

Dr. Robert Spence, Former Evangel President, Dies at 84 After Stroke

Dr. Robert Spence, former president of Evangel University, died yesterday, Feb. 19. He was 84.

Spence suffered a stroke on Feb. 16, 2020. According to a statement from Evangel's current president, Carol Taylor, Spence passed away peacefully, surrounded by family.

A public memorial service will be held on Sunday, Feb. 23, at 3 p.m. at the university. The event will be livestreamed at . Before the service, a visitation will be held between 1:30 p.m. and 2:45 p.m.

"The family has asked me to extend its gratitude to you for your love and support," Taylor said. "Please continue to keep the Spence family, and especially Dr. Spence's beloved wife, Anne, in your prayers.

"... President Spence lived his life with great integrity and dignity in service of the King of Kings. His service to Evangel and Springfield cannot be overstated. I am reminded of the words of Jesus in Matthew 25, in which He says: 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' While we mourn his passing, let us also remember that he is now rejoicing with our Lord and Savior."

Described on the Evangel University's website as "one of the longest serving college presidents in the U.S.," Spence served as their president for 40 years. When he retired in April 2014, he was appointed to a new role as chancellor for the university.

“He is deeply committed to the school, the community, and the Assemblies of God Fellowship,” Dr. George Wood, former general superintendent of the Assemblies of God Fellowship, said of Spence when he retired in 2014. Listen to one of Spence’s sermons here.

In 2004, Dr. Spence received the Springfieldian Award, the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce’s most acclaimed honor, recognizing outstanding community service and commitment to Springfield. Spence was also the recipient of the Missourian Award in 2004, which acknowledges the most accomplished and recognized citizens of Missouri.

During Spence’s time at Evangel University, he saw incredible progression: The institution not only gained university status, but also created over 100 undergraduate degree programs and 10 master’s programs. He also helped consolidate the university with both Central Bible College and the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary.

In lieu of flowers, Spence’s family has requested that people send contributions to the Robert H. Spence Evangel University Memorial Fund.