



Paul Jacob Ballmer

Remembrances

Paul Ballmer, our friend and St. Chad's Treasurer, passed away on October 2, 2010. He was a dedicated, humble man who selflessly helped so many in a variety of roles in his life. At St. Chad's he participated in the choir, formerly served on the vestry, and most recently was the St. Chad's treasurer. In the Diocese, he previously worked as the Communications director, handling the Diocese website and the publication of the Diocese *Together* newsletter. In Civil Air Patrol (CAP) he was a tireless mentor to young men and women. Here are some remembrances of Paul in his various roles.

St. Chad's

Gary Swanson remembers Paul as a "talented musician," very aware of how all vocal parts of a piece fit together. He not only knew his own part, but when each section was to come in. Gary says he "will sorely miss Paul singing next to [him] in the choir."

Another choir friend, Michele Sandager, remembers Paul's solo from a particular Christmas piece. "We were working on a Spanish carol, 'Riu, Riu, Chiu,' for Christmas, and Paul was singing, solo, one of the verses which gives thanks for the Christ child. Paul had a lovely tenor voice and claimed to speak Spanish so that pronunciation of the words would not be a problem. His pronunciation of 'muchas gracias' invariably was 'mucous grassias' even after being told of the correct pronunciation. Throughout the rehearsals and through the Christmas performance of that carol, he maintained, with a straight face, his 'mucous grassias' rendition, and throughout every rehearsal and the Christmas performance, I, the alto section, and the choir director giggled our way through the carol. 'Riu, Riu, Chiu' will forever be a song of happiness for me."

Cindy Frost worked with Paul as the Assistant Treasurer at St. Chad's. She says, "We are doubly blessed by the work that Paul Ballmer did for St. Chad's — he was conscientious and hard-working. Before he died, Paul completed his work for the month of September, so it was very easy to compile the treasurer's reports for the month."

Barbara Caldwell of St. Chad's says, "The Paul I knew had a gentle spirit and was always ready to help with whatever problem I had ... be it at the Diocesan office or at St. Chad's. I loved listening to him tell stories about his camping experiences with the young men and women in the Civil Air Patrol."

Diocese

Father Ben Wright, Rector of St. James' Church in Clovis and Team Leader for the High Plains Team Ministry from September 2006 through July 2010, remembers Paul for his "compassionate responsiveness" and as "a faithful servant of the LORD." Father Ben says, "He cared about serving the needs of God's people. He always very quickly responded to either my wife Beryl's or my e-mail or telephone messages — a genuine communications officer! Paul was a team player who always reliably did whatever he committed himself to do. He always wanted to help and serve in whatever way needed. When given new information or articles, he very quickly updated the Diocesan web site and published them in the Diocesan *Together* Newsletter. Each month he very predictably and competently published the Newsletter on time and you could always read it online the day after the deadline for submissions."

Mary Jewell, Executive Assistant to the Bishop of the Diocese of the Rio Grande, worked with Paul at the Diocesan House. She remembers Paul as an Administrative Assistant on staff at the Diocesan House and in his later promotion to Communications Specialist for the Diocesan Office. “He was responsible for collecting, editing and publishing *Together*, maintaining the databases here at the office, maintaining the Diocesan Directory, and helping organize the annual Diocesan Convocation which included producing the Convocation Journal every year.

“Paul was exceptionally talented at using computers and enjoyed using various programs to figure out the most efficient way to produce and disseminate information for the Diocese. While he was here, he completely revamped our database — streamlining, updating, and making the data entry part more user-friendly. He spent countless hours painstakingly reviewing each entry to ensure accuracy not only of the Information, but of the various reports that he had created.



“Paul was also a good sport about being the lone male on staff, which meant he got to change light bulbs, kill spiders, and carry heavy boxes. As long as there was Dr. Pepper in the house, Paul was willing to do just about anything that was asked of him.”

The Reverend Timmy Case says, “I got to know Paul while I was at the Cathedral and he was at Diocesan House. I needed his help on numerous occasions for a project I was doing. He was so helpful and always went the extra mile to get the information I needed. I'm very appreciative that I was able to work with him. What an extra nice person!”

Personal

Paul's sisters, Gini Beach and Kathi O'Mary, gave us a remembrance of the early years with their brother. “As a teenager, he used to deliver the *Silver City Daily Press* on his bicycle after school. He was six feet tall and weighed about 125 pounds. All of his customers, most of which were nurturing grandmothers, felt the need to fatten him up. They gave him tamales, burritos, and cookies every evening as he delivered his route. He took and ate each one in exchange for the paper as he pedaled along his way. Our mother couldn't figure out why Paul wasn't hungry for dinner. The truth came out when he broke his leg in an accident and we delivered his route. The caring grandmothers wanted to be sure he got his tamales, burritos, and cookies so by the time the route was delivered the weight of treats easily exceeded the weight of the papers. The gig was up.

“Family was important to Paul. He was the one who visited and kept up with the cousins, aunts, uncles, great-aunts, great-uncles, and anyone who happened to have a spare bedroom along his travel route. He always left them laughing and glad for the time together they had together. Having no children of his own, he ‘adopted’ a number of young people and helped them become upstanding and successful adults. The three of us, each living a different military lifestyle, spent many years apart, both physically and emotionally. However, when push came to shove and we needed Paul, he was always there for us. He provided us with cats, photos, discarded electronic equipment, advice, and puns to last a life time. He was generous with his time and his love.”

Sara Tinkcom, the Parish Administrator at St. Chad's, enjoyed talking with Paul when he stopped into the office. Many of his stories were about CAP. However, Paul shared a couple of stories about his birth place and time in Iceland with Sara. “Paul was born in Santa Rita, NM, which no longer physically exists. The neighboring copper mine kept expanding and finally the town was vacated. Its site is now ‘space’ in the open pit copper mine. Paul said an astronaut who was born in Santa Rita started the ‘Born in Space’ club, which meets annually. Paul was a proud member of the club. Interestingly, researchers from Humboldt State University have studied the bond of community that persists among former residents of Santa Rita.”

“Paul was stationed in Iceland at one point in his career in the Air Force. There had been a long stretch of below freezing weather; then one day it warmed to 20°. In true New Mexico fashion, Paul donned his shorts for the day!”

Elizabeth and Charles Arms of St. Chad’s remember Paul as a “quiet and unassuming person who never called attention to himself.”

After Paul’s first love, CAP, Elizabeth shares that “a very close and barely second love of Paul's was cats! He could never pass by or refuse a stray cat. His collection was varied and composed of all ages of kitties from very young to older and more refined. Paul built a small screened-in porch so the cats could feel the outside joys (birds - little creatures - smells and sounds) without leaving the safety of indoor protection. There was even a cat door so they could go in and out at will. One of the concerns with Paul's death was who would take those beloved cats. Gini, Paul's sister, told us that each cat will go with a different family member — couldn't be better!”

Many friends of Paul remember his love of a good pun. Elizabeth Arms writes, “Paul's quick sense of ‘punning’ was enjoyed by all who knew him well. Choir members would groan with delight as quick as a wink some word or phrase would elicit a clever pun from Paul. In his quiet way, Paul kept things lively.” Mary Jewell also comments that “Paul could always be counted on for a quick smile and a horrible pun!! He and Charles Arms always enjoyed the clever use of language to get a ‘groan’ from the staff. Paul was cheerful and happy to participate in making us smile.”

Jim Wall of Las Cruces sent a remembrance through his nephew, Randall. Jim says, “I met Paul in the late seventies, where else but church — St. Andrews in Las Cruces. He had arrived from Alaska to attend NMSU and then serve as an officer after two years. In talking with him, I found he needed a place to live, so I invited him to stay in my extra room. During this time, I was the Junior Warden and needed to find a custodian. Paul needed a job, so I hired him. He was the best at the job and saved the church thousands of dollars: a city trash truck demolished an air condenser and the drivers were going to drive away. Paul called me with the number of the truck and I called the city. It was taken care of.”

Civil Air Patrol (CAP)

From Paul’s obituary we learn that Paul “joined the United States Air Force in 1972 and became a commissioned officer after his graduation from NMSU in 1981. He retired after 20 years of service in 1994.” He spent many years involved in Civil Air Patrol, and his CAP bio reports “he had been in CAP for many years and held staff positions in Texas, Arizona, Arkansas, California, and Alaska Wings.”

Elizabeth Arms of St. Chad’s also shared that, “first and foremost, Paul's love was CAP and all that went with it. The kids were very special to him and we often thought he felt they were ‘his brood.’ If any cadet in that organization needed help, Paul was right there to offer it. He drove them all over the western part of the U.S. to attend functions they might otherwise have missed. When a cadet from out-of-state was unable to complete some part of his/her training, Paul saw to it that the need was met. CAP in Albuquerque has lost a most valuable and generous leader.”



Colonel Richard Himmelbrook, NM Wing Commander for the Civil Air Patrol, shared the bio that will be included in the upcoming CAP Wing Conference. Paul transferred to the New Mexico Wing of CAP in 2000. In October 2000 Paul became the Eagle Cadet Squadron Commander, and the squadron received the Squadron of Merit award for 2002-2003 and 2005-2006. “In 2004 they received the Squadron of Distinction for the Southwest Region. In 2008, they were recognized for the best Aerospace program in the Southwest Region.”

“In November 2002, Lt. Col. Ballmer became the Wing Director of Cadet Programs and was the Advisor to Cadet Advisory Council. In 2008, New Mexico received the Southwest Region Award for the Outstanding Cadet Programs. In 2009, Cadet Programs received a Highly Successful Rating on the Compliance Inspection under [Paul’s] leadership.”

The CAP bio concludes that “New Mexico Wing lost a tremendous asset. [Paul] will always be remembered as an exceptionally dedicated member of Civil Air Patrol.”

Captain Anthony M. Torres, CAP Project Officer for AFJORTC Honors Camps 2009, shared a memo from November 2009 in which he requested a Certificate of Appreciation for Paul’s work in support of the AFJROTC Honors Camps in 2009. In the memo, Captain Torres writes, “Lieutenant Colonel Ballmer’s impressive willingness and support as NMWG Director of Cadet Programs provided aviation ground training pages of folding aircraft for over 50 AFJROTC Cadets to be used in accordance with the CAP NMWG/ AFJROTC established syllabus. Lieutenant Colonel Ballmer also provided assistance towards a goal to locate an eligible NMWG cadet to attend the Honors Camp and provided sound advice to the NMWG AFJROTC Project Officer to resolve complex and uncharted issues. Singularly, as a supplier of aviation training tools and advisor, and simultaneously as a cohesive member of CAP NMWG aviation ground training team during the Honors Camps, Lieutenant Colonel Ballmer directly contributed to the overall success of CAP NMWG’s aviation ground training support to the AFJROTC Honors Camps.” The certificate was requested for Paul’s “outstanding assistance to CAP” and “for his support to the AFJROTC Honors Camps in 2009.”

Paul will be sorely missed for his gentle ways and the tireless help he gave to others.

