

Obituary for Dr. B. Stanley Bittinger

Emeritus Professor Dr. B. Stanley Bittinger, known affectionately to many as 'Dr. B', passed away on June 4, 2026 in Uvalde, Texas at the age of 97. Stanley was born in Lima, Ohio on July 3, 1928, to Desmond and Irene Bittinger. From 1930-1939 Stanley grew up at Garkida and Marama, Nigeria, where his parents were church missionaries and teachers.

While studying at Manchester College in North Manchester, Indiana, Stanley met Vivian Swihart. They married in 1949, and both graduated in 1950. Stanley obtained a master's degree in Sociology from the University of Notre Dame in 1956, and a PhD in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin in 1967.

Dr. Bittinger taught Sociology and Anthropology for over 30 years at Texas A&I (now Texas A&M University Kingsville). He was a highly respected and beloved professor, and his students often spoke of his passion for teaching, his mentorship and his commitment to helping them succeed.

Dr. Bittinger was well known and loved for the many trips he led to visit remote archeological and historic sites all over Mexico, introducing students, family and friends to the complex history and culture of Mexico. Stanley loved camping, climbing mountains and exploring caves. He traveled all over the world, including a semester (1970) circling the globe while teaching aboard the 'World Campus Afloat' (associated with Chapman College, California.)

In addition to his work as a professor, Dr. Bittinger was an active part-time minister from his college years onward and was associated with Falfurrias Church of the Brethren from 1955 until his death. He married, buried and christened many people in the Kingsville / Falfurrias area.

Stanley first learned Spanish in the early 1950's while working on community development projects in Puerto Rico. His fluency in Spanish and knowledge of Latin American culture increased his effectiveness as a leader in his community and on his trips to Mexico.

Stanley was a fierce and loving advocate for social justice, promoting civil rights for all citizens and opposing war over many decades. He opened his home and his heart to immigrants and to anyone in need of material support. In 2023 he received the Tejano Service Award honoring a lifetime of inspired activism.

Dr. Bittinger was a kind and generous man, and he was always willing to help others. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He will be deeply missed by all who knew

him.

Dr. Bittinger is survived by his two sons, Steven Bittinger of Canberra, Australia; and Craig (and Pat) Bittinger of Austin, Texas; his grandchildren, Molly, Michael, Jason, Morgana and Logan; his brother, Richard Bittinger; and four great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Desmond and Irene Bittinger; by his beloved wife, Vivian (Swihart) Bittinger in 2021; and by his sisters, Pattie Stern and Marianne Francis.

Stanley was deeply appreciative of the help and loving care provided by Eva Vera and her family; Cindy and Donny Diaz; Juanita Medina; Maritza Hernandez and her family; and Jan, Mitchel and David Burchfield in his final years.

Plans for a memorial Service are pending.

VITA (1966) copied from Stanley's PhD

B. Stanley Bittinger was born in Lima, Ohio, on July 3, 1928, the son of Irene Frantz Bittinger and Desmond W. Bittinger. He graduated from high school at Elgin, Illinois, in 1946, and entered Manchester College, North Manchester, Indiana. He graduated with honors receiving the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1950. He was elected a member of "Who's Who Among College and University Students." He entered graduate school at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, and received the Master of Arts degree in Sociology in 1956. From 1951 to 1954 he was employed by the Brethren Service Commission as community developer in Castaner, Puerto Rico. He was a student in the Graduate School of The University of Chicago during 1954-55. During the following two years he was a high school teacher in the Brooks County Independent School District, Falfurrias, Texas. In June, 1957, he entered the Graduate School of The University of Texas and was admitted to PhD candidacy in April, 1961. From 1959 to 1961 he served as research associate in the Department of Sociology. He was an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Texas Technological College, Lubbock, 1961-62. From 1962 to 1966 he was Assistant Professor of Sociology at Texas College of Arts and Industries, Kingsville. In 1966 he became Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at LaVerne College, California. During the summer of 1962 Mr. Bittinger was director of an international community development work camp in highland Ecuador; in 1965 he directed a similar work camp in Cuauhtenco, Tlaxcala, a remote village in the mountains of central Mexico.

Mr. Bittinger wrote articles for The Leader, The Messenger, and other similar publications.