Rather than pursue an NBA career, Ted chose a different path. He and his wife Doris McCain Loder (Willamette, 1952) and first born of four children moved East, where Ted earned his Theology degree from Yale Divinity School. After parish posts in Yalesville, CT and New Rochelle, NY, Ted arrived in Philadelphia to begin his urban ministry at the church that became affectionately known as “FUMCOG”. Ted gained notoriety for his dynamic sermons that were part homily, part poetry, part dramatic performance, and always intellectually and morally challenging. In drama sermons, he would narrate the mystery of the nativity as a common stable hand or inn-keeper, or script and stage plays that would wrestle with the anxiety of “getting Christmas right” and discern in that human struggle its authentic meaning.

Under Ted’s leadership, FUMCOG was in the vanguard of social change and often at the forefront of history itself. He led a church delegation to Selma, Alabama in 1965 to march with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. During Ted’s FUMCOG ministry, the church led protests against the Vietnam War, was active in the anti-nuclear movement, became a leader in the Sanctuary movement, and sent a delegation to South Africa to observe that nation’s first universal elections won by Nelson Mandela.

Closer to home, the Church sponsored numerous social justice nonprofits, including Covenant House Medical Services and Germantown Interfaith Housing, helping people in need to find affordable medical care, housing and job training. The list of dignitaries who graced FUMCOG’s pulpit at Ted’s invitation included Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Shirley Chisholm, William Sloane Coffin, Fred Gray, Maynard Jackson and many other visionary leaders of conscience.

Ted authored eight books of poetry, biblical profiles, and prayers. His most well-known book was an imaginative collection of plaintive prayers, entitled “Guerrillas of Grace.” In his retirement years, Ted regularly lectured at retreats and universities. A Bishop once introduced Ted at a Methodist retreat by describing the Bishop’s visit to the study of a nervous divinity school graduate starting his first parish assignment. Taking his seat, the Bishop noticed three books on the young pastor’s desk, whereupon he quickly reassured him “I see you have your Bible and two of Ted Loder’s books - - you’ll be just fine.”

A searching soul, a champion of social justice, an avid basketball fan, a prophetic public intellectual, Ted was a complex man who in his prayers, plays and sermons gave voice to the vulnerable, the afflicted, and those struggling with their faith, embracing the poignant and eternal questions common to humanity. His books are profiles in humanity, humility and awe. One typical prayer, “The Deepest Wonder of All”, begins: “O God of imponderable elegance, the wonder of it all is that we are here at all and ends “... and loving at all is the wonder of us, even as all loving is the wonder of you.”

He is survived by his second wife, Jan Filing, his children Mark, David, Karen (Stephen Duffy), and Thomas (Amina), stepsons Chris (Valerie) and Jon (Hilary) Long, eight grandchildren and five step-grandchildren.

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