

Francis

During his career in research, university extension education and academic administration, Francis became a leader with outstanding organizational and human qualities. Others recognized these capacities in Francis and he was called upon to serve in numerous, short-term interim positions of import in the early years of his retirement. Francis was intrigued, challenged and grateful for these opportunities to make a difference in higher education, a calling to which he is deeply committed.

Since leaving higher education, Francis has expanded his interests and leadership in his neighborhood, community, congregation and international mission. Francis has volunteered at a senior living center; he's a long term "reading buddy" at his local elementary school...and recruited others to join him; he provides program oversight at his local Kiwanis' Club; he's held multiple leadership roles at his church where he serves as a "meet-er and greeter" on Sunday mornings, he's been the president of the housing association where he lives; and with others been instrumental in developing irrigation systems on farms in Tanzania. At age 82, Francis has "shed" some roles, yet continues his active involvement in family, community and congregation...especially in worship and men's Bible study as he has the energy and stamina.

Relationships are an essential part of Francis' vital, robust lifestyle. Engaged in a relational web that begins with his family and neighbors, expands to his church and community and reaches back to friendships from his university years, Francis is surrounded by interesting people in whom he delights and who deeply appreciate him.

Tending and cultivating these quality relationships is intentional and a huge value for Francis as he looks to the future for himself and his children and grandchildren.

Francis deeply appreciates his family, both his immediate and extended families. Francis spends quality time getting to know his grandkids so he can encourage and support them as they make their way to adulthood. Sharing holidays and life milestones with them is a high priority and meaningful for him and his wife. He especially appreciates each of the spouses to whom he has been married over his lifetime. His first wife died at age 64, soon after Francis' retirement. He remarried three years later. He met his present spouse at church.

Health has been a concern for Francis. He had surgery and radiation to treat prostate cancer when he was 64. The cancer is presently in remission. Francis had a knee replaced at 80. He has moderately high blood pressure managed with medication. Recently, nerve malfunctioning in his lower extremities affected his driving so he uses hand controls. While as he says, "these hiccups have slowed me down, they have not kept me from my people and service. God is with me and leading me into the future."

Francis reflects, "My present life is framed by gratitude, by thanksgiving for the gift of my solid, simple beginnings where influential mentors in my family, with all their love, prepared me and guided me to the opportunities that have provided financial security and an incredibly interesting and rich life. God continues to draw me forward as he promises to be with me forever." Just being with Francis gives evidence that it is from this wellspring of gratefulness and hope that Francis' gracious, purposeful life flows.