

Remembering Hans Fleischner



Hans G. Fleischner passed away peacefully on November 19, 2021 in Sanibel, Florida. He and his wife, Leslie have been part of The Neighborhood Academy community for twenty years.

I remembered the countless conversations that Jodie Moore and I had about the warmth and laughter in his eyes, the kindness he showed — not just to The Neighborhood Academy, but to our students and staff. When anyone sat with him, Hans gave you the feeling that you were the most important thing in the world for those few minutes. I often said, “When I grow up, I want to be Hans Fleischner.”

Hans Fleischner believed in our school and in the community that God called into being. He believed in our teachers and their skill. He saw and celebrated the growth of our students and their accomplishments, and for Jodie and me, he was a source of encouragement, humor, and joy when the road was difficult. What struck me most was that for someone who was accomplished and blessed, there were no pretensions or demonstrations of ego; he was humble. Defined in the words of a mentor, he had a right-sized view of himself. One never felt in Hans’ presence anything other than a valued equal.

I remember the countless times he sat at a table with laughter and storytelling and broke bread with us, the care with which he greeted our students, and the unswerving belief in our vision, our hopes, our mission. Every community that is ecclesia, the community called forth by God, needs voices and hands, and hopes of people to shape and guide and nurture that calling forth. Hans Fleischner was such a voice and presence for us.

One more voice has become quiet; a voice so needed in this world. That voice has been called home by God, and we mourn the loss. So we offer prayers of comfort to his family, and hope that from this winter of grief will soon come spring and summer, the seasons of healing.

As for me, I still say, when I grow up, I want to be Hans Fleischner.

May God bless him and keep him,
And may God make his face to shine upon him, always.

The Rev. Thomas E. Johnson Jr.
Headmaster Emeritus
The Neighborhood Academy