the 1940's until 1975. We both enjoyed college football and Ronny enjoyed nothing more than to call and needle me if my team had just suffered a big loss. A greater passion we shared, however, was the many mutual friends we enjoyed from among our brethren. Ronny had many cherished friends throughout the country. I cannot count the number of people who have told me that Ronny was their best friend.

He had a great sense of humor. Years ago, he, Johnny Elmore, and I met at a restaurant in Norman to discuss a special issue of the OPA. They began to reminisce about some of their shared experiences and we sat there and laughed until we cried for over two hours.

He was quick-witted. I always enjoyed the good-natured, verbal jousting we engaged in during our visits. I'll definitely miss the repartee.

Ronny's total personality, however, was undeniably complex. He could be joking and acting silly one moment, but within a heartbeat he could become deadly serious and discuss logically and soberly any subject. He could relate warmly and personably to anyone, but sometimes you would get the feeling his mind was elsewhere while you were talking to him-or preaching to him from the pulpit. However, he was absorbing it all. He never missed a word. He was a master of diplomacy and it was difficult for anyone who crossed swords or became disgruntled with him to remain mad at him.

It would be impossible to estimate the impact Ronny's life has had upon our brotherhood and my own life personally, but I shall ever remain grateful for it.

IN HONOR OF RONNY WADE

By BILL FERGERSON

In the May 1965 issue of Old Paths Advocate, a leader at the 11th Street Acres church in Tulsa, reported 'I baptized and 1 restored'. I found out recently that the person restored was my dad. He had been unfaithful for several years but decided

to return to the Lord. I was 5 years old. In that same report which recognized dad's restoration was also an announcement that Ronny Wade would be holding a meeting. The members had built a new church building, moved into it a year earlier, and now Ronny was going to conduct a meeting at the new location. At such a young age I hardly remember much about the meeting, or Ronny Wade. Three years later, at the age of 8, Ronny Wade returned but the occasion this time was him debating a preacher in West Tulsa by the name of Paul Knight over the number of drinking vessels used in the communion. Having never attended a debate, and not being around the church much, I was somewhat curious as to what was going on, though I really didn't understand what the discussion was truly about. Nonetheless, these two occasions, though I knew virtually nothing, marked the beginning of what would become a long, lasting, deep appreciation and love for Ronny Wade for the next fifty-two years. I cannot share all the moments during that time with Ronny, it would be impossible, but one for which I shall ever be grateful happened about a month before he passed, and days before I turned 60. One afternoon my cell phone rang, and the caller I.D. revealed it was Ronny. Unhesitatingly I answered, though I had no clue what was on his mind. He called to tell me that he wanted me to have the hardbound volumes of the Old Paths Advocate which he had in his library. I suddenly was at a loss of words, swallowed terribly hard, was overwhelmed with silent emotion, and softly said, 'Thank you brother Ronny.' I felt my words were so inadequate compared to the tremendous gift I was receiving. At the time, I had no idea what was included in his generosity until I picked them up at his house a few days later. To my surprise it consisted of all the issues between 1940 and 2010. They have been on my desk since bringing them home and I've spent countless hours reading through them. Since Ronny's passing, I've been reading things from him and about him - his articles, his field reports, his debates, and so much more. These volumes will be a constant reminder of Ronny, a gift invaluable, but they can never take the place of my sitting at his feet and listening to the scores of sermons I heard him preach. He was a master teacher while teaching the will of the Master; his love for the Lord's church was obvious because his life was about the Lord's church; his concern for the future was evident because he recognized the mistakes of the past; and his interest in others was keenly felt through his kindness and encouragement. There are people better, stronger, and wiser because of Ronny Wade. I definitely am. And it all started with a five-year-old boy who knew nothing about the Lord or eternity. Now at sixty, I know more than ever that the fragility of life and the certainty of death comes to the tallest of men who did.

"AS A FATHER..."

By CLINT DEFRANCE

In Job 31.18, the patriarch declared - as a specimen of his dedication to God -that he had been "as a father" to those who were fatherless. This passage comes to mind when I think of Ronny Wade. When I was nineteen years old, my father was diagnosed with terminal bone cancer. I had been traveling and studying with Ronny during the summers for the previous couple of years, and Ronny went to see dad in the hospital. He later told me that my father had taken his

hand and asked him: "Take care of my boy for me." He did - he took that charge seriously and filled the great void in my life in a way I could never have dreamt or asked.

In many ways, Ronny's noble adoption of me in my hour of need was a fitting snapshot of his life. He was a man of remarkable talent and intellectual ability. He was shrewd and thoughtful in money matters. He was a diplomat and an exceptional logician. Though a gentle person, never given to violence or wrathful outbursts - he had the ability to intimidate others because of the remarkable depth of wisdom and ability that obviously was lying beneath his calm exterior. Yet, he used these gifts and blessings unselfishly: first and foremost, for the glory of God; by extension for the good of his brethren and neighbors. He was looked to as a leader by individuals and congregations all throughout the United States, and even throughout the world. Whether in person or by pen, his influence carried tremendous weight. Yet he was without controversy an unassuming and humble man. He dressed in orderly but simple and dignified attire; he never volunteered his academic credentials for mere self-promotion; nor did he flaunt or abuse the many opportunities he was given to address large numbers of people whether as a speaker or host of a meeting, or as a writer within the several religious journals which published his work. He was given opportunities to compromise his convictions for personal gain, but rejected them without hesitation. He was not a perfect man, and it would not be difficult to criticize him, but I do not think anyone could question his love for the truth, the church, and the Lord of all.

Ronny's contributions to the people of God were too numerous to list in an article of this kind. He answered our challenging inquiries in the OPA, he spread the gospel to thousands on Let the Bible Speak, he defended the truth against her ablest attackers in debate, he trained young men to preach and helped them find placement in congregations to begin their service, he counseled churches, families, couples, and individuals through great and difficult crises. He was a scribe and historian who documented and interpreted our complex history and helped us understand our identity as a people. He was a truly remarkable man; a great Bible student; the prince of preachers; a leader of leaders; a counselor to counselors; and to me...he was "as a father." His passing leaves a great void in our midst. Only by the grace and power of almighty God can we know that as He raised up that young boy in Texas to be His servant so many years ago, He can raise up another generation of servants to carry on the noble tradition and all of these will be able to look to Ronny Wade as an example and hero in the faith.

DEEP CONCERN FOR ALL THE CHURCHES

BY JERRY DICKINSON

The words in the above caption are the Apostle Paul's as translated in the NKJ version. The Old King James version renders Paul's words, "The care of all the churches." (II Corinthians 11:28) Paul, after listing all he had suffered for the cause of Christ outwardly, writes about what he bore inwardly, his deep care and concern for all the churches. These noble words of the great Apostle remind me of Ronny

Wade. Ronny was, I think, unique in our brotherhood because of his unparalleled standing and influence. Brethren from "all the churches" called upon him constantly for advice and help. He had his finger on the pulse of the brotherhood. Even those who did not necessarily agree with him on certain issues respected him and listened when he spoke. It is rare to find a man to whom all sides in a dispute will listen. Several years ago I talked with Ronny about a meeting I had booked and told him that because of a serious problem in the congregation I was trying to decide whether to go or cancel my meeting. He told me he was going to be in the area the next month and he was going to meet with all concerned and try to settle the problem. I told him if he could do that I would be surprised and impressed. He met with the parties involved and the problem was resolved. I called him and told him I was indeed impressed. How did you do it I asked. He said he asked each party, "What can you do to resolve this problem?" Each time the person would start talking about what the other people needed to do and Ronny would stop them and repeat his question. "But what can you do to solve the problem?" Stunned, the person addressed would finally say what they needed to do. Amazingly, it worked and the problems were resolved. I told Ronny I did not think it could be done but he had and there is no doubt it was because of his standing with those brethren that they were willing to listen to him and do the right thing. Ronny and I held the Lebanon Meeting years ago and we were trying to get people to move up front and leave seats in the back for visitors. I got up a couple of times and exhorted people to move down to the front but very few did. Finally I got up at the beginning of one service and said, "Ronny wants everyone who can to move up toward the front." To my surprise a migration took place and a host of people moved forward. I told Ronny when I sat back down that I had learned the secret to get people to do what I wanted; just invoke his name! (lol) Ronny was a rare and unique man in our brotherhood. I pray, as I am sure he prayed, that the Lord will raise up men of his caliber and influence who have a deep concern for all the churches.

RONNY WADE

BY DON PRUITT

On January 7, 2020, another chapter of the Lord's church in our lifetime was closed. Brother Ronny Wade left this world for the next. Ronny was a unique man. He was a very talented man-student, professor, teacher, counselor, administrator, preacher all wrapped up into one. He was a professional in his work. Add to that, a disciple of Christ, husband, father, grandfather, congregational leader and you can see why he met himself every time he turned around. Yet, he was there for you when you needed him. His life is also a demonstration of the providence of God. Whenever God needs something done, He calls a man. Brother Wade answered. When the bell rang, he answered. When the enemy came, he stood on the wall. When digression came, it was his voice that was heard above the rumblings. When the brotherhood needed a "Keynote Address," he was prepared. When mass media was made available by the congregation in Lebanon, Missouri, Ronny fostered a program that has reached people in the hundreds of thousands. The program still does today.

I am not suggesting he was the only significant preacher. His generation of preachers rose to the top at one of the most significant times in our brotherhood's history. He was one of their leaders.

As is so often the case, it was his lovely wife Alfreda and their children that paid the high price of sharing him. May God bless them. May God bless the congregation where he worshipped in Springfield, Missouri. May God bless the church for whom Christ died. May we always remember Ronny Wade's voice.

RONNY WADE
By BRETT HICKEY

We mourn with the family of brother Ronny Wade in their great loss. He did so much great work for the Kingdom of God in print and pulpit.

I remember vividly while in high school at Deer Park, TX, attending a debate where Brother Wade respectfully and forcefully presented the truth before a large audience. As a young preacher, I heard him do the same at the High School auditorium in Mountain Home, AR.

I am most impacted by the decades of work Brother Wade did through the TV program, Let the Bible Speak going back to the 1960's. It would be difficult to tabulate how many people were led to the truth through his preaching and how many thousands more still have the opportunity to act on the truths he presented through God's word.

Perhaps the memory that most impresses me took place when I worked with the Brookside congregation in Nashville. During a gospel meeting, Brother Ronny and sister Alfreda spent hours one day with a troubled widow.

No matter how knowledgeable, eloquent, or doctrinally orthodox we are, we cannot claim to follow in Jesus' footsteps unless we treat the "little" people with love and respect.

May we all realize the brevity of life and prepare for our own time of departure from this world. Does anything else really matter?

RONNY WADE WAS _____.
By RICK MARTIN

Ronny was a family man. He loved his wife of almost 65 years, Alfreda very much. He would often refer to her as "mama". He loved his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild and they loved him.

Ronny was a debater. He ably defended the truth against those who practiced error and attempted to bring innovations into the Church.

Ronny was a writer and publisher. He wrote several books and numerous pamphlets and tracts which have been used

extensively in our Brotherhood. His writings have appeared in this Journal for many years. He had a monthly feature, the Querist Column, in which he answered questions submitted by readers. He also published two books.

Ronny was a great preacher. He was the original speaker on the television program, "Let the Bible Speak". Countless numbers of people were able to hear the Gospel because of his efforts. I rarely heard Ronny preach over 35-40 minutes, but his sermons were always inspiring and thought-provoking.

Ronny was a man we called on. He spent many hours on the phone and in person helping people solve problems and build themselves up spiritually. Whenever there was a problem in a congregation Ronny was called for advice and guidance. He was called on to officiate at weddings and funerals. I was privileged to assist Ronny in several funerals here in the south. Ronny assisted the late Lynwood Smith in conducting my daddy's funeral. He was on his way to Greenville, SC to hold a meeting and had planned to stop by and spend the night. My daddy passed away early that morning and when we came home Ronny had taken the time to mow my lawn before he travelled on to his meeting.

Ronny was a friend. Many people considered Ronny to be their friend. He was my friend and through the years we spent many enjoyable hours together. I will always cherish those times.

For now, we will say good-bye to this remarkable man. We look forward to a time in brighter climes where we will meet again. This life brings us many questions, but we feel confident that Ronny now has the answers.

EARLY MEMORIES OF RONNY WADE
By TED M. WARWICK

On the morning of January 7, 2020, I received word that the long, brave battle for life ended for Ronny. It has been my pleasure to know Ronny for almost seventy years and Jan (my wife) has known Ronny all of her life. Jan was eight years old and Ronny was thirteen when she heard him preach his first sermon at the Vaughn Blvd. Church of Christ in Ft. Worth, Texas. Jan contracted bulbospinal polio the previous year and was admitted to the City-County Hospital Ward in the isolation unit where she was placed in an iron lung. Just when the shadows were deepest Jan recalls Ronny peeking in her window each day as he stopped by on his paper route.

In July of 1953, Ronny and I conducted a memorable gospel meeting in a small, hot, dry, windy west Texas town. Our "home" during the meeting was a small one-room house that provided no cooling. Each night after checking our beds we attempted to count the scorpions that ran across the floor and up the walls. Early in the meeting we started visiting the Ford dealership and soon after discovering our situation the owner invited us to spend our remaining days in his showroom. Ronny was dating Alfreda at that time and I was aware that his mind was in West Virginia. After a few days Ronny left for West Virginia leaving me to finish the meeting. The brethren asked us to return the following year and instead of accepting their invitation we strongly recommended

Lynwood. Lynwood made sure that we never forgot what we did to him. For years on each of our birthdays Ronny and I reminded each other of the meeting in the little west Texas town where the heat was unbearable and the scorpions were abundant.

Ronny and I had a unique way of greeting each other that we began when we were young preachers and remained with us all of our lives. We never actually shook hands when greeting each other - we simply reached out with our hands and before touching we quickly pulled back and burst into laughter. What this meant to us, we never told. We didn't realize we were making crazy memories, we just knew we were having fun.

I cherish the note Ronny sent me a few years ago, "Ted, thanks for all the happy memories and good times." Ronny's life was a blessing, his memory a treasure. The sun has set on an amazing life.

Ronny will be missed but his influence lives on to bless and encourage future generations. In this connection I think of the familiar and beautiful words in the last book of the New Testament. "Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on! "Yes," says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." May God bless his memory and may God bless Alfreda and family. "The Sun Will Shine Again, Someday."



REMEMBERING RONNY WADE

By PAUL O. NICHOLS

The name Wade has been a part of the history of the faithful brotherhood of the Church of Christ for as long as some of us can remember. Ronny's mother and father were members of the church in Fort Worth, Texas, where Ronny spent his formative years and where he attended the services of the church with his parents and one sister. Later Ronny married Alfreda Mckeand, and became my brother in law. They had three children; twin daughters and a son. I was married to Wilma, one of Alfreda's older twin sisters. While Ronny did not spend all his time preaching the Gospel, but went to higher schools of learning and made a reputation in the

field of education, first in the lower grades, teaching younger children and worked his way up to the position of Counselor, and retired as a highly respected principal of education. When he was on vacation from school, in the summertime as well as on weekends he was engaged in preaching the Gospel and filling appointments. He gained a reputation as a preacher who would contend for the faith, holding Gospel meetings, and in debate if what he believed the Bible taught was challenged. Fortunately, we have some of his written works still available. Ronny suffered from a rare blood disorder which finally claimed his life. And although he is gone from us, his influence remains. Young men are influenced to carry the banner of Christ high, and will continue to take the saving Gospel to the world. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13).

RONNY WADE, A GREAT LEADER

By ALAN BONIFAY

My remembrances of Ronny begin in my youth, when he became known to me through hearing our history recounted.

When I was traveling with Lynwood back in the '70's I learned a lot about the history of our brotherhood. I remember Lynwood talking about the crisis that occurred among us in the late 1950's: Ervin Waters, the brotherhood's champion debater, experienced personal hardship that he navigated scripturally, but which resulted in a waning influence and years of sadness among our brotherhood. Homer Gay, Ronny's mentor, died suddenly in 1958, a great loss to the brotherhood. Then Homer King was struck down in 1962 by a major stroke from which he never fully recovered--another great loss. Our brotherhood was reeling from grief, loss, and heartbreak.

But in 1965 Ronny Wade stepped up to debate Dudley Spears in the Oklahoma City church where Foy Wallace once preached. And the sun began to shine brighter in our brotherhood. We needed a great debater during this period of our history and Ronny more than filled the bill. Ronny was a gifted debater and held over 25 debates with the cups and classes brethren and one with a holiness preacher. While listening to a Wade debate recording with Bennie Cryer many years ago, he said, "It's not a matter of whether you can answer the argument like Ronny does. It's whether or not you can do it as quickly and accurately under pressure like he does." And he was right. Ronny taught us all how to answer the arguments of the cups and classes brethren.

Ronny was a skilled preacher, debater, writer, editor, scholar and mentor to many of us. I am thankful to have travelled with and studied under Ronny in the summer of 1973. He was a pioneer among us in television. Churches all over Missouri and northern Arkansas benefitted from his TV preaching. But he was also a wise man who could read the coming changes on the religious horizon. In his later years, he believed that TV evangelism had largely passed its usefulness and he was, even as his body failed, turning to new technologies to spread the gospel. Even as he was facing death he continued

to look for new, effective ways to broaden the borders of Zion. In his last days he secured the support needed to begin an evangelistic work near Springfield, and turned the project over to others to complete.

Brother Wade loved the church and the gospel. He was a great preacher and a tireless worker for the Lord. He taught us well. He will be greatly missed, and never forgotten among us. If you haven't yet read one of his books, do that, and be mindful as you read of how this godly Christian leader has touched your life (The Sun Will Shine Again Someday, 1986; Footprints On The Sands of Time, 2006; "IF You Ask Me": The Querist Column, 2013; A Glimpse of Glory: Sermons and Writings of Ronny F. Wade, 2015). Ronny long ago "set his affections on things above" (Col. 3:1) and "waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). I am confident that he has been welcomed home and is safe "in the bosom of Abraham" (Lk. 16:22). I pray that we continue his great legacy for the cause of Christ.

TRIBUTE TO RONNY

By DAVID GRIFFIN

My earliest recollections of Ronny are from about 1975. At the time, my mother and two sisters and I attended the Hayes Street congregation in Lebanon, MO. I remember Ronny coming to Lebanon to preach from time to time, and one Sunday evening after the sermon, my youngest sister went forward to be baptized. As I recall, he may have also baptized another young girl or two that night.

It would be ten more years before this stubborn young man (I myself) would be baptized (although not by Ronny). Not too long after obeying the gospel, I was striving to learn more about the Bible and got hung up in my young mind on something about 1 Peter 3:21. So I decided to ask Ronny about it. I had to work up the courage to dial the phone. I'm sure he had no recollection of me as the older brother of a girl he had baptized at Lebanon ten years before, because by then my family had been out of church for years, and when first baptized I attended Northside in Springfield-he attended Southside (as we called it back then).

When he picked up the phone, I swallowed hard, introduced myself, and attempted to articulate my Bible question. But there was no reason for me to be nervous. His manner and tone of voice put me immediately at ease. And although my question was simple, he treated it as an important one, and to this day, my understanding of that passage is partly based on the response I received in that phone call.

At that time, as a young person I could not fully appreciate his ability as a preacher. By the time I obeyed the gospel he was no longer on television. Tommy Shaw was doing the program by then. It was only as years began to pass, and I made my own attempts to preach, that I realized his keen ability as a "pulpit preacher." He held a meeting for us at Northside, then I heard him preach at the big meetings in Lebanon and Oklahoma year after year as well as various other meetings around Southwest Missouri. As a young fellow attempting to "give a few lessons," I became in awe of his ability to

treat his topic so succinctly and compellingly and hold an audience spellbound with it right up to the invitation song! He had a gift to make the profound seem simple and the simple profound! And while we have many great preachers in the brotherhood and many talented young men coming of age, Ronny Wade's absence from our midst is going to be felt for a very long time!

REMEMBERING RONNY WADE

By MELVIN BLALOCK

Like so many, I will remember Ronny Wade as a friend and mentor. I look around my study and see so many things with his name attached to it. Ronny was prolific with his writings over the years. He has left the brotherhood with a treasure of spiritual insight. His logical approach to the scriptures, in my estimation, made him a great preacher and debater. He was a friend with whom I enjoyed visiting and soaking in his knowledge and understanding. He enjoyed coming to Cleburne, Texas, the city of his birthplace. He would tell us about sitting on his mother's knee on the second pew from the front of our old building. It was likely the same pew, and no doubt the same building. He loved our old building. We had several meetings with him. It was my pleasure to drive him around and carry him into Fort Worth to a chosen destination. This afforded me opportunities to learn from one of the great men of our brotherhood. We greatly miss this wonderful gospel preacher, but we look forward to a great reunion day .

TRIBUTE TO RONNY WADE

By GREG GAY

As a young man, Ronny travelled with my grandparents, Homer and Susie Gay, on their meeting travels. Homer Gay's Field Report in the September 1951 issue of the Old Paths Advocate (OPA) includes, "We were glad to have with us our boy preacher, Ronny Wade, of Ft. Worth, Texas who preached twice during this meeting and was appreciated very much." Ronny had a lot of fun stories to tell about those days and always expressed the greatest of appreciation for those early experiences. When Homer Gay passed away, he left behind just a few pages of the beginning of his autobiography. Ronny compiled and published the book, A Good Soldier in tribute.

Ronny's first Field Report in the OPA was in October 1951. His first submission to the paper was a selected piece, The Diary of a Bible in March 1953. He submitted a short paragraph about an appeal for someone to go to Belgium in March 1958 and prior reports indicated he had volunteered for that task and was studying French in the event it worked out for him to go. His first longer article was his tribute to Homer Gay in the July 1958 issue. In the next issue he began a series of articles under the title, Think it Over, which took the place of Homer Gay's monthly Timely Topics, that had been in the paper for years.

Ronny was added as an editor to the OPA in February 1963 along with Clovis Cook and Edwin Morris. He accepted the Assistant Publisher position in May 1984. He wrote, "I firmly

and devoutly believe in the ideals and truths that have been proclaimed by this journal for the past fifty years. I want to see the paper prosper and go on blessing mankind for many years yet to come. I am keenly aware of the responsibility involved in this decision, and with that in mind I dedicate myself to the task at hand." Ronny's ever popular Querist Column began with the September 1987 issue with the question, "Who are the sons of God mentioned in Gen. 6:2?"

Ronny was masterful as the first and longest presenter on the Let the Bible Speak television program. I was honored, beginning as a sophomore in high school, to be in a quartet with my dad, Sonny Gay, Clovis and Travis Cook to record songs for the program. If he was in town, Ronny would come to the TV station when we were recording to encourage us in our task.

Ronny's care for the brotherhood, his love for the truth, and his ardent desire for faithfulness to God's Old Paths, meant that many sought his time and advice. Ronny was one of the generation of preachers who, like Paul the Apostle, felt an obligation for the "care of all the churches" Paul said, "besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?" (2 Corinthians 11:28-29). Ronny, more than most preachers among us, was quick to recognize and warn of issues to come. He never hesitated to share those concerns among those he hoped could have influence to help encourage faithfulness.

Ronny ever stands before us as an example of a life of dedication and service to God and is an inspiration to all. May his example live long in the lives of all who were privileged to know and love him, and may we share stories of him with others so they too can be encouraged by the life of this great man of God.

RONNY WADE TRIBUTE

By LARRY COMBS

My earliest meeting with Ronny Wade came sometime in the early 80's in Miami, Oklahoma, when he held a Gospel Meeting for the church that had been established there in 1981. The church had first been meeting in a hotel meeting room, then, in the home of brother Joe Morgan. Soon we began meeting in an old vacant Dry-Cleaning building in an older, run down part of town. I believe that during the beginning of the meeting, when brother Ronny got up to speak, he made the following comment. "If you have outsiders visiting, you know it is because they are seeking the truth and not because of your building."

A few years later, my family and I had moved to southeast Tennessee to work with a congregation in that part of the state. Brother Ronny was in a debate being held in Marietta, Georgia, with a Cups and Sunday School preacher. My family and I attended, and brother Ronny did an excellent job defending the truth as he was known to do. We returned home and the next day, the Lord's Day, brother Ronny and Clovis Cook attended services with us, and, what a surprise and a treat.

Later on, over the years, I have had a number of occasions to be around him and listen to him preach. However, these two occasions are special to me as there are a couple of things about them that, as I look back on them, I believe, speak to the kind of man Ronny was. The first, from the meeting in Miami, is that above all other things, we must always keep in mind that it is all about preaching the truth. Oh, it's good to have a nice building to worship in, but, standing up for and preaching the truth should always be in the forefront. The second is from the Lord's Day service in southeast Tennessee. The congregation that assembled there was a small one, just a handful of people, meeting in kind of an out of the way place, kind of isolated. Ronny and Clovis, could have chosen somewhere else to worship as I am sure they were making their way back home. But they chose the place where we were meeting and in doing so, it was an encouragement to everyone there to have two such well-respected preachers in our brotherhood to assemble with us.

REMEMBERING RONNY WADE

By GEORGE BATTEY

In December of last year I attended the funeral service for Brother Johnny Elmore. It was told that sometime-back Brother Johnny and Brother Ronny Wade had made an agreement that the first one to die would have his funeral preached by the one who was still alive. As fate would have it, Brother Ronny was unable to fulfill that pact because he was himself on death's doorstep. Thirty-eight days after the passing of Brother Johnny, Brother Ronny would likewise take his flight from this world to the next. All who knew these two men are confident they are together again, in the presence of the Lord, awaiting the resurrection of their bodies on the "last day" (John 11:24).

My first memory of Brother Ronny was in July, 1977. Brother Bob Loudermilk had taken several young men to attend a debate Ronny was having in McAlester, Oklahoma with Jesse Jenkins concerning the use of individual communion cups and Bible classes. I did not know Brother Ronny before this, but this introduction would forever leave an indelible imprint on my memory. This was my first debate to ever witness and I learned beyond doubt, the position we practiced relative to both issues was unquestionably right. My faith was strengthened.

Brother Ronny was, in my opinion, the best debater I have ever witnessed. He was a quick thinker and was able not only to answer the arguments presented in debate, but was also able to deliver friendly, humorous, and barbed observations regarding the arguments being addressed. Every opponent who ever faced Ronny in debate had his hands full and knew it. Others in those days were having debates and each upheld the truth, but none were so convincing as Ronny.

Debates are a thing of the past now. They are acceptable for politicians running for office, but are considered unkind and hateful wrangling when preachers debate scriptures - and in some cases that description would not be too far-fetched. Brother Ronny was a true gentleman in debate. On one occasion Ronny's opponent made a seemingly outrageous statement. When Ronny got up to reply to the speech, he

brought up the statement and asked, "Did you mean to say this or was it just a slip of the tongue? If it was a slip that you made in the heat-of-the-moment, just say so right now and I'll leave it alone and go on to something else." I was impressed with Ronny's generosity in this instance - and it was a generosity that permeated his entire approach to religious debate.

Brother Ronny was an excellent preacher from the pulpit. The subjects he chose to preach about were always interesting and timely. His delivery was interesting and compelling. His sermons were scripture-centered and scripture-saturated. I "stole" one of his sermons because I was so impressed with it: "If Dead Men Could Speak, What Would They Say?" Inwardly I hoped the audiences I preached to had never heard Ronny give this lesson and then accuse me of being a "thief."

My memories of Brother Ronny will be kept alive by the books he left behind: *The Sun Will Shine Again One Day*, *Footprints On The Sands Of Time*, *Pulpit Treasures*, *If You Ask Me-The Querist Column*, and *Glimpse of Glory*. Perhaps there are others - these are the ones I have and remember. Ronny authored several tracts. In 1977, every household in Wichita, Kansas had a copy of his, "Does It Make Any Difference?" because several of us younger men were passing them out by the thousands. By the way, the answer to that question is: "Yes...it makes a difference" - and that's a good description of what Brother Ronny did for our brotherhood and for me personally - he made a difference...in a very good way. I will miss him.

BROTHER RONNY WADE - MY TRIBUTE

By DON McCORD

As I shall always remember him:

- Next to the last sermon I heard him preach -- I was in transit from one meeting to another, passing through northern Arkansas. I knew he was preaching at Hartwell, so I stopped by to worship that Lord's Day, and hear him. The most appropriate sermon was a masterpiece; his message was, "How to Treat Your Brother" - unforgettable. I needed it, and still stand in gratitude.
- After perusing "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" A commentary, Ronny sent an email which reads, "Don, your book is excellent in every way. Beautiful job by the printer and your comments are right on target". I could not thank him enough for this assessment. Thanks again, my Brother.
- Our mutual confession of faults - not too long ago he knew I had been hurt by some, unscripturally, unreasonably. In essence He said to me, "Wherein I have hurt you, as for me, I am sorry; please forgive me." My reply in essence was and still is, "Dear Brother, I forgive before I am asked. I need forgiveness too."
- His lone, and most respectful tribute to Brother Ervin Waters in this Journal, yes, his lone respectful tribute, and most impressive -- I take the liberty to quote some of it here, in honor to them both, published in the June 2019 issue:

Ervin was involved in mission work in both California and Missouri during the 1940's and 50's. A number of churches were established in both states as a result of these efforts. -- As the years passed various personal situations had an impact on Ervin -- Both time and events change people, and there is no doubt that Ervin changed in a number of ways. He was no longer the old war-horse of previous years. Unfortunately there were some who took pleasure in his decline. With all the dignity of which he was characterized he pushed ahead regardless of what others were saying. -- He enjoyed the benefit of a loving family who supported and cared for him during his physical decline. -- I always tried to call him on his birthday -- he made it to one hundred one -- (Ervin's funeral was April 6, 2019 at Temple, TX; from a meeting in Florida, I was called to officiate, my honor)

- Our last meeting -- this was special. At his request, we met privately, one on one, he and I alone. We prayed, we talked, we reminisced. I heard wonderful words I had not heard before; in sanctity and secrecy now they rest in my heart. We will meet again some fair day, my brother, and I will be blessed. I still cry.

Farewell, dear man, 'til the eternal morning breaks and the shadows flee away. "Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for awhile and leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never ever the same" -Flavia

RONNY WADE: PRINCE OF PREACHERS

By BILLY D. DICKINSON

N.B. Hardeman, a preacher of years gone by in the churches of Christ, was known among his brethren as the "Prince Of Preachers." As I think of our beloved brother, Ronny Wade, I believe he is certainly worthy of that same description. It is only my opinion, but I have long considered him to be the best all-around preacher in the brotherhood. I say that because of his many accomplishments, how he was able to do such a wide range of things and he seemed to do them with ease. When he stood in the pulpit, for example, he packed more Biblical information into a 30 minute sermon than most preachers can do in an hour. More importantly, his sermons effectively touched the hearts of his hearers, leading many through the years to obey the gospel, be restored to the faith or take a stand for scriptural worship. No wonder he was in great demand for gospel meetings right up to the end of his life!

However, it was his expertise as a debater that I was especially impressed with. When he mounted the polemic platform in order to refute religious error, that is when his scholarship and analytical skills became apparent to all, including both his opponent and the audience. Pat Donahue, a preacher among the conservative element (as we say) of those who use cups and classes, once told me that Ronny Wade was the best debater he ever heard. What a compliment from someone who has also engaged in numerous debates on a variety of issues! Ronny participated in at least 31 debates [See "Thrasher's Encyclopedia Of Religious Debates" on the Internet for a full listing] and he always conducted himself as a gentleman. Yes, he knew how to drive his point home, often backing the other disputants into a corner and knowing

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how to keep them there, but he also had a winsome personality and used his sense of humor to defuse hard feelings. Indeed, the truth never suffered defeat in his hands!

To say that I will miss Ronny is a great understatement. I will miss his friendship, encouragement, wisdom, wealth of knowledge and presence at the upcoming 4th of July Meeting here in Missouri. One by one that generation is passing away, but “their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13). Our brother leaves behind a great legacy that will not be soon forgotten.

RONNY WADE
By DON BEE

The passing of our brother Ronny Wade has left us here in PA with a deep personal void. Ronny has been coming to our congregation in Greenville for over forty years. During those years we enjoyed great gospel meetings, dinners, times visiting and studying together, some good laughs, and some fun day trips. He once told us that we were all dear to his heart, and the feeling was certainly mutual. We all developed a real bond of love and respect for he and Alfreda.

He was a source of comfort to my wife and I during a deep personal loss a few years ago. We will never forget the Biblical wisdom he used to guide us during an immensely difficult time. He told us that our loved one had passed from death to life, and now what a comfort to know that our brother Ronny has passed from death to life. And what a legacy he has left us! It is one of love and devotion to our great God and His Word, one of love for family, the brotherhood, and all mankind. Though he will be greatly missed, how thankful we can be for all we have learned from him.

RONNY WADE
By MATT TRENT

The first time I remember hearing Ronny Wade preach was at the Planz Road congregation in Bakersfield, CA. It would have been the late 1980’s. The sermon he preached that night was based on Proverbs 23:23 where Solomon says, “Buy the truth and sell it not.” I never read this verse without remembering Ronny’s sermon. Over the years, I was privileged to hear Ronny preach fairly often. His sermons were always well organized and memorable. Of course, his writing is much the same. I grew up reading his answers to various questions in the OPA every month, learning how he reasoned through challenging and difficult questions. I also enjoyed reading his other published works, especially those on the history of the church. There is a great deal of our history I would not know if Ronny had not written it down. In the more recent past, I enjoyed being able to call and chat with Ronny about various aspects of the work I

was doing. His advice was always wise and insightful.

In these times of reflection, my mind races back to a trip I took with Bennie Cryer in August of 1998. During our trip, we passed through Springfield and spent the night with the Wades. At the time, the congregation there was having a meeting with Johnny Elmore. What a night! I was traveling with Bennie Cryer, staying at Ronny Wade’s house, and hearing Johnny Elmore preach in a meeting. I am so thankful for these men, and so many like them, who spent their lives faithfully working for the cause. May we carry on this noble work!



TRIBUTE
By CULLEN SMITH

Ronny and Johnny made an impact on everyone they were around. Great preachers and very talented scholars of the Bible, education, and music. They were full of knowledge and somehow by God’s grace did not become arrogant or puffed up always choosing to love the brotherhood and edify everyone around them. They had their finger on the pulse of the work of the Lord in our brotherhood and they were the ones who taught every preacher how to press a point without ruining a relationship unnecessarily. I doubt anyone could accurately count the number of preachers they encouraged to preach and how many more secretly wishes to have their ability, their way, or their influence. I’m convinced God made them great men for the cause of Christ despite their flaws and mistakes. I’m thankful to their families for sharing them with us so many times when they probably didn’t want to and especially to the late sister Sally Elmore and Sister Alfreda who is still with us. Both men could not be who they were without them and their devotion. It’s amazing how God can raise up men from Ringling, OK and Forth Worth Texas as well as others in that generation and put together a team of preachers who only wanted others to “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” 1 Cor 11:1.