

People

News in the [September 5, 2006](#) issue

Kathryn Wolford, 48, will resign after 13 years as president of Lutheran World Relief on October 31 to become president of the McKnight Foundation, in Minneapolis. The LWR is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. Under her leadership LWR became a founding member of Action by Churches Together (ACT) in 1995, and she oversaw LWR's move from New York to Baltimore in 1995. ACT is a global alliance of churches and related agencies working to save lives and support communities in emergency situations worldwide. The McKnight Foundation, founded in 1953, provides grants in support of children and families, the arts, the environment, the region and communities, and select international scientific research efforts.

Dutch cardinal **Johannes Willebrands**, who worked to improve relations between Roman Catholics and other Christians, as well as with the Jewish community, has died at the age of 96. Willebrands, who died August 2, was praised by ecumenical church leaders as a devoted servant to the cause of Christian unity. For almost 30 years, Willebrands was a key Vatican figure in efforts to promote Christian unity, being nicknamed the "Flying Dutchman" for his travels to bring different denominations closer together. The cleric played a key role in enabling Orthodox, Protestant and Anglican observers to attend the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which introduced major changes into the life of the Catholic Church and paved the way for improved relations with Christians of other denominations. Willebrands "was well known and respected in the Orthodox world," Moscow patriarch Alexsy II said. Willebrands was appointed secretary of Pope John XXIII's newly created Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in 1960, becoming its president in 1969, a post he held until he retired 20 years later. From 1974, he was also the first president of the Vatican commission for religious relations with the Jews. "Under Cardinal Willebrands's leadership the Catholic-Jewish relationship was institutionalized in a way we take for granted today," said Rabbi David Rosen, the American Jewish Committee's international director of interreligious relations. "He was the captain of the Catholic-Jewish ship and steered its significant voyage in the transition from the pontificate of Paul VI to the remarkable pontificate of John Paul

II."