

## *Leonard Mason Alley*

We are gathered this afternoon to bear witness to our faith in the resurrection, the resurrection of all who are buried in Jesus Christ the Lord and the resurrection of Leonard Mason Alley. Leonard died on Sunday evening of an acute illness related to medical condition that developed three years ago. He was 60.

Leonard Mason Alley was born February 15, 1950, the eldest of the three children of Elizabeth and Milton Mason Alley. He was a lifelong resident of Richmond. After graduating from Huguenot High school in 1968, he attended the University of Richmond, taking his bachelor's degree in 1972, and a master's degree in 1974.

Although not as athletic as most boys, from an early age Leonard was obsessed with sports, and especially the statistics that both record the events of games played and create the historical backdrop against which sports legends are portrayed and compared through the ages. Some people say, "That person can't see the forest for the trees." Leonard would have replied the trees, the individual and unique trees, the number of trees and the configuration of the trees – THAT is what a forest is."

So, as a boy, when Leonard would go to local minor baseball games with his dad, his scoring book in his lap, he would record every pitch, hit and error of the game. Then he would read the next morning newspaper account of the game, and if the sportswriter's account didn't agree with his, he would call the paper and ask for a correction to the story.

While attending the University of Richmond, Leonard's childhood pastime went to higher levels, as he worked for the sports information department and began compiling official statistics. Thus began a long relationship with U of R and also VCU, with whom Leonard kept statistics for football and basketball games.

Leonard was perhaps known as the statistician and official scorer for the Richmond Braves, a position he held for 30 years. During that span he had a stretch of 750 *consecutive* games at the scorer's table. Leonard would have modestly noted that was 1882 short of Hall of Famer Cal Ripken's 2632 consecutive games, but then Cal only had to *play* the game, not record every pitch, ball and strike, hit, out, error, and player substitution. Leonard was excited to be in the lineup to return to the scorer's table this season for the new Richmond Flying Squirrels.

In addition to being the official scorer for the Richmond Braves, Leonard served as the official scorer for the entire International League. He covered high school contests as well, sometimes doing a couple of games in the same day.

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Leonard's love of statistics cannot be separated from his natural and God's given gift for numbers and his amazing, even photographic like memory. Leonard could read a training manual and essentially memorize it with total recall. Before technology made historical stats available in real time with a couple of key strokes, Leonard kept stats with a calculator, storing them in his head. Remember the Rubik cube puzzle? Leonard mastered that right off the bat.

While covering sports was his passionate vocation, Leonard did have a day job as well. He worked in the back office operations departments of local financial institutions, most recently for Capital One.

As is often the case with the mathematically gifted, Leonard was also musically talented. He enjoyed playing the piano and formerly sang tenor in the church choir.

Growing up in Richmond and being engaged in the sports activities that help build a city into a community, Leonard knew lots of people. He was a former Jaycee. He served a term as President of the St Patrick's Day Association.

Leonard Alley was a modest, quiet, good-natured man. Statistics are boring to some. To the professional ball player, whether an at bat is scored a hit or an error can mean the difference between a contract and being released. Which means Leonard frequently had to deal with professionals who challenged his rulings. He typically would receive such appeals, even heated ones, with cool and open consideration. And if he decided the appeal was in order, was not afraid to change his mind.

Above all, Leonard faced life the same in its adversities and its conveniences with the same optimistic, self-effacing manner. The day of his last illness was spent in the ICU of the hospital. Leonard was quite uncomfortable, but offered did all he could to assist those caring for him. His last words were in response to a question about how he was doing: "I can't complain."

Leonard Alley was baptized and confirmed here in the Bon Air Presbyterian Church, where he was a life-time member.

Leonard was preceded in death by his father, Milton M. Alley. He is survived by his mother, Elizabeth S. Alley; his sister, Dr. Marilyn A. Gowen and her husband, Dr. C.W. Gowen; his brother, Dr. Daniel M. Alley and his wife, Beth Alley; four nieces, Catherine and Martha Alley and Sarah and Rebecca Gowen; and by an extended family and countless friends. Having gathered for our mutual support and to hear the comfort of the scriptures, let us worship God:

R. Charles Grant  
Bon Air Presbyterian Church  
April 16, 2010.