



~Alan D. Whanger~

July 17, 1930 to October 21, 2017

Scholar * Friend * Teacher

It is with great sadness that I recently learned about the unexpected passing of Dr. Alan Whanger. He died on October 21, 2017. He had sustained a fall a couple of weeks earlier and was admitted to Duke Hospital for tests. He later peacefully passed away while there. According to Mary, he was gracefully spared long suffering.

Alan was a very humble, loving, generous, kind and gentle soul to EVERYONE he met. He was a loyal and faithful Christian, first and foremost, and always ready to share the Gospel, as remarkably depicted on the Shroud. He was just as comfortable speaking before an in-home group, an international conference, or speaking to total strangers in the mall or a “captive audience” on an airplane. His collegial and outgoing personality made him most welcomed in any and every setting. He was ever-ready to pull out his Zip-Lock baggie to open and share with anyone his numerous photos of the Shroud and his and Mary’s research. (I often kidded with him that he must have owned some Zip-Lock stock and in the maker of “manila folders”, which he used *extensively*.) I have seen him many times witness to people just standing in line, cab drivers and passengers on a plane. If one were fortunate enough to be seated next to Alan on a flight, he or she would learn about the Shroud, whether they wanted to or not. Most oftentimes, they did!

It was a distinct honor and privilege to have known him personally as my mentor, colleague, coworker, and friend. We worked together from September 1993 to May 2003. After I left my role as Executive Director of CSST, Council for Study of the Shroud of Turin, in May 2003, I continued to serve as the Vice-Chairman of the CSST Board of Directors; and thus, we saw or talked with each other on numerous occasions. I last spoke and communicated with him this past summer. Unfortunately, distance and other circumstances prevented our seeing each other more often.

In 1985, while visiting my former wife’s family in Durham, NC, I first heard of Alan Whanger from my late father-in-law who attended the same Sunday school class at Duke Memorial UMC. He mentioned that a Duke professor had evidence which supported the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin. I thought to myself, “Yeah, right... some local professor here in Durham has done something which the 1978 STURP (Shroud of Turin Research Project) team was not able to do.” That was the first mention of Alan’s name to me. Several years later, after receiving Jesus Christ as my Lord and

Savior, and while attending a men's retreat from my church, I noticed a flyer on the wall describing an upcoming day-long seminar on the Shroud, being delivered by Alan and Mary Whanger. I immediately signed up for the event, still four months away. Having previously worked for the FBI for almost eight years, I know what constitutes good evidence. Finally, I attended the comprehensive seminar and was overwhelmed. The Whangers indeed presented an abundance of compelling evidence, which demanded more attention.

That was in April 1993. Fate would have it that later that same day, I once again ran into him at the grocery store and we struck up a cordial conversation. We met or spoke several times and in September 1993, he called and invited to me to attend a gathering of several people in his "infamous basement" to watch a Shroud presentation. I recall Dr. Tom Langford, Duke University Provost, and Dr. Giles Carter, Shroud scholar, and several others, attending that night. I was ecstatic to hear and see first-hand more of his in-depth knowledge and evidence supporting the authenticity of the Shroud. (To those of us who were fortunate to have seen an "in-house presentation", it was truly something that will never be forgotten.) Hand-turning the polarizing filters to see the diffusion of two projected and overlaid images was remarkable and convincing. And, perusing through his "museum" of various artifacts, photographs, posters, etc. was incredible indeed. Several months down the road and this basement became my "office." What a great place to work for years!

In 1994, Alan, Mary and I, and several others, formed a 501(C)3 nonprofit research and educational organization to continue and advance the research already conducted by the Whangers. It was known as the Council for Study of the Shroud of Turin, CSST. Alan served as the Chairman, Mary served as the Secretary and I served as Vice Chairman and Executive Director, serving at the "pleasure of the Board of Directors." Once established with a Charter and esteemed Board members, including CPA's, a lawyer, a business executive, university provost, we proceeded with the mission of continued Shroud research and dissemination of the findings to the public. Many presentations were conducted over the following years, as well as a monthly newsletter mailed to patrons and supporters worldwide. Funding was sought on a continual basis. CSST was fortunate to have acquired a state-of-the-art Olympus AX-70 microscope in order to conduct additional tests and examinations on the Frei Collection which the Whangers already had in the possession. The Frei Collection is the largest repository of materials taken directly from the Shroud located anywhere outside of Turin, Italy. Considering the limitations which we confronted, tremendous progress was still made. CSST is still recognized and respected worldwide.

Alan, and his wife and co-researcher, Mary, were pioneers in Shroud studies with their numerous discoveries and areas of research, including the Max Frei pollen grain study and identifications-(albeit some are still in dispute), botanical studies, image analysis

and the Continuous Directional Derivative, CDD, the possible coins over the eyes of the Shroud Face, Byzantine coin iconography, radiological and 3-D work, etc. Not only was Alan “fun” and exciting to work with, he was literally a “walking encyclopedia” about the Shroud and could answer any question posed. His extensive library was well used by him, Mary and myself. My foundational knowledge about the Shroud and its history came from Alan’s numerous presentations. Working directly with him was like taking an advanced study course in Sindonology, or the study of the Shroud.

Fortunately, I was able to make numerous overseas Shroud-related research trips with Alan and Mary. Traveling with Alan was an adventure in and of itself. He did not know how to “pack lightly”, so he always carried more than he needed or used. Luckily we traveled when one could check extra bags with no fee...nowadays, it certainly would have been cost prohibitive. Those of us who knew him can recall seeing numerous cameras strapped around his neck, coupled with a large camera tote bag. I have literally seen him turn blue from the constriction of the straps around his neck and have on several occasions had to assist him with untangling the straps. While his presence was known by his cheerful and friendly attitude, people could also hear the clanking of the cameras upon his jovial arrival. While it did appear somewhat comical, it was Alan who always captured the desired shot! Further, as most recall, he always carried his plastic shirt pocket “sleeve” which was filled to capacity with his necessary accoutrements, such as numerous pens, markers, highlighter, laser pointer, tongue depressor, flashlight and even a credit-card sized magnifier. He was always ever-ready for any contingency and was quick to respond when needed. Our late friend and colleague, Al Adler, used to joke with him about the items, but we all recounted our Boy Scout days and knew Alan was always “prepared” for anything. Always!

We were blessed to have seen the Shroud during two Exhibitions and also the Crown of Thorns in Notre Dame, Paris, the Sudarium of Oviedo in Oviedo, Spain and the Tunic of Argenteuil, outside of Paris, France on several occasions. We visited the Holy Land in 1995. We journeyed on a tour trip throughout Europe in 2000 visiting Shroud-related sites. Alan, Mary and I also attended several international conferences together. Many great memories abound from our numerous adventures! They were all true blessings!

Alan’s priorities in life were first to the Lord Jesus Christ, then to his wife, Mary, his family, his church, numerous friends and colleagues and the Shroud. He was passionate for the privilege of studying the Shroud. That dedicated passion was, in part, what motivated me to devote my life to conducting independent studies of the Shroud, Related Relics and Sacred Art. I am deeply honored and forever grateful to have known and befriended Alan Whanger, a pioneer and gentle GIANT in Sindonology, who so graciously permitted me “to climb upon his shoulders to see a little further down the road” of Shroud studies. He truly enriched the lives of those around him. He will be sorely missed and never replaced. His tenacious work will be long remembered, tested

and perhaps even challenged...but, in the end, people will see that, for the most part, he and Mary were absolutely correct in many of their conclusions. The Truth shall ultimately prevail, even in the midst of minor derision or misunderstanding.

May the Creator Lord of the Shroud grant him everlasting peace, and fully answer all of his remaining questions about the Shroud and life. After all, that is, or should be, the hope of every Shroud researcher. I think with Alan, there will be much affirmation of his work and that he has most assuredly already heard the blessed statement, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

Note to Mary: Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during this most difficult period of grief; while at the same time, rejoicing for Alan's Homecoming. As you know, the Good Lord is in charge and everything is going to be alright. Alan was blessed to have had you as his loving and faithful wife for nearly 63 years. You two journeyed through this life hand-in-hand and enriched those around you. You two were the proverbial "match made in Heaven." It has been a personal blessing to have known and worked with both of you over the years. Thank you, Mary, for everything you and Alan did for me and for letting me accompany both of you for a short time on this Journey.

I believe the greatest homage and tribute we scientists, scholars and investigators could pay to Alan's memory and legacy would be to objectively and humbly press forward in our honest Pursuit of the Truth about this enigmatic cloth known as the Shroud of Turin. After all, that is how Alan consistently conducted his research.

Requiescat in pace, Alan...my dear friend and teacher.

A final prayer so aptly reflecting Alan's sentiments:

An Ancient Prayer

From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth,

From the laziness that is content with half-truth,

From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,

God of Truth, deliver us.

Now, Alan KNOWS the Truth.

Blessings,

Phil Dayvault

Author: *The Keramion, Lost and Found: A Journey to the Face of God*

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Link to Alan's obituary:

http://www.cremnc.com/memsol.cgi?user_id=2028162