

James L. Holly, M.D.

Fifty-One (51) Years

August 7, 2016

Doc and Mrs. Holly

I picked up my daughter's copy of "To Kill a Mockingbird" the other day, one that I read many times. But I had not remembered the following conversation between Miss Maudie (The Finches' slightly crazy elderly neighbor and Jem Finch, the young son of Atticus). After Atticus predictably lost his trial, Miss Maudie and Jen had the following conversation:

Miss Maudie: I simply want to tell you that there are some men in this world who were born to do our unpleasant jobs for us. Your father's one of them."

"Oh," said Jem. "Well."

"Don't you oh well me, sir," Miss Maudie replied, recognizing Jem's fatalistic noises, "you are not old enough to appreciate what I said."

Jem was staring at his half-eaten cake. "It's like bein' a caterpillar in a cocoon, that's what it is," he said. "Like somethin' asleep wrapped up in a warm place. I always thought Maycomb folks were the best folks in the world, least that's what they seemed like."

"We're the safest folks in the world," said Miss Maudie. "We're so rarely called on to be Christians, but when we are, we've got men like Atticus to go for us."

Both of you have done the hard things for so long.

Doc, you have voiced the unpopular opinions, when it would have been so easy to remain silent. And Mrs. Holly, you faithfully stood beside him weathering the repercussions. Both of you did ministry along Liberty Street, 35 years ago, when it was racially polarizing and socially costly to do so, even in the confines of church life. I saw you open your home and love when it was controversial to do so-- those headed to jail, those dying of HIV, victims of spousal cruelty and abuse, members of different races and politically unpopular religions.

And most recently, and personally, you both became involved in the painful situation of telling your longtime friend that she needed to move out of her home into a safer place--when you could have easily, and understandably, demurred

I am grateful for the 51 years he has given you together, and for the 51 years that you have been called on to be the Christians, to do the hard things, when it would have been pleasant to stay in your cocoons and be among the "safest folks".

Happy Anniversary you love birds. We love you.