

## **In Memoriam Hans "John" Schmidli first American member of the Unification Church - November 2, 1905 -- June 30, 1990**

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On June 30 at 6:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, Mr. Hans "John" Schmidli passed into the Spiritual World. We would like to pay tribute to this first American member of the Unification Church.

Uncle John was the first American to respond to Missionary David S.C. Kim and supported his work throughout the early pioneer days. In spite of the terrible circumstances of persecution, suffering, hardship and trials, he constantly supported, spiritually and financially, the pioneer missionary David S.C. Kim, one of 4 pioneer missionaries sent by our beloved True Father to the United States of America. He also protected Missionary Kim as he was expelled from a Christian seminary and was threatened with deportation by the Immigration authorities.

At this time he mobilized a small number of early church members in both St. Helens and Portland, Oregon, thus consolidating efforts to prevent this deportation. Finally, he and the others succeeded in securing Mr. Kim's stay so he could enroll at another university and continue his pioneer missionary work.

Through the efforts of "Uncle John," Mr. Kim was able to continue his mission, especially the work in Oregon and the San Francisco Bay area, but also in Canada, several other Northwestern states and Chicago, Illinois. As a result of his efforts Mr. Kim was able to expand his work to the East coast where he eventually became President of the International One World Crusade, Inc.; President of the Unification Theological Seminary; Vice-President of the Unification Thought Institute; and pioneered many other projects that are vital to our movement today.

According to President Dr. David S.C. Kim, Hans 'John' Schmidli gained the virtues of absolute faith, great sacrificial service for the world and absolute obedience inlaying the first Cornerstone for the Unification Church work in America. On this foundation the present and the future work of our movement, centered on True Parents, marches on toward the completion of the dispensation... He is truly the Cornerstone for the will of God as the first member of the Unification Church of America."

The Seung Hwa ceremony of Hans "John" Schmidli was held on July, 1990 in Portland, Oregon. Testimonies were given by Sung Soo Kim and Matthew Morrison. David Mallock read a history of the early church sent by Dr. David S.C. Kim and State Leader Jerome Carroll gave the sermon. Reverend Jin Hee Yu, Regional Director, officiated at the ceremonies. The Won Jeon ceremony was held at the burial site of "Garden of the Good Shepherd" cemetery. Vernon Pearson, president of United Faith Inc., gave a testimony followed by a prayer vigil which was attended by friends and family from the Portland area.

In August, 1990, following the Assembly of the World's Religions in San Francisco, Dr. David S.C. Kim went to Portland and visited the Won Jeon site of "Uncle John." He also visited the Holy Ground in Hendricks Park, at the Rhododendron Garden site. This Holy Ground was the last American site to be established by Father during his 1965 tour of the world.

Reprinted, and photo, from The Cornerstone.

## **Reflections Of Uncle John**

### **Jack Ashworth**

Little did I know that the person I was about to meet would be remembered in history as the cornerstone of the Unification Church in America. That was in the spring of 1975 in Portland, where along with my spiritual father, Vernon Pearson, I first met "Uncle John" Schmidli. Uncle John, unlike the predominantly youthful membership of our church in those days, was old enough to be my grandfather as he was in his 50s when he met missionary David S.C. Kim in 1959, while serving as head usher at the "Church of Truth."

He reminded me of a heavenly Wallace Beery, a sort of tough old bird with a heart of gold. And maybe it was because of these qualities in his character that God could call him as the first person to join the Unification Church in America.

After a brief acquaintance with Missionary Kim who had come to visit John's church for several weeks, John offered him a ride home. It was on that day that John received and accepted the testimony of Missionary Kim, that he had come from Korea as a missionary for the Lord of the Second Advent. Without even seeing a Divine Principle book or any visible movement John made his decision to unite with missionary Kim and from that moment until his last day on earth John remained faithful to his pledge. Although his health prevented him from active involvement in the church in later years, Uncle John, one of the 13 American blessed couples first established, made several significant contributions to the early Unification Church.

In 1959 John established the first Unification Church located in a roadside motel, John and Missionary Kim would invite the local farm boys, loggers, fishermen and the like to attend evening lectures. Vernon Pearson, a local youth, was one of the first to join with them in late '59 and remains active in church work today.

I will always remember Uncle John for his undying faith in and love for True Parents. Jesus said, "One who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the Kingdom." Let us remember Uncle John as a victorious cornerstone of faith for the American Church.