

### **Boardman (Barney) W. Kathan, the Man in the Red Jacket**

Anyone who has attended Religious Education Association functions in the last 25 years likely knows Barney Kathan. Even if you haven't personally met him, you have seen him. He is the man in the red jacket. That jacket is more than 40 years old and he only wears it for special occasions. You can tell that REA is special to him.

Paul Vieth and Randy Miller introduced him to REA while he was a student at Yale Divinity School. He joined REA in 1956 in order to attend the convention in Chicago. He was present at the founding meeting of APRRE in 1970. He served as the General Secretary of the REA 1970-1982, its archivist since 1986, and has been part of the task force on the history of the REA since the 1970s.

Under his tenure as general secretary, following the convention held in Chicago in 1972, a biennial pattern of meetings started in Toronto in 1973 followed by the one in Philadelphia in 1975. With grants from the Stone and Dodge Foundations, the National Council on Religion and Public Education was formed in 1971. Special "bonus" issues of the journal were published for three years: "Religion and Public School Curriculum" (Richard U. Smith, editor), "Religious Education in a Pluralistic Society" (H.L. Puxley), and "Functions of Faith in Academic Life" (Myron B. Bloy). A newsletter was started in January 1971 to report on the projects, personalities and programs of the R.E.A., as well as to serve as a modest clearinghouse for other organizations.

His love of history comes naturally; one might say genetically. It is not a stretch to say that Barney Kathan is a Connecticut Yankee. His family heritage dates back to the 1600s. Other loves in his life are Joyce, his wife of 59 years, with whom Barney has three children and four grandchildren.

Kathan holds the following educational degrees:

B.A., Wesleyan University, 1951

M.Div. Yale University Divinity School, 1956

Fulbright Scholarship, University of Leiden, Netherlands, 1952-53

Graduate study at the University of Connecticut, New York University, Hartford Seminary

Also did post-doctoral training research training with notable REA members

In addition to Barney Kathan's love of history and the REA, he has loved and served the United Church of Christ as a pastor of local congregations in Illinois, Minnesota, and Connecticut. He was ordained September 16, 1956, in Downers Grove, Illinois by the Chicago Association of Congregational Christian Churches. He served on the staffs of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, Boston, 1964-70, and the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, New York City, 1982-85. In the 1967-68 academic year, he taught in the Sociology Department of Emerson College in Boston and team-taught a field-based course for Yale Divinity School from 1974 to 1976.

He has given significant volunteer service to the Boy Scouts of America, the Massachusetts Governor's Task Force on Marriage and Family, founding and serving as president of the Massachusetts Council on Family Life, as well as the National Council on Religion and Public Education, membership on the Region 16 Board of Education, Secretary for Prospect Bicentennial Commission, the board of Adult Faith Resources, and corporate board membership for the Christian Medical College and Hospital in Vellore, India. Since 1999 he has served as historian, Prospect Congregational Church and Archivist for the Religious Education Association since 1986.

His writings include three books, approximately 20 articles, 8 book reviews, newsletters, reports, unpublished papers and sermons, website contributions, family history and genealogy, and most pertinent to the REA, the archives of the REA and APRRE at Yale School of Divinity. In honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of

the REA in 2003, Barney joined others in writing a special edition of REACH that documented the organization's history in which he reflected on 70 years of the journal, 1906-1976. See bibliography.

He is most proud of his work in the formation of the National Council on Religion and Public Education from 1971-1994, the project on "Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle," special conferences on "Religion and Public Education," "Adult Religious Education," "Religion in Higher Education," and "Models of Teaching;" his publications in the REA journal, his development of "The Religious Educator" newsletter and *REACH*, which has been published since 1975.

It is with great appreciation that the Religious Education Association (REA) honors the man in the red jacket, Boardman (Barney) W. Kathan for his service to the organization and the human family.

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