

MEMORIES OF ROLAND PARRISH BY HERMINE DAVIDSON

His relationship and help to the Prairie Society of Madison

The decision to begin a second Unitarian Society took place at Spring Parish meeting in 1967. At that time Roland was president of the First Unitarian Society and Hermine was vice-president. Planning proceeded with the view of another Sunday school and the adults doing their own services--Avis and Roland, the Burns, Bitzes, and Benita Byrd moved ahead. A place to meet was found, and by the time the first Sunday of that fall of 1967 arrived Charlie and I were part, Charles upstairs, me downstairs with the children--a role which was not new to me.

Prairie Society is 10 years old now and during those years Roland served as president of the Board, as treasurer for several years, Housing and Property chairman for several more years and took his turn at teaching Sunday School.

Last fall in a Sunday program planned by Dave and Barbara Carson we learned of and considered the life and teachings of St. Francis. Since this was a service planned to include the Prairie children, we went as a group to Vilas Park. Leading all of us on this bright and beautiful September day, dressed in an improvised cossack, bare-footed, was Roland. His enjoyment of such a theatrical role was evident and the children were infected by his enthusiasm and instead of scattering to the far reaches of Vilas Park were by his participation able to take part, too.

He was a folk dancer, a square dancer--all the same we remember him here in this room, on West Lawn Ave., up at the Prairie Site, at Carson's farm, out at Jane Farwells--performing a "grand right and left" with a kind of a "striding the Ridge" style--always smiling. He took part with great enjoyment, simply, whole heartedly, directly, without pretense, with all who joined his circle. He made me feel included, as I'm sure all of us felt included in his circle, in his dance--of life.