**Rev. Steven Case, Beloved American Baptist Pastor and Leader, Passes Away**

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 10/13/15)—**A lifelong American Baptist fully engaged in the life of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), the Rev. Steven Case, retired pastor of First Baptist Church, Mansfield, Pa., died on October 8 in Washington, D.C. from complications related to injuries resulting from a fall suffered as he left his hotel for a board meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee (BJC).

During the previous day’s meeting, he was recognized for meritorious contributions to BJC through his induction into the James Dunn Legacy Circle and beamed with pride as the Rev. Brent Walker, Esq., BJC executive director, helped him tie the legacy’s signature bowtie. At a celebratory dinner that evening in one of his favorite D.C. restaurants, the Rev. Case shared his happiness at seeing American Baptists coalescing around issues of religious liberty and the separation of church and state.

Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, American Baptist Home Mission Societies’ (ABHMS) executive director and a participant in the BJC meetings, recalls the man with whom he had shared the previous day: “Steve Case was a champion for religious liberty. He was incredibly enthusiastic about the work of the Baptist Joint Committee. He has been a delegate to the committee on behalf of ABHMS and ABCUSA for many years. As we broke bread together the evening before his passing, he shared deeply about his passion for the work and his gratitude that ABHMS had commissioned him to it.”

A member of the ABCUSA delegation to the BJC Board of Directors, Case served as its chair from 2007 through 2009. In other denominational service, he was president of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey (ABCNJ) and the Board of Trustees of the Baptist Home of South Jersey. He was former chair of the Committee on Public Mission for ABCNJ, and he chaired the Public Policy Working Group for the New Jersey Council of Churches for eight years, serving on its executive committee. Also, Case served as a board member of American Baptist Home Mission Societies, the General Board of ABCUSA and the Board of General Ministries of ABCUSA where he chaired the Standing Rules Committee.

Prior to his Pennsylvania pastorate, Case served as pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Westmont, N.J., for 25 years. He was ordained in 1978 following graduation from the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa.
Remembering Case’s contributions to the New Jersey region, the Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer, ABCNJ executive minister and senior regional pastor, says, “The ABCNJ family is very saddened to learn that Rev. Steve Case has passed away, and wishes to express condolences to his family. Rev. Case served as a pastor in our region and as region president, and he also was a strong voice for justice as a member of our Public Mission Committee. Even after leaving our region, he was a member of our Facebook community and regularly expressed support for Camp Lebanon and other ministries we have. We will surely miss him.”

Those who were part of the ABHMS delegation at the BJC meeting and spent the last hours of his life with the Rev. Case were especially touched by his stature: “Steve had a heart for people and a heart for justice. He understood that separating church and state didn’t mean separating faith and politics. He was a tireless advocate for the common good,” remembers Curtis Ramsey-Lucas, ABHMS managing director, resource development, and immediate past chair of the BJC board.

Valoria Cheek, Esq., ABHMS house counsel and president, American Baptist Extension Corporation, recalls, “Rev. Steve Case was a man whose beliefs and actions lined up—whether it was supporting American Baptist ministries at the regional or national level, serving as a champion for justice and religious liberty, pastoring, or being a caring colleague and friend. I am still stunned by this loss. I am thankful for the time spent over the years, especially during this recent trip, sharing and serving with him.”

“On the eve of Steve Case’s accident,” says Dr. Jeffrey Haggray, ABHMS executive director-elect, “I had the most delightful time listening to him share stories about his early days as a pastor in New Jersey.  Steve was so committed to serving his American Baptist family, and was a proud past chair of the Baptist Joint Committee. I was moved by Steve’s profound sense of justice, truth, and by his loving personality.  It is surreal to me that Steve has left us.”
ABCUSA General Secretary the Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley remembers the denominational leader this way: “It has been my joy to have known Steve since early in our ministries in New Jersey. There was a joy in Steve that filled all he did. His commitment to Christ’s gospel led him to be a strong public voice for justice. In his own community, Steve was a constant presence in service to the rights of the poor. At the national level, Steve was a constant reminder to those in power of their responsibility to the marginalized. Our prayers go out for Diane and Steve’s family. Our hearts break with theirs even as we turn our eyes to the face of Jesus who is our comfort and our hope.”

The Rev. Steven Case is survived by his wife, Diane. Please keep the family in your prayers.

Details about a memorial service in November will be announced when available.

*ABCUSA is one of the most diverse Christian denominations today, with over 5,200 local congregations comprised of 1.3 million members, across the United States and Puerto Rico, all engaged in God’s mission around the world.*