

George and Florine Sanchez served with The Navigators more than 50 years, both in the United States and Central America. For several years, George served as our International Director, giving him opportunity to serve Navigator staff around the globe. George and Florine passed away in 2008, within two months of each other. They are remembered as teachers, mentors, and friends. Following are some of the tributes to George and Florine, received by their children and passed along to us to share with all those who knew and loved the Sanchezes.

Inspiring speaker

One fond memory I have of George is back in the spring of 1975. I was just getting involved with The Navigators on the University of New Mexico (UNM) campus. It was my first semester at college. I was finally convinced by Lonnie They (the UNM Nav Collegiate leader) to attend the Collegiate weekend conference in Colorado Springs (Glen Eyrie) at the middle of the spring semester.

On the last evening of the conference George shared on the "Worth of the Individual." I was first of all, impressed that a Hispanic man was talking to all the students . . . and we were all gripped with every word coming out of this speaker named George. He helped me see for the first time that I was very important to God. He challenged us with what God could do with a man or a woman who was surrendered to Him. I was so touched by the message that I couldn't speak! I snuck out of the large conference room at the castle and walked up the side of the hill behind us. I had tears in my eyes, walking and stumbling, through the dark areas of the mountainside. When I stopped, I looked down at the castle lights and I told God, "Lord, no more games. I surrender everything ... and I'm all yours."

When I returned to UNM, Lonnie couldn't believe the change in me. I was totally sold out to the Lord, because I heard and believed what George taught about the "Worth of the Individual." That really was the beginning of my lifetime adventure with Jesus Christ. Heaven will reveal much more to George and Florine about how God used them for His glory. I'm sure it will be beyond their furthest dreams or imaginations!

There's a song by Ray Boltz called "Thank You," where the refrain speaks about the response of a person in heaven who was blessed by someone else's life and sacrifice. This really speaks about George and Florine.

Thank you for giving to the Lord . . . I am a life that was changed. Thank you for giving to the Lord . . . I am so glad you gave.

—Abe Chavez, Navigator staff, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Appreciative boss

When I returned to Glen Eyrie in 1961 from Germany, I worked in the International Office for George Sanchez who was the Overseas Director. Ken Lottis was an assistant to George, and I was the secretary.

George was always so appreciative of my work during those almost three years, almost thanking me every day. He was easy to work for.

—Janice Jantzen, Navigator staff, Lynwood, Washington

Loving grandparents

George and Florine Sanchez were my grandparents. My father, Tom Sanchez, George's son, was a missionary in Latin America. I spent my growing up years out of the United States, but we came back periodically to visit. One of my fondest memories was Grandpa telling us stories with sound effects associated. He would make the sound of the creaking door opening that I will forever remember.

After I married Ricky Archambaud, we moved to the States. We went to the immigration office and came to find out that there were a lot of expenses associated to the process (you would think we would be prepared for this). We were told that we had to get money orders to submit payment. Grandpa offered to go to the bank with us to get them issued. He then proceeded to pay for all the bills. And if anyone knows Grandpa there was no way to say no, so we just stood there and graciously accepted the gift. We owe a lot to both of Grandma and Grandpa in getting us started in the beginning.

It wasn't always easy to come back to the States growing up but I always loved to see Grandma and Grandpa. I loved going to Grandpa's office when he worked at the Glen and saying that I was George Sanchez's granddaughter. I just felt so special. In their home I always felt welcome, appreciated, encouraged and loved.

—*Sherry (Sanchez) Archambaud, granddaughter*

Unexpected guest

When we lived in Palmerston North, New Zealand, in 1972, we were glad to hear that George would pay us a visit. He was on his way to minister to the Australasian staff in Sydney, but he got no further in New Zealand than our city! One morning, we had a call from the manager of the motel where George was staying to say that George had had a muscle seizure in his back and that he could not move. I went to the motel and we made arrangements for an ambulance to take him to the hospital where they gave him a shot, which relaxed his muscles. When they discharged him, George was astounded to find that there was no charge!

But we were blessed in that he came to stay in our home—prone, of course! We had the pleasure of having George in our home several more days while he recovered mobility.

During that time George shared this verse with us: Psalm 27:4 (Living Bible) "The one thing I want from God, the thing I seek most of all, is the privilege of meditating in his Temple, living in his presence every day of my life, delighting in his incomparable perfections and glory." This verse has become one of my life verses.

George was able to travel on to Sydney for the conference, but we had those days with him that I will never forget. Thank you, Lord!

—*Allan and Maureen Goulstone, Navigator staff, New Zealand*

Marriage counselor

George and Florine were instrumental in correcting the direction of our marriage in a positive way. We were a young couple very much in love that didn't know what to do with the opposites of our personalities. We were privileged to participate in a test-training program of what was later to become their marriage workshop. Along with about ten other couples, we worked through a number of significant marriage issues. This process was the beginning of transforming our marriage. We have now been married for 42 years.

Another significant time of change for me (Marylyn) was in 1971, when George was doing a workshop on communication at the Glorietta, New Mexico, Staff Conference. He made this simple statement: "Disagreements in marriage aren't wrong. If two people have opposite personalities they will have conflict. It is what you do to resolve them that is important." What a weight was lifted from me! I thought Christian couples shouldn't experience such conflicts. We had always compromised and worked out our differences and difficulties. George on many occasions had just the word of encouragement and instruction for us as we grew in Christ.

I (Gordon) have many *musical* memories of George as well. As a singer and song leader, we always got to do things together at the Glen or at other conferences. His infectious smile and positive spirit were an inspiration to so many of us younger staff. The Lord used George, along with many other mentors, to help develop me as a leader in the Body of Christ. Marylyn and I are deeply grateful for the lives of George and Florine.

—Marylyn and Gordon Adams, *Vision Foundation Inc., Knoxville, Tennessee*

Family advisor

We shared a wonderful meal with George in England in 1974. We had been married for about a year and struggling with questions of conflict. His engagement with us over this was wise and gentle and was truly life changing for us.

Later he stayed with us in Nigeria and again it was timely in helping me especially, to surface and embrace some issues I had with one of our daughters—again we would say that was life changing within our family. We are deeply grateful for George and Florine.

—Bernie and Jo Dodd, *Navigator staff, United Kingdom*

Compassionate listener

It is hard to realize that it has been 25 years since George invested some precious time helping me through an extremely painful time in my life.

George was a remarkable man. At a time when it was greatly needed but not much seen, George was a gentle, compassionate man with great sensitivity to people. He brought in a new and different perspective by listening more than speaking, supporting more than directing and, like Esther, he was brought into The Navigators "for such a time as this."

I never actually met Florine but now, after nineteen years of marriage, I have a real appreciation of her willingness to share her husband's gifts and time with people all around the world. No doubt, only eternity will reveal the extent and impact of her generosity and his obedience.

—Sue (Armitage) Hume, *New Zealand*

Dear friends and co-laborers

George and Florine were both such dear friends and co-laborers. They ministered together all these years, serving Jesus and His Kingdom. They also certainly served The Navigators and their sacrifices were great. For Mary and me, George and Florine were always such encouragers, always ready to help. I also thank God for their lives of faith, which were such a practical example to us.

George and Florine were such models to the Navigator staff. When I was selected as president, George gave himself fully to me—even when I thought I was so unprepared. As pioneers, George, together with Florine, led The Navigators in so many ways. I could not have done it without them. Their contribution was so great and so significant I cannot fully describe how important it was.

—Dr. Jerry E. White, President Emeritus, Chairman of U.S. Board, The Navigators

Supreme example

George and Florine mean more to me than I could ever communicate. George was a personal friend, mentor, model, and hero of mine for four decades. He was the supreme model of a Christian husband and father, a missionary, and Christian leader after whose life I have attempted to model my life. What I know of loving my wife, loving my children, and loving my co-workers I learned primarily from observing and dialoguing with George.

We had thousands of unrecorded, candid conversations about life, relationships, The Navigators, the missions world, and nearly every topic mentionable. He so deeply impacted me that hardly a day passes that I do not envision his face before me. *He is one of my heroes.*

I have a file of dozens of letters George wrote me over the course of our relationship. Each of them is personal, poignant, encouraging and challenging to my personal life at pivotal times in my spiritual journey. I am thankful for his personal involvement in my life and his commitment to me as a friend and mentor.

—Jim North, longtime Navigator staff, Colorado Springs

Supportive counselor

George spoke at one of the Navigator conferences I attended in the late '60s but I didn't get to know him personally until 1974, when Bob Boardman asked him to counsel me regarding my relationship with Miyako. Over the next year we met together several times and I really appreciate the support he gave Miyako and me.

At that time, international marriages were not looked upon that positively in The Navigators. I feel that the support we received from George (and Dr. Bob Bremner) were a key factor in changing people's attitudes.

The memory of the righteous will be a blessing (Proverbs 10: 7a).

—Wayne and Miyako Meyer, Navigator staff, Japan

Gracious guest

George was influential in the decision to let our family join the team in Costa Rica where Skip and Buzzie Gray were leading. As we prepared to move to Costa Rica, Florine was a major help with counsel in how to pack our earthly belongings in those 55 gallon drums we used at that time. She told me to use all our clothing, linens, bedding, and anything soft to wrap and cushion all our dishes or anything breakable to a few inches above the top of the drum, then have someone force it down until we could put the steel rim around the top and cinch it down. I followed those instructions on our moves to Costa Rica, Mexico, and return to California and nothing broke! What a major help she was in making those moves as "painless" as possible!

George visited the Costa Rican team while we were there with the Gray family. We were having a team Bible study in the living room of the "Nav home" where the Grays lived while the kids played outside. The kids got pretty noisy so one of the dads was going outside to quiet them down. George's response was, "Oh, let them play. I don't mind the noise as long as it's 'happy' noise!" That was so gracious.

—Bill and Georgia Haskell, Navigator staff, Portland, Oregon

Godly example

Jim said that George was the most godly man he has ever known. Jim also said that he and George used to play golf and that George was a true sportsman.

Jim and I met in at a Glen Eyrie conference in 1976. We were married before the August 1977 conference. George was the main speaker that first year that Jim and I attended the conference at Glen Eyrie together.

And then, when Jim and I were having marriage troubles, George called me and gave me some very important things to think about. I am sure both George and Florine prayed for me to do the right thing. I feel sure that I did and am so thankful for their prayers and George's intervention.

—Jim and Sally Carlisle, former Navigator staff

Hero of the faith

We thank God for He is Good and His mercies endure forever. We exalt the Lord for His mercies to George throughout his sojourn here on earth. His was a triumphant hero of the faith. We will continue to cherish his faith and to draw inspiration from the outcome of his life while he was with us. Indeed faithful in the eyes of the Lord is the death of His saint.

George was really an example to us in so many ways since he first came to visit us in Nigeria in 1985. Chi and I can still remember the time he spent with us as a couple at our dining table as he encouraged us and helped us maintain the right priorities in our lives, ministry, and leadership. His deep love for God and commitment to Him also challenged us to seek to serve Him diligently for indeed no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom (Luke 9:26).

May we be encouraged by the fact that the godly legacy George and Florine left will continue to live, not only in the lives of their physical children, but also in the lives of the many people like us that they impacted in many parts of the world.

—Chris and Chi Oliobi, Navigator staff, Johannesburg, South Africa

Positive influence

We met George and Florine for the first time when we visited Glen Eyrie for a 1967 New Year's weekend with a group from Iowa who supported their ministry. We were in a daze at the warmth and caring of the people at Glen Erie. Since then, George and Florine have been very influential in our Christian walk, especially as it relates to marriage and raising children. We always loved to hear George sing and his messages really made an impact on our lives. Florine has such a sweet and caring person, always looking out for others.

We remember when George and Florine visited our home in the springtime. Our sons had gotten into some mud puddles and really made a mess. We were having dinner together and the subject came up. George was so gentle but made a point with our sons. They still remember all the details of that evening.

We have been to the Glen Eyrie for many conferences. George through his unique way of sharing God's Word, has really made a difference in our lives. We have taken many couples through your "Spiritual Home" Bible study.

George and Florine were both are very special to us and we think of them often. We are so glad God brought them into our lives because through their ministry God really made an impact on our spiritual lives as well as our marriage and the raising of our children.

—Donald and Yvonne Kutz, former Navigator staff

Stirring communicator

As we look back what especially stands out, are the talks that George gave in early morning seminars at Glen Eyrie for friends we brought out for conferences from the Midwest. The talks were outstanding and became a foundation for all our future relationships in family and ministry. Many of our friends benefited along with Ruth and me.

One clear memory is George breaking out into song, romantic or spiritual, in the middle of a talk to illustrate a point. I still get goose bumps thinking about it.

Florine seldom got to those conferences because of her health, but she was very much a part of the ministry and we knew it.

—Ed and Ruth Reis, Navigator staff, Colorado Springs

Caring servant

In 1982 during my last year at Glen Eyrie on the maintenance crew, I got to know George Sanchez, when he stopped to give me a ride. During our brief time, George asked about my background, how I came to the Glen, when I was leaving, and so forth. I mentioned that I had been there almost four years and was planning to leave in the months ahead. I told George that I was reading up on how to conduct a job search and that one of the things I was struggling with was how to pick out a suit to wear to interviews. I asked his opinions on how to shop, as he always dressed so well.

He volunteered to go shopping with me. We set a date, and when that time came, George stopped by, picked me up and drove us to the Citadel, a shopping center in Colorado Springs. Once we were in the department store, he helped me pick out a very sharp suit, and get it tailored in the store. That suit served me very well through numerous interviews and in the workplace for many years.

All this for a person he really didn't know. He saw this as an opportunity to serve. And serve he did. What most impressed me was that in those days George spent many days traveling, he had few hours home, and here he readily took some of his few free hours to serve a guy who worked on the maintenance crew. Wow! Often I have praised God for George's kindness. George set an example—a very good example (1 Corinthians 11:1).

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (2 Corinthians 9:12-15).

—Ron Finelli, former Navigator staff

Faithful example in hardship

George and Florine were participating at the first staff conference we ever went to, in 1971. George was speaking and Florine participated in the workshops. We enjoyed some good time with them. George stayed with us a few times when he was traveling the world, encouraging his team members. I worked with George's international team for several years.

In March 2008, my wife Jan and I were able to visit George and Florine in Albuquerque, along with the Warrens and Ed and Ruth Reis. It was lovely to see them again, although they were doing poorly physically. But his spirit was amazing, and he and your mother were a blessing to us, as they had been over many years. I still have a strong memory of your father's spirit and humor, in the face of very tough physical circumstances. I had to give a talk recently on the general topic of finishing well, and I used that incident as an illustration.

—James and Jan Broad, former Navigator staff

Godly supervisor

I worked for George for about 16 months from the late spring of 1963 through the summer of 1964. George valued a personal daily relationship with Jesus Christ. He could see through the emphasis on the daily practice of the spiritual disciplines and knew that they too often became a mechanical set of duties to perform. He understood the Bible was primarily a means of developing this personal relationship with Christ and that the discipline was only a means to that end, not the end in itself.

George was gracious, kind and considerate. He never used his position as the Overseas Director to demand or require. He always appealed to people.

George trusted me in my work. He delegated certain responsibilities in the Overseas Department to me and never "looked over my shoulder" to see if I was doing them. I always appreciated His confidence and the fact that we had a collegial relationship rather than a supervisor-employee relationship.

And then, of course, George was gifted as a musician. His singing was always Christ exalting and edifying to his listeners. I never tired of listening to him and appreciated the recording he made.

—Jerry Bridges, Navigator staff, Colorado Springs

Fun-loving partner in ministry

I have letters from George as Overseas Director of The Navigators dated May 1963 when Selene and I were preparing to visit the Glen for a year's training. At that time, we could only afford a one way ticket from Singapore but were informed by the authorities that we needed a return ticket. George encouraged us to trust the Lord and He amazingly answered prayer by providing for our return ticket. At once he replied (excerpt of your letter dated May 29, 1963):

"Dear Jimmy,

We rejoice with you in this evident provision of the Lord and His leading at this time.

We are also glad that it worked out as well as it did for you to get the visitors visas.

I understand that you plan to come to Colorado Springs on Saturday, June 8. Rest assured of a very warm welcome. Sincerely in Christ, George"

We did arrive on June 8 and George and Florine were at the airport to welcome us. Since then, they have been shepherds to us, and especially when we were facing some struggles in Asia. George's marriage seminars and personal counseling gave us much hope. We shall always be grateful for his godly input into our lives.

There was another side of George that I particularly remember—and that is as a tennis player. He was dangerously dedicated on the tennis court. Every shot counted! I remember one incident playing doubles when, from my judgment, he had hit a ball just beyond the baseline. George refused to acknowledge the ball was out, and came right across from his end of the court to our side, pointing out the exact spot his ball had landed! Wow—we told him had good eyesight to be so definite. We had to give him the point!

Another memory was in Penang, Malaysia. We were having a banquet at a seaside restaurant when guests were invited to participate. We got George up on stage to sing "Guantanamera." The crowd gave him a standing ovation!

We remember well George's solo at the Glen—*It will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One glimpse of His dear face, All sorrow will erase. So bravely run the race, Till we see Christ.*

Well, our next game of tennis and hearing George sing again will likely be in Heaven! We shall meet again.

—Jim Chew, Navigator staff, New Zealand

Prayer warrior

I am writing my appreciation for Florine's "Life Lessons & Thoughts." I can identify with each one, probably because, like her, I often have something physical limitation. Yet, the Lord has been patiently teaching me that God's "power shows up best in weak people" 2 Corinthians:12:9 (Living Bible).

I especially appreciate Florine's words about her prayer life, because that is also how I've prayed since my burnout years, and I've felt embarrassed when a few people have called me a "prayer warrior"! I could not explain to them that I simply enjoy "communicating with GOD constantly" (without sounding "holier than thou"). But she has said it beautifully.

—*Selene Chew, Navigator staff, New Zealand*

Constant encourager

I have so many great memories of George and Florine. The thing that stands out the most for me is George's great smile and the joy that seems to be with him at all times.

We will always treasure the memory of him performing our wedding ceremony. What an honor that was. He was so good to us, gave us good advice, and told us not to weary if we had to spend a few years eating more than our fair share of beans! He said that with a smile.

Florine was always a source of inspiration in her positive outlook on life despite the difficulties she had to face. Her calm and intelligent ways were reassuring.

—*Jim and Debbie Nash*

Caring confronter

In 1962 George was the director of the international ministries of The Navigators. Marge and I were living at the Glen. While there we were appointed to work in Brazil, so my job changed from operations supervisor to being George's assistant. We shared one office room together for about six months. Much of his work consisted of maintaining correspondence with the Navigator staff outside the States. It was letter writing. George wrote good letters, but he didn't enjoy letter writing. In fact, he hated it. I would watch him return to the office after lunch and climb back into his chair with a pained look on his face - like he was climbing into a dental chair. I can still see that face! But he stuck with it.

In 1964, after we had moved to Brazil, George visited us. One day, George sat us all down at our dining room table. He then proceeded to confront me with the negative effects my choleric temperament was having on everyone. It was a total surprise. I didn't even know how to spell choleric at the time. He was right, of course. I look back on this confrontation as being the single most important event in my personal development. I have been pursuing transformation in this area until today.

The funniest experience I ever had with George was the time he and I almost got hauled in by the police in a raid. We checked into a hotel in Bogota, Colombia, one evening and stayed in the same room. I'm an insomniac, so after a couple hours in bed I was still wide awake. I noticed George was, too. So, we decided to go for a walk. It was probably 2:00 a.m. We walked around, heard some music in a gallery and walked in to see what was going on. Just then, the police stormed the place, pulled the security bars at the entrance to

the gallery down and trapped everyone inside. We stood there with everyone else, waiting for the paddy wagons to come for us. Finally, George walked over to one of the policemen and struck up a conversation. I never heard what he said but after a while the policeman opened a door in the security gate and let the two of us out. This story never made the news in Lorne's "Dear Staff" letter.

—*Jim and Marge Petersen, Navigator staff, Colorado Springs*

Practical teacher

How we thank them for investing in our lives in the early years of our marriage as we had studies in our home. Then, in future years, they visited us in Germany and counseled us in many areas. We still pass on many things George and Florine shared with us. We are thankful to God for their taking the time to spend with these two stubborn, rebellious, and bent on destruction, young kids.

God is good and we look forward to much more time with George and Florine in glory at the feet of our Lord. We will plan on their visit to our mansion in the "new city" when we will all be whole once again and together lift our voices to sing praises to His Holy Name.

—*Joe and Pat Stone, former Navigator staff*

Beloved Brother in Christ

I am in my 93rd year and my memory isn't as good as it used to be. I have been asking the Lord to help me recall the many happy times, my beloved wife Marie (who has been with the Lord for two years) and I shared with Florine and George.

The outstanding things I remember, was the great blessing they were in our lives. Florine and Marie had a very warm and loving relationship; she was so kind and considerate when we were in the States in the 1960s. Marie's health was not so good at that time. Florine poured out her love on Marie, and she was able to overcome her problems. All through the years Marie remembered Florine's love and kindness and often expressed her love for her and appreciation of her.

George made an outstanding contribution to my life and ministry in the '60s and '70s. He encouraged me and taught me a lot that helped my spiritual growth and enabled me to expand the Navigator ministry in Australia and New Zealand. His various seminars on marriage, discipleship, and so forth have left an indelible impression on the lives of those who attended and heard his teachings. They still talk of them with glad hearts.

George was not only a good teacher and preacher, he was also a great singer. He had a lovely voice and sang beautiful hymns to us.

George gave himself to people completely, 100 percent, and made a person feel that he had George's full attention. George was always the encourager and had a very good sense of humor. He was a very humble, faithful, loving servant and a beloved brother in Christ.

—*Joe Simmons, Navigator staff, New Zealand*

Relational leader

I first met George Sanchez when he visited Australia around 1970. He shared some beautiful thoughts from Revelation 4 about the worthiness of our Lord and God with our Australian staff. He also sang, "Thou Art Worthy," and I was greatly blessed by what he shared and the warmth he showed to us as young believers in the Lord.

The next occasion when I saw George was when I worked at Glen Eyrie for two years (December 1971-1973). The first year I was Waldron Scott's assistant and the second year I was Jerry White's assistant. During this time, I had the privilege of listening to George at conferences in Colorado Springs and at the Glen. Also at that time I saw him constantly counseling the leadership of The Navigators and seeking to help them focus on the importance of relationships.

At the end of 1974, I returned to Australia and then in May 1976 left for India via Singapore. At that time my supervisor was Warren Myers and over the next few years we realized how important was the issue of contextualization and appreciating the uniqueness of other cultures and how relationships worked out in these non-Christian societies. In 1982, we held the first major consultation in The Navigators on the subject of contextualization. George was the sponsor for this meeting and many leaders came, including Jim Peterson. Again George's relational skills were evident as he enabled many people from different cultures to make their contribution. It was a turning point in The Navigators and George with his bi-cultural background was able to appreciate all viewpoints expressed.

The next major event was our marriage, when I sensed the Lord leading me to Ruth. I was able to take advice from George and Lorne Sanny at this time as well as Warren and Ruth Myers and Doug Sparks. After we were married, we again saw George in Australia and his warmth and encouraging words were a great strength to us as newlyweds.

Over an almost 40 year span, George significantly impacted my life. His love for the Lord was very evident. His love for people was equally evident.

George's strong emphasis on relationships has finally borne fruit in the worldwide Navigator world. This has been absolutely vital as The Navigators have moved into the very relational cultures of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Without this relational dimension, we would have had great difficulty penetrating the non-Christian religious mainstreams of the world.

—John and Ruth Ridgway, Navigator staff, Broomfield, Colorado

Meaningful mentors

George and Florine were the Navigator representatives in Greeley, Colorado, when we attended the University of Colorado in the late 1960s. While we certainly appreciated their leadership to the ministry that developed during that time, we especially appreciated the personal attention that they gave to our individual lives.

The college years are both difficult and exciting at the same time. There is the opportunity for personal growth as well as the chance to make some big mistakes. Fortunately, George and Florine were there to help us with those decisions.

Of course, the biggest decision they helped with was the one to get married! Their wise counsel was a major influence in helping us determine God's will for our life together. Now, after 40 great years of marriage and ministry together, we still fondly remember the time from the "first date" (when we met at the Sanchez house before going out to dinner) until George presided at the wedding service in Colorado Springs in June of 1968.

—Keith and Donna McGuire

Valuable advisors

We had met and interacted with George and Florine during their Navigator ministry visits to Asia from late '70s onward. The sessions were personal and very special. The discussions mainly focused on biblical interpersonal relationships with specific teachings, counsel, and applications on the marriage relationship.

One of our most memorable interactions with the Sanchezes was at the Penang Navigator staff conference. The highlight was our personal session as a couple with George sharing with us about husband-wife relationship.

We invited George and Florine to Singapore in 1982 to be the key speakers for a marriage seminar in our couples' ministry. The most outstanding and valuable advice from Florine for Lee Lee was to be in "A.W.E " of her husband—Available, Willing, and Enthusiastic!

—Patrick and Lee Lee Tan, former Navigator staff

Exemplary leader

We first met George and Florine Sanchez in September, 1971, in the UK, at a Navigator staff conference where George spoke on family life and the biblical foundation of good communication and healthy relationships. We had been married just a couple of months and still in the "honeymoon stage," so when we were given a little marriage-assessment questionnaire, we graded ourselves as an A+ on most things. This gave George and Florine plenty of opportunity to tease us! We felt bonded to them through this time, and their teaching became foundational for our marriage and ministry in the years ahead.

Ten years later in September 1981, when we were struggling with discouragement and difficulty in laying the foundations of the Navigator work in Africa, George was asked by Lorne Sanny to become the International Ministries Director. One of George's first acts in his new role was to travel with me in Nigeria in October of 1981. These two weeks together were life changing for me and shaped my understanding of my role as a spiritual leader in the years since. George traveled with me, listened to me, gave himself to those I was ministering to, responded with grace and wise counsel to my woes and worries, pointed me to the Lord, and encouraged me to keep going. For years afterwards, whenever I would recall those two weeks, tears of gratitude would well up in my eyes as I remembered the way George, as my leader, entered my world and shared my struggles.

In the years that followed, as George asked me to take on the leadership of the Africa work, we experienced his care, counsel, and concern for us as a family as well as his wise leadership of the Navigator International Team.

We pray that we would be able to live up to this wonderful investment that George and Florine have made in our lives.

—Mike and Chris Treneer, International President, The Navigators

Friend, counselor, mentor

Kay and I stand up and call George and Florine blessed for their faithful walk with God. We have so benefited from their kinship, friendship, co-laboring, and counsel over the years. I feel highly honored to have had a very special relationship with George.

Here are some reflections:

Christlike disciple. George was full of grace and truth. Few people spoke truth in such a gracious manner.

Navigator. George was one of my top three favorite senior Navigators along with Lorne Sanny and Jim Downing.

Godly mentor. In 1956, San Luis Obispo, California, George had come to speak at the Grace Tabernacle Missionary Conference. As an 18-year-old I asked to meet with him and expressed that I was concerned that after one year of being in Christ, I didn't see much fruit. He turned to John 15 and advised me to focus on abiding in Christ and He would take care of the fruit. In 52 years I have not forgotten that.

Musician. His singing was not only beautifully melodious, but always had a meaningful message. The first songs that come to mind are "The King is Coming" and "The Woman at the Well."

After a tiring international leader's conference at Glen Eyrie, he was gracious enough to drive up to Denver and sing a solo at our wedding June 20, 1964, at Emmanuel Baptist Church.

Sensitivity. Jim Downing was the first and George was the second person I shared my romantic interest in Kay Pagard while I was in India and she was in Denver. When I sensed the Lord giving me the green light to write her of my interest, I checked with George and his advice was "Be sure not to put any pressure on her."

Compassion. While visiting us in the Middle East, we introduced him to a young American lady. When he realized the hard life that she had had, he offered to "adopt her."

Tennis. We enjoyed playing together as we were pretty equal.

Leisure. In 1962 or 63, we were at an Asian staff conference together in Hong Kong. While walking the streets, he slowed me down and said, "Nate, I don't need to work up a sweat."

Counselor. He came through Beirut in the late 1960s or early 1970s and helped us to grow towards a Christ-centered marriage. You did not mistake his advice that was always biblical, practical, and clothed in love. Subsequent to that we looked to him for advice on several occasions. One time he flew out from Colorado Springs to San Francisco airport, tried to help us with our struggles for a few hours and flew back.

I don't know how many times I have listened to his tapes on Interpersonal Relationships and Marriage.

Friend. I felt fully accepted, affirmed, and enjoyed by him despite all my weaknesses and failings and grew to address him in letters as "Estimado Hermano" (Dear Brother).

Persevering Wisdom. When he was convinced about a matter, he would stay with it until it was worked out in a godly manner. On one occasion he argued with Lorne Sanny for three days over an issue until it was settled.

Last conversation. The day after Florine's memorial service, Jim North, John and Ruth Ridgway and I had about an hour of precious fellowship with George. Naturally we were reminiscing and appreciating how God has used him in our lives especially in the area of relationships. He said, "Relationships: that what's it's all about isn't it." Then after a pause, ". . . and it's not that complicated."

I miss him.

—Nate and Kay Mirza, Navigator staff, Colorado Springs

Like a father

I have many cherished memories of George and Florine and thank God for their ministry in my life at pivotal times. They were very special in our lives in many ways, both personal and organizational. Early on Florine was home with the kids, so it was mostly contact with George when I was single and then when Noel and I were first married.

I loved George's singing! Way back when I was single and working at Glen Eyrie (1959-61), they were back from Costa Rica for part of that time. George sang a lot at our Glen family gatherings and at conference meetings. What a voice! It wasn't just that his voice was beautiful, but also the spirit of the man behind the voice that was beautiful. He would often sing one of my favorite songs because I requested it—"On a hill far away, stood an old rugged cross." I can still hear it in my memory. His singing always lifted my soul to the Lord.

George always made me feel loved and accepted. He was like a Daddy to me. I considered myself "the black sheep of Glen Eyrie" in those days—not quite fitting in or measuring up. But he was God's encourager for me. It was so exciting when my best friend Leette (Dillon) Henrichsen left the Glen to join the Sanchez ministry in Costa Rica.

Then came that *most* special summer evening in July 1962. In my mind's eye I see myself running across the parking area by the old barn (where they staged the "Hayloft Opera" for summer conferences) where I found George. As was the Navigator tradition back then, only the leadership knew of my engagement to Noel Nelson in faraway Pakistan. I wasn't sure they were as happy about his engagement to this "black sheep" as I was! The big announcement was going to be made that evening at Leadership Conference opening night. George knew, and he was all smiles when I dashed up to him. He was so excited with me, rejoicing in God's obvious leading in our lives. His love and approval at that moment was God's confirmation to me. I was so thankful and have never forgotten it.

Another unforgettable moment with George was in his tiny Overseas Director's office six months later. Noel had just returned from Pakistan and we traveled together to Glen Eyrie for him to report in. He had visited Lebanon on the way home where Waldron Scott had invited us to come and minister with him there after our marriage. We were excited and had told everybody along the way to the Glen.

Noel shared this plan in his report that morning at staff prayer meeting in the Castle. I remember seeing George and Rod Sargent exchange surprised glances at that announcement. Afterwards George diplomatically asked us to join him in his office instead of going off to pray with others. He then gently broke the news that in the few weeks since Noel's visit with Scotty, the Navs had closed down India and were moving someone else from India to Lebanon. That slot was now filled, so we weren't going to Lebanon after all.

We discussed other openings for which we were being considered. As an afterthought, George mentioned news just received of a staff need in Sweden. Maybe that might be something for us? Well, that was it! Ten months later we were there and stayed for 10 years. George was key!

George and Florine's counsel and visits in our home in Sweden were so much help. They had a wonderful ministry to us and many others in the marriage arena. The marriage and family course they put together was so helpful to our marriage. We used it to minister to others for several years.

This is just some of the memories and blessings of George and Florine. They are precious and I thank God for them in strategic places along the path God has taken me.

—Joel Cary Nelson (Mrs. Noel Nelson), Navigator staff, Clarksville, Tennessee

Tremendous inspiration

It is with the deepest sense of gratitude to God that we receive the moving news of Florine's departure to be with her Lord. What a joy to finish strong in faith, in hope and in loving service to the Lord. Florine's life of sacrifice and service as she stood by George in the ministry has been a tremendous inspiration to us.

I really admire George and Florine because of who they are and the great influence and contribution they made in our lives and ministry. George's deep insight and teaching, on the "Worthiness of Jesus to be Lord" as a basis for a hearty and acceptable service to Him changed me and my relationship to Jesus. It refined and redefined my motivation for and standards in service to the Lord.

As George discussed the subject of the lordship of Jesus from the mind-searching question "Who will be Lord?" I recall George singing that old favorite, "Shall there be any stars in my crown" and reminding us that when we actually see Him that the number of stars on our crowns will not be the issue because we will lay them all at His feet and join in the song, "You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things and for your pleasure they are and were created." He demonstrated how all other motivational basis for service was self-centered and self-serving and thus unacceptable. The thrice Holy One is the thrice Worthy One to receive it all—power, wealth, wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and praise!

—Okorie and Chi Kalu, Navigator staff, Nigeria

Devoted husband

Florine has had a quiet but significant influence on our family. Barb and I met Florine and George in the summer of 1966 in Greeley, Colorado. And though Florine already at that time had limited reserve of strength and stamina, she unselfishly gave herself to Barb meeting often in our home to talk about how to be a Godly person, a loving wife and a devoted mother. Florine saw our family 'in the raw', naughty kids and all. She offered helpful suggestions and scriptural principles that became woven into the fabric of our lives. We will always be grateful for her involvement in our lives. Our children, and now their children, have benefited from her influence.

But even though her physical limitations were a hardship, in a sense they were a blessing, because of her loving and devoted husband George who absorbed into his daily routine the responsibility of tasks Florine was unable to do. George never grumbled or complained about the added load. He was always very considerate and accommodating of his wife.

Someone once said, "Some things are taught, and some things are caught." What I learned from George about "Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed Himself for her" I learned in great part not by what George taught, but by what he was. If God had never allowed Florine to have the physical limitations she endured, and if George had never accepted the added life responsibility as a result, I don't think I would have learned as much.

—Ken & Barb Roberts

Father-like friend

Both Carrie and I had the privilege of living with the Sanchez family in the '50s. The influence of George and Florine on our lives, our marriage, and our ministry is incalculable! George was my example and my firm mentor in all these areas as a very green and young missionary in Costa Rica, and he followed us through the years.

We learned from George that Christianity is all about Christ and knowing Him. I remember so well making a pact to make Psalm 27:4 our goal, which I called our "One Thing Philosophy." He always checked me on that first. We are eternally indebted to that emphasis early in our missionary experience.

When I began to minister in Latin America I both consciously and unconsciously imitated George. Whether in speaking to an individual, a couple, or large crowds, I had in my mind his example and felt that I knew what to do. His training was not so much directive as exemplary. Throughout my ministry I have followed his pattern of being biblical in both methods and content, and people appreciate that in every culture! There is no substitute for this scriptural method.

Many a time we called or wrote with our issues and he always was quick to answer. He was more than a leader or counselor, he was a father-like friend to me. Even though he was only 9 years older than we, his maturity and gifts made him more than just a supervisor to us.

We praise God for such a great influence in our lives. Not many have had such a privilege and we feel immensely enriched by it. We feel that this humble man has no idea how many people count him as their "best friend." Heaven is filling with the spiritual fruit that has been multiplying because of the life and ministry of this beloved couple. "To God be the glory, great things He hath done"!

—*Sam Clark, Navigator staff, Mexico*

Spiritual parents

George and Florine are the most important people in my life, they are the ones God has used to affect so many changes in my life and I am blessed beyond measure to be their spiritual child. When they arrived in San Jose, Costa Rica, I had walked enough with the Lord to know that there was a richness of life I didn't have. And what I was missing showed up in them. I remember how my heart would burn at their words, their example, their singing. And I was sort of starving and wanted to be satisfied with Jesus as they were. And then I found that they loved me unconditionally. George and Florine convincing me time and time again that their love didn't depend on what I did or didn't do. And so I learned that God loves me that way, too. I believe this is the thing that has most changed me and freed me to believe God and love others.

I have been so greatly blessed in life in so many ways, as has Sam, because of George and Florine—our "parents."

—*Carrie Clark, Navigator staff, Mexico*

Wise counselor

When asked who had the most impact on my life, I would say without hesitation, it was Florine and George Sanchez. I had been involved with the Nav contact point, Jim Baxter, until George and Florine arrived in Greeley to lead the college ministry. I fondly remember the Friday night team meetings at their home. They were wonderful times of teaching, fellowship, worship, and music. Having grown up in a mainline church, I didn't know many of the great hymns of the faith. I remember with great joy how Florine and George would sing together. The song that I remember the most is *Gentle Shepherd* and when I hear it I always think of them.

It was through their ministry that I learned to love and study God's Word. It provided the foundation of my spiritual growth. I learned how to have a quiet time, memorize Scripture, and share the Gospel.

It was also through their ministry that I met Dave Goodman. I'm not sure if you heard what we students called the Navs the "Never-daters"! Well, that policy was firmly in place. Looking back, I understand it. We were part of a team. Our purpose was discipleship and whatever would get in the way of that goal was not helpful. So, when an occasion came up for me to need a date for an college event, I thought it would be okay to go with Dave, because he had graduated and was working and was so much older. George talked to Dave but he was a little too eager, so George thought it was unwise.

But, several years later Dave and I were both living in Colorado Springs. Dave went to Florine and George on Denver and asked if he could date me. The reply was an enthusiastic, "Yes." When Dave asked "When?" George said, "Well, it takes about 45 minutes to drive down the Springs!" We dated one month and were engaged. I did not go home to be married, in large part, because I wanted George to do the ceremony. Whenever I am speaking of George, however, Florine was always behind the scene to others but in the forefront to me.

As the years passed, I, like others, experienced many trials. Though we were always miles apart, Florine was the one I looked to for counsel, understanding, and unconditional love. She always was my mentor, mother, but also became a friend. Her counsel was always honest, caring and wise.

—*Sherry Goodman*

Generous friend

My memories of George Sanchez are pleasant and filled with admiration—not especially humorous. One of the most memorable was our trip together from Panama to Caracas, New Year's eve 1963. He was getting ready to leave me in Venezuela for a month of working with "Evangelismo a Fondo." My canvas suitcase had been torn open by some airline employee thief. George graciously gave me his thief-proof aluminum Haliburton suitcase for me to use and keep. Very characteristic of his thoughtfulness and generosity.

We have so many joyful memories of George and Florine. In the few days we had together in San Jose, Costa Rica, after we arrived and before they left, they both did so much to help us; getting the necessary paperwork downtown, helping us to learn to use the bus service, teaching us how to work with servants, the process of preparing food and doing other household chores and so much more.

My outstanding memory of Florine is her sharing Psalm 16:11: "In thy presence is fullness of joy"—not in the presence of George or Skip, especially when they are gone traveling, but in God's presence. It had a profound effect on my outlook and I so appreciate it.

—Skip and Buzzie Gray, Navigator staff, Green Valley, Arizona

Godly marriage partners

When I worked for George as his secretary in the early 1960's, I had to begin each letter to our Spanish-speaking staff with this sentence: "Lamento que esta carta esta escrita en Ingles. Mi secretaria no habla Espanol." (I'm sorry that this letter is written in English. My secretary does not speak Spanish).

George's gentle and thoughtful spirit was such a blessing to both Chuck and me when we were just starting to date and George cooperated in every way to give me extra time off on the rare occasions when Chuck was in town.

Florine was the quiet confidence behind and alongside this busy man. I remember her sweet submission when on numerous occasions she was called out of the audience at some meeting or other to sing a duet with George, who was leading the singing. I know she would have preferred to have a little warning or even a little practice but she was always gracious.

What a legacy of a godly partnership George and Florine left for all who knew them.

—Chuck and Nancy Strittmatter, Navigator staff, Des Moines, Iowa

Visionary ministry leader

George and Florine both entered into our lives and gave us some very good counsel about our marriage and ministry. I remember we asked about the dangers of moving a young family around the world as Marg and I have done. They said that as long as your family unit is strong you can move that unit around and it won't hurt the children. Marg and I have moved 22 times and lived on three continents and our family has remained very close and the kids are doing well. I also remember that during one of his visits to Norway George asked us if we would be interested in joining his team of missionary counselors and be responsible for our missionaries in Europe while living in Norway.

It was in 1972 that George invited Jim and Jerri White to pray about moving back to the States to work with him in staff care. George was definitely a man ahead of his time as

it wasn't until the year 2000 that we finally put in place a ministry to our missionaries around the world. We now have seven couples focusing on each major part of the world doing missionary care. So the vision George had way back in the 70's is finally in place and we are serving our missionary family around the world.

Last year Marg and I and Chris and Mike Treneer enjoyed our brief visit at the assisted living center where George and Florine were living in Albuquerque. It was a joy to see the two of them still loving the Lord and loving each other during these twilight years of their journey.

We are thankful for all George and Florine have done to minister and give their lives to our staff family around the world. They were true pioneers in going before and seeing the need to take care of our staff so they could carry out their ministries to a hurting world.

—Bruce and Marg Van Wyk, Navigator staff, Colorado Springs

True and faithful friend

George and I first met over 32 years ago in the castle at Glen Eyrie where DJ and I were married in 1976. When he and Florine moved to Albuquerque in the mid 1980s, I had the opportunity to get to know him as a Bible study leader, mentor, partner in ministry, golfing companion and dear friend and brother in Christ. We also spent many fun days on the golf courses around Albuquerque. Over the last 20 plus years, I grew to love him as a true and faithful friend.

When I think of George, three occasions come to mind that capture the essence of the kind of man he was. While George and I met regularly over these last 20 years, DJ and I also would meet for dinner with George and Florine every few months. As all who knew George will recall, he would faithfully look you in the eye and ask you first "*How are you doing?*" followed by "*How are you really doing?*" When he asked you that, you knew it was time to get down to business!

On one such occasion both George and Florine asked me that question on the matter of my temper, which was becoming a troublesome issue in our marriage. Wisely, they did not let me get away with explaining myself or justifying my behavior, but instead continued to press the issue to get me to recognize my need to make a change. When we parted that evening, I must say, I was reeling a bit, trying to sort out all I'd heard and been confronted with. As gentle yet firm as they were, I knew they meant well for me. But, I also felt a bit blind-sided by the whole conversation and frankly wondered what it might mean to our friendship going forward. Well, I needn't have wondered.

The next morning, bright and early as I arrived at my office, George was waiting for me at my door. As we sat down to visit, he immediately said that he wanted to make sure I was okay. He reminded me that he himself had struggled in the same area and had experienced the Lord's deliverance. He wanted me to know that the prior evening's conversation in no way lessened his respect, acceptance and affection toward me. That reassurance brought tears to my eyes. His visit filled me with the determination to make the changes I needed to make so that our marriage would be all that God intended it to be.

The second occasion was a few years later, in October 1999. George and Florine were there for us as faithful friends when our daughter Sarah was killed by a drunk driver. George was at our home within minutes of learning what happened. He later graciously agreed to sing at Sarah's memorial service, which he did in both English and Spanish, in memory of our daughter's love for Spanish and of her plan to be a missionary teacher to children in Central America.

For many months following Sarah's death George met weekly with me to comfort, encourage, and gently but firmly help me see God's good hand on our lives. He gently guided us back into the ministries we had. He also encouraged us toward new opportunities

to minister that came our way as a result of that painful and devastating experience. I told him once that on many days I was having trouble even opening my Bible. Without a hint of judging, he told me that that was OK and that the Lord would minister to me and would carry me when I couldn't manage myself. He was a great encourager.

Thirdly, I am reminded of a conversation George and I had a couple of years ago. I asked him which of his ministries he thought would have the most lasting impact for the Kingdom of God—leadership, singing, pastoring, counseling, preaching, teaching, leading seminars and broadcasting . . . Without any hesitation he said, "John, that's an easy question to answer." The answer, he said, was personal ministry: meeting man to man, face to face with individuals over the Scriptures, helping and encouraging them to understand and apply the Scriptures to their individual thoughts and behaviors... helping them "change their thought patterns", if you will. That, he added, is how lives are changed so that the Gospel is effectively lived out and advanced among the nations. He reminded me that it's a ministry anybody who is available to the Lord is both called to and can be equipped for.

When I last saw George a few weeks ago, we had a longer than usual conversation about ministry, particularly relating to a couple of men I was meeting with. Before parting, we prayed together briefly and he seemed energized and encouraged. As I was leaving, as he always did, George thanked me for stopping by. I told him that day that if he liked, he could consider my visits as somewhat of a stand-in for many of his friends around the world whom he had helped and encouraged over the years, but who could not visit him as I could. He seemed to like that idea. It was a blessing to serve this gentle, humble, and godly man in that small way. DJ and I will miss George and Florine's presence and wisdom in our lives but we are also rejoicing that they both are together now in the loving presence of our Lord.

—John Warren, former Navigator staff

Skilled counseling mentor

How we do love George and Florine! They had very significant influence in our lives at a time when we were going through a difficult crisis in our ministry.

George asked me (Jim) to join him in the counseling ministry of the Navigators. The first year of our time together, I sat in on scores of hours, observing the way George counseled others (with their permission, of course). That experience was more beneficial and instructive to me than if I had taken a Master's degree in counseling from an institution! I will be forever indebted to him.

Florine and George have our deep, deep love and our heartfelt gratitude. We are blessed for their ministry while on earth and thankful that we were a part of it.

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul (Psalm 94:19).

--Jim and Jeri White, Navigator staff, Norman, Oklahoma