

Alvin Harsch, age 89, was born on May 24, 1935, in the farm home south of Carbon, Alberta, Canada to Chris and Rosie (Diede) Harsch. He was the third of five boys. He attended Kern School, a one-room school two miles from home, through grade eight. He then rode the school bus to Carbon High School, graduating in 1954, with grade 11 at Christian Training Institute (later North American Baptist College), Edmonton, AB.

Church activities and devotions in the home were regular parts of his family. Alvin accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior during special evangelistic services on December 11, 1945, and publicly declared his faith through baptism on May 25, 1947.

Experiencing a distinct call from God to serve Him in ministry, he moved to Sioux Falls, SD, where he began his preparation at Sioux Falls College (1954-58), from which he received a Bachelor of Arts in History with minors in Religion, Philosophy, and German. He was elected Tepee Day [Homecoming] Chief in 1957 because the girl he was dating, and would later marry, was so popular. He then attended North American Baptist Seminary (later Sioux Falls Seminary, now Kairos University) from 1958 through 1961, earning a Bachelor of Divinity (now Master of Divinity).

Music was always a part of his life. He sang in quartets with his brothers in Carbon and traveled across the United States and Canada in 1955 with the *Gospelaire*s from the seminary. No matter where he was living, he found a way to find a place to sing. Even in his 80s he was singing in church musical events.

Alvin served as student pastor of Harmony Presbyterian Church in Hurley, SD (1957-60), then pastored the following Baptist churches: Plum Creek, Emery, SD (1960-65); Lakeshore Mission, Vancouver, WA (1965); Startup [now Grace Fellowship], Startup, WA (1965-66); Swain Oaks [now Quail Lakes], Stockton, CA (1966-70), and Grant Park [now Whyte Ridge], Winnipeg, MB, Canada (1970-74).

At Sioux Falls College he met the love of his life, Evella Rose Sawin, and they married on July 7, 1957, in Lead, SD. Two sons were born to this union, Dr. Lloyd Harsch, professor of Church History and Baptist Studies, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and Dr. Jeffery Harsch, a psychologist in Milwaukee, WI.

In 1974, Alvin received a one-year scholarship to train for Hospital Chaplaincy at the Winnipeg Health Sciences Hospital complex. He then served as chaplain at the Medical Center Rehabilitation Hospital in Grand Fork, ND, for 15 years. While there, he was encouraged to complete the work to earn the Doctor of Ministries degree at Sioux Falls Seminary, which he completed in 1982. He returned to Vancouver, WA, in 1990 and continued his chaplaincy ministry at Emanuel Legacy Hospital in Portland, OR, retiring in 1997. When Evella's health began to decline, Alvin faithfully cared for her at home for many years until her growing needs necessitated a move to a facility that could provide more advanced care.

In 1988, Alvin was invited by the Cameroon Baptist Conference, West Africa, to train six Cameroon ministers to serve as chaplains in the hospitals and clinics of their conference. He served three months, August through October 1988, in this ministry.

In 1998, he joined Dr. Manny Mariano, and his team from Grand Forks, ND, for two months to provide free eye surgeries for the people of the Philippines.

In 2022, he moved to New Orleans to live with Lloyd and Jill, where he insisted on washing the dishes and mowing the yard. It was a joy having him in our home and hearing his stories (often more than once). The last three weeks of his life were filled with family, music, friends, and worship. After breakfast on Monday, August 5, he completed the word puzzles in the newspaper and went to mow the yard. He lay down in the shade to rest and woke up in the presence of the Lord.

Alvin was preceded in death by his wife, Evella, in June 2010, and his son, Jeffery, in October 2018. After Evella died, he married Gail Kuhlman who also preceded him in death. He is survived by his brother, Wilbert (Myrna) Harsch, Edmonton, AB, Canada; brother-in-law Bernie (Elaine), Lakewood, CO; son, Lloyd (Jill) Harsch, New Orleans, LA; daughter-in-law, Lisa Larson, Shorewood, WI; grandsons, Christopher (Grace) Harsch, with his great-grandson, Leon, Coldwater, MS; John Michael Harsch, New Orleans, LA; Dylan Larson-Harsch, Brooklyn, NY; and a large number of nieces, nephews, and other relatives.

Alvin always felt blessed by God to have been able to serve Him in so many meaningful ways. He often said, in analyzing his life's work: "That was not bad for a poor farm boy from Carbon, Alberta, Canada. I lived the life God intended for me. There is no greater honor and satisfaction than that."

Relatives and friends are invited to attend the memorial service at Metairie Baptist Church, 401 Codifer Blvd. in Metairie, LA, on Sunday, August 25, 2024, at 3 pm. It will be live streamed at <https://www.youtube.com/@MetairieBaptist/streams>. A reception will be held after the service at the church. The interment will be privately held at a later date in Lead, SD.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Alvin's memory to White Cross, Canada (whitecrosscanada.ca) or Metairie Baptist Church (metairiebc.org).