



Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff:

It saddens me to inform you that we have lost a beloved member of the Valparaiso University community, the Rev. Richard P. Baepler, Ph.D., '11H, former vice president for academic affairs, founding dean of Christ College — The Honors College, and professor emeritus of theology and law. He died peacefully on Nov. 19, 2020.

A lifelong scholar, Professor Emeritus Baepler received his bachelor's degree from St. Paul's College in Concordia, Missouri, master's degree from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, and doctorate in theology from the University of Chicago. Professor Baepler began his professional career as an ordained minister of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He was called as an assistant minister to Faith Lutheran Church in Valparaiso and attended services there throughout his life. He studied at Theologische Hochschule in Hamburg, Germany, and the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in Bavaria, Germany. He married his wife, Simone, in 1954 in her native Paris, France.

He joined the Valpo faculty in 1954 as a professor of theology, eventually serving as chair of the department. In 1966, President O.P. Kretzmann appointed him founding dean of Christ College — The Honors College. He provided guidance and leadership for the new college as it found its footing in the Valpo community and helped grow the program into the beginnings of what it is today. In 1979, he became vice president for academic affairs. Throughout his Valpo tenure and past his retirement in 1999, Professor Baepler taught and led with faith and dedication to the students and community of Valparaiso University.

He was granted honorary alumni membership in 2011 for exemplary ideals of achievement and service in his association with the University. He was recognized as a foundation member of Eta of Indiana Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa for his display of commitment to the study of liberal arts and sciences through scholarship and achievements as a distinguished scholar and author. During his tenure, he served as an early advocate of the value of establishing affiliations with organizations such as Phi Beta Kappa.

After his retirement, Professor Baepler authored several articles and three books, "Flame of Faith, Lamp of Learning: A History of Valparaiso University," "Witness to his Generation: Selected Writings of John Strietelmeier," and "Keeper of the Dream: O.P. Kretzmann." He was always an avid supporter of our community of scholars and friends and was in the bleachers of every Valpo basketball game he could attend.

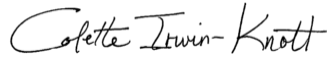
Professor Baepler was preceded in death by his parents; his wife of over 50 years, Simone; his two brothers, Walter and Donald; his sister, Marjorie; four nephews; and a niece. He is survived by his daughter, Marie-Danielle Burrus (Roger Burrus); son, Paul Michel (Melanie Brown); grandchildren, Andrew (Courtney), Christopher, and Nicholas; great-grandchildren, Luke, Drew, and Lyla; and two nephews and three nieces.

A private graveside service will be held at Graceland Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Faith Lutheran Church, 753 N. Calumet Avenue, Valparaiso, Indiana. A

memorial service will be held in the Chapel of the Resurrection during the spring semester.

Professor Baepler's faithful devotion to Valpo exemplified the spirit of the University in every way. Through his various positions, he modeled service and leadership to countless members of the University and surrounding community, and he will be deeply missed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colette Irwin-Knott". The script is cursive and elegant.

Colette Irwin-Knott '81
Interim President
Valparaiso University

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