



*A Good Word for George Morgan*

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George Morgan was on the go. Clarice says that was his middle name. If you look up “go” in the dictionary, you’ll find George’s picture. He wasn’t just ready to get on a plane, get on a train, he wasn’t just ready to go to England or Germany or China, going was not about the destinations. George Raymond Morgan was a man on the go, all the time.

It wasn’t where he was going, going was just who George was.

In his childhood home, he quickly learned to be responsible and driven. His mother was ill and his father was away in the war. By age 13 or 14 George was the primary care giver in the house. Until he died last week he never relinquished that responsibility.

In high school they called him “Fire Chief,” because he was in charge of running the fire drills. Sometimes when his buddies needed a break from class, or there was a test they weren’t quite prepared to take, mysteriously the alarm would sound. They could thank the Chief for that. These friends continued to get together, regularly, for reunions, and in recognition of his go-getter-spirit, because he was their Chief, in 2014 they named him, “permanent class president.”

After graduating from Central High in 1946 he went to Wofford, and he was just as much on the go and in charge there. He took some of his innate business skills with him, and honed them into an art while running

the school's concessions. Some of his classmates were veterans from the war, and he learned pretty quickly that he could make a little extra in the concession stand if the cokes he sold them had a little extra "pop" in them!

Because of his success in business and in life, the way he represented his Alma Mater, Wofford honored George with their Distinguished Alumni Award, and invited him to serve as President of the Wofford College National Alumni Association.

Taking what he had learned in all of that on the job training, at home, at Central High, at Wofford College, he applied his on-the-go spirit to his life as a businessman and in civic responsibility to his community. He found his niche in the printing business, and before it was over he had made Craftsman Printing the largest commercial printer in the Carolinas. George played an important role in the economic development of this Queen City he loved so much. He served as the Chair of the Economic division of the Chamber of Commerce, and because of Charlotte's rapid and successful growth, as an ambassador of that success, in the early 80s George was invited to the White House. No one had to ask him twice if he wanted to go to Washington!

He walked into the cabinet room that auspicious day and asked where President Reagan would be sitting. They pointed to the President's chair, and George walked right over and placed his materials next to it. When Caspar Weinberger came in he wanted to know whose stuff that was in his place – and he moved George one seat down!

George Morgan was a leader in this town that he so loved. Charlotte was his home – the only place he ever lived. He took an active role in numerous worthwhile causes in this community. He was President of the NC Community College Trustee Association, President of the Myers Park Civitan Club, President of the Zoological Society of Charlotte; he was on the Board of Directors at Alexander Children's Center, Children's Nature Museum of Charlotte, and Sharon Towers.

From 1980-84 George served as the Chair of the Central Piedmont Community College Board of Trustees, a board he served for 17 years. Due to his involvement in that institution the Sloan-Morgan Building at CPCC bears his name.

George Morgan was on the go. It was his middle name. He never met a plane he wouldn't fly, a train trip that didn't excite him, a cruise or a bus trip he would try, if it gave him a chance to see something new, learn something more about history and humanity. George was on the go in business. It made him more successful than most people can even dream. But in all that going, George never left home. And I don't just mean he died in the same town in which he was born.

I mean that George Morgan never left the people and the values and the institutions that really mattered in his life. He never outgrew his raising. He never left those high school buddies, most of whom had not accomplished what he accomplished. He never left those hard-earned values of work and loyalty and honesty. And he never left his family, even though he was on the go everywhere else.

The Morgan and Warren families had become friends through the printing business that the fathers shared. They spent time together, vacationed together. The kids grew up together – and after Ed Warren, Sr. died and George married Clarice a decade later, this Brady bunch of a family came together. This new family became George's family. He took in Clarice's mother as his own, bought her a house and a car. Clarice says if they had ever split up, her mother would have taken George over her any day!

I'll never forget what Ed Warren told me about his then, new step-father, George Morgan. Ed was four years old when his father died, and because Ed, Sr, and George had worked together so many years, George knew him well. When those families merged, George took the responsibility to raise Ed and Robbie, and he spent time telling Ed stories about his own father. George knew it was important for Ed to know who his dad had been.

Ed said through his youth he was all about sports, had his hand on balls of every shape and size, and he says though George was not athletic, didn't even know the rules to some of the sports he played, George was always there. George Morgan was on the go, but never too much to love his family, support his children.

Finally I will tell you this about George Morgan. The Psalmist said, "*I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord...*" (Psalm 122.1). George was always on the go, but he was never too busy to be at church. He was a charter member of Covenant Presbyterian Church, and Elder at Carmel Presbyterian, and he made a pretty good Baptist, too! Amy and I would periodically get notes from George, characteristically typed on one those little "GRM" stationery notes, words of appreciation for a sermon, a program, our leadership of his church. George was always on the go... but he was never too busy to be here, or to be appreciative..

It is the question human beings have always asked, since the dawn of time and human consciousness... What happens when we die? Where do we go? I believe this: the boundaries of life are much greater than we can know; life does not end when our breathing ceases. So, it's not "going, going, gone..." It's going, going... still going. That's what I believe about George. God put him on the move, and in memories and in the heart of God, today, tomorrow, forever, George is still going.

For George Raymond Morgan, a man on the go, Thanks be to God.