Rev. Edwin Hancock
August 19, 1910 - March 28, 2012
Washington, Iowa
(This article was written in 2004.)

The Rev. Edwin Hancock of Washington has been involved with Boy Scouts of America for more than 70 years, and that's just counting the years he has served as an adult. The Boy Scouts of America recently celebrated its 94th anniversary.

Hancock is a retired Presbyterian pastor and lives in Washington, where he continues to help with Washington's Cub Scout Pack 242, Boy Scout Troop 242, and Boy Scout Troop 2001.

"Just last night, I had a boy come here," Hancock said, Thursday. "He wanted me to sign for his Eagle project, so we've got another Eagle coming on."

A week earlier, Hancock donned his badge-and-patch-filled Boy Scout shirt and accompanied Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts to a Washington City Council meeting, where they received the Volunteers of the Year Award from the Washington Tree Committee. Currently, he is a Unit Commissioner.

"What I really do is set in committee and listen," Hancock explained. If there's a problem, I try to help with it. If there's no problem, I keep still. I'm not there to give advice or try to run the troop. I'm there to help if they need help.

Hancock's first Scouting experience happened when he was a boy growing in San Juan, Texas, in 1922. He became a Lone Scout, an organization that help boys growing up in rural areas or too far away from a troop to have the opportunity to experience Scouting. The Lone Scouts merged with Boy Scouts in 1924. Hancock was a Lone Scout for about two years. He dropped out of Scouting after his father died.

In 1927, Hancock helped organize Boy Scout Troop 1. "I started out as a junior assistant Scoutmaster," Hancock said. "When I turned 18, they made me an assistant Scoutmaster."

One of his fellow Scouts grew up to become the 1988 Democratic candidate for vice president, Lloyd Bentsen.

"I have met and worked with some tremendously great men," Hancock said. "I mean outstanding men who I can shake hands with and feel honored, just like Lloyd Bentsen." Hancock received a letter on official letterhead from Bentsen when Bentsen was the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury.

After graduating from high school, Hancock attended a junior college near his home and continued as an assistant Scoutmaster. He then moved to Missouri to attend college. He became a member of Alpha Phi Omega, a Scouting fraternity.

"When I graduated from there and went off to seminary, I wasn't registered for about six years," Hancock continued. But from 1939 on, Hancock has been registered adult leader.

"I've often said my ministry was my vocation," Hancock said. "Scouting has been my vocation. It's just another way to have contact with young men. One of the things that is notable about Scouting is that in all the years I've been associated with them, I know only boy who had trouble with the law. I think that's a great record. I think that, next to the church youth who I've worked with, this is the greatest program we have."

One reason Hancock has enjoyed Scouting for so many years can be heard when he talks about Washington's Cub Scout Pack 242.

"They need a Cubmaster," Hancock said. "The Cubmaster they have had, his boys are out of the pack and into Scouting and, naturally, he wants to move into Scouting. He hasn't deserted, but he's urging us to get somebody else. It's difficult to get somebody to take it on. And yet, what they don't seem to realize what a great reward there is in it. The great reward is the wonderful response of the boys and how they honor the Scoutmaster or Cubmaster. Man, he's it."

Hancock also said the Scouts in Washington are well financed and the community's response to the Scouts is "excellent."

As the father of one son and four daughters, Hancock also has experience with Girl Scouting. His wife was a Girl Scout leader. "I remember one time we went to summer camp and they gave me sweatshirt for having the most family in Girl Scouting," Hancock said.

Several Scouting mementos are on display on a wall in Hancock's study. He has received several honors from Boy Scouts from Texas, Arkansas and Iowa. He has a Lone Scout booklet from the 1920's and a book, The History of Scouting, resides on a table in his living room.

And hanging in his closet is his Boy Scout shirt. While it might have been nice to have worn his shirt for the photograph, he has another Boy Scout function to attend soon, so he wanted to keep the shirt crisp and clean.

One vision of the Boy Scouts of America is to instill in young people lifetime values and develop in them ethical character as expressed in the Scout Oath and Law. That vision has been met in the Rev. Edwin Hancock.
Obituary — Rev. Edwin Hancock


Celebration of life services will be held 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, April 3, 2012 at the United Presbyterian Church with Rev. Bob Wollenberg officiating. Visitation will begin 9:00 a.m. Tuesday at the United Presbyterian Church where the family will receive friends from 9:00 until 11:00 a.m. Interment will take place at a later date at the Verdon Cemetery in Verdon, Nebraska. Memorials have been established for Camp Wyoming, Hawkeye Boy Scouts or the American Heart Association. Online condolences may be sent for Ed's family through the web at www.jonesfh.com

Edwin Ewing Hancock was born on August 19, 1910 at a farm home near Verdon, Nebraska, the son of Samuel Henry and Ella LuRee Delberta (Ewing) Hancock. In 1915, the family moved to an irrigated farm in the Lower Rio GrandeValley of Texas. He attended the Elementary School in San Juan and went to Junior High and High School near Pharr, Texas, where he graduated in May of 1929. He went on to Edinburgh Junior College at Edinburgh, Texas and transferred to Park College at Parkville, Missouri where he earned a BA degree in 1934. In 1937, he earned his Bachelor of Divinity Degree from the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Nebraska. He was ordained on January 31, 1937 at the Benson Presbyterian Church of Omaha, Nebraska. He then became a member of the Presbytery of Omaha.

At Park College in the fall of 1931, he met Margaret Theresa Wright. They were married in the Seminary Chapel in Omaha on May 1, 1937 and this union lasted for fifty nine years and five months.

During his Seminary days, he served a group of youth in West Benson, a suburb of Omaha. This group grew into a Sunday School, became an organized Chapel and grew to be an organized congregation, Trinity Presbyterian Church.

After ordination, he served Pastorates in Luverne, Iowa; El Paso, Texas; and Primrose, Nebraska. In 1943 he was called to be Superintendent of a faltering institution, the Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Home for Children at Monticello, Arkansas. He served in Monticello until 1950. He then served Pastorates in Gainesville, Texas from 1950 until 1954 and in Greenville, Texas until 1958 at which time he was Moderator of the Presbytery of Dallas in Texas in 1956. His Pastorates continued in Iowa where he served Union Presbyterian Church in Lost Nation, Iowa from 1958 until 1966. In 1962 he was pastor delegate of the Synod of Iowa to a conference on "The Farmer and His Government" in Washington D.C. In 1961, he Co-Directed the first Junior High Summer Camp at Camp Wyoming at Wyoming, Iowa. He was Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Boston, Massachusetts in 1967. From 1961-1968 he was a member of the Synod of Iowa Committee for institutions serving older citizens. His last Pastorate was at Zalmona Presbyterian Church in Waukon, Iowa where he served from 1968 until 1976. He was a member of the Committee on Reorganization of the Presbytery of Northeast Iowa from 1974 to 1976. The result was the organization of the Presbytery of John Knox.

He retired from the installed pastorate in July of 1976 and he and Margaret moved to Columbia, Missouri. From 1976 to 1986 he served six Interim Pastorates. In 1980, he served as Interim Administrator of the Presbyterian Camp Wyoming. In 1985, he and Margaret moved to Washington, Iowa and built a cottage at the United Presbyterian Home in 1986. His last Interim was as an Associate Pastor of the United Presbyterian Church in Washington, Iowa.

Edwin was a life long member of the Boy Scouts where he began as a Lone Scout. He was tapped out as an Order of the Arrow in 1939. He has continued as Unit Commissioner to two Units in Washington, Iowa until he was in his nineties. He is now a 77 year Veteran Scouter. He is a member of the Presbytery of East Iowa, a regular attendee at the United Presbyterian Church, member of the Washington Optimist Club, and member of the Washington Masonic Lodge No. 26. Edwin enjoyed visiting with family and friends and was a proud past president of the Winga's Coffee Club. He enjoyed the fine arts offered at the Washington Community Theater and enjoyed participating in a variety of community activities.

He is survived by son Hugh Earl Hancock of Mineola, Texas; daughter Susan Claire Noth and husband Robert of Bettendorf, Iowa; daughter Sarah Margaret Hancock of Spokane, Washington; daughter LuRee Mabee and husband Scott of Spokane, Washington; daughter Mary Mildred Wirch and husband Robert of Kenosha, Wisconsin; 13 grandchildren and 18 great grandchildren.

Edwin was preceded in death by his parents, his wife in 1996, two brothers, Earl Hancock and Samuel Henry Hancock Jr.; and five sisters, Carolyn Klang, Maybel Hetrick, Nelle Spiker, Pearl Hancock and Mildred Cummings.

The family would like to extend their thanks to the staff at the United Presbyterian Home and Brownlee Health Center as well as the staff of Hospice Compassus for their loving care.