



MR. L.N. Tucker

Seaman's friend dies, 86

Mr. L.N. (Dickie) Tucker, founder of the Bermuda Sailors' Home and of the Guild of the Holy Compassion, died suddenly Monday evening at his home, Valhalla, Paget, aged 86. He had recently complained of heart problems.

A requiem mass will be held at the Anglican Cathedral at 8 a.m. tomorrow, followed by interment at St. Peter's Cemetery in St. George's. His wife Agnes Kent Caruth Tucker, who published several books of poems, died some years ago.

Mr. Tucker was decorated by four countries for his work on behalf of merchant seamen. Besides receiving an MBE in Bermuda, he was made a Member of the Order of Olaf by the King of Norway, was named a Knight of Vasa by the King of Sweden and was awarded the Freedom Medal by the Danish Government.

In 1977 he was made a Paul Harris Fellow in Rotary on recommendation of the St. George's Rotary Club.

Mr. Tucker was born on St. David's on November 20, 1902, the son of Canon Arthur Tucker who was curate at the Chapel of Ease and later rector of St. Peter's Church. The son had a life-long association with the church, acting as server for around 60 years, mostly at the Cathedral.

He was only 16 in 1918 when he took it on himself to see to the upkeep of the graves of foreign seamen, after attending the funeral of a murdered crewman and promising the ship's crew that he would look after the grave of their mate.

This interest led him to found the Guild of the Holy Compassion, which holds an annual requiem mass on November 7. Mr. Tucker called it "a tremendous feather in Bermuda's cap" when visitors expressed amazement at how well the graves of foreign seamen were kept here.

When he founded the Bermuda Sailors' Home in the 1920s, it occupied one room in a building in St. George's, later moving to several sites in Hamilton and becoming affiliated with the British counterpart. Now known as the Mariners' Club, it is housed on Rosemont Avenue.

As superintendent of the original Sailors' Home, he would assist with the burial of foreign seamen in Bermuda. Thus he got to know Mr. A.J. Perinchief, and later joined the firm of Perinchief Funeral Directors, retiring in 1980 after years as managing director. Mr. Voorhees Tucker, the present managing director, said Mr. Dickie Tucker paid regular visits to the firm until very recently.

After three years at a boarding school near St. John's, New Brunswick, Mr. Tucker spent a year at a theological seminary in Calgary, Alberta, but gave up the idea of a preaching career. While working as a cook for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, he invested some of his earnings in oil stocks until he had enough money to return to Bermuda and start a home for sailors, which was run as a charity. For a while he operated a florist shop in St. George's.

In recent years he made numerous trips to Scandinavia to see his many friends among families of the sailors whose graves are looked after by the Guild of the Holy Compassion. Mr. Tucker is remembered not only for his unselfish life but for his salty wit and unassuming manner.