

People

News in the [March 24, 2009](#) issue

Barbara Wheeler, one of the first women to head a theological school in the U.S., will be succeeded in July by another woman as president of New York City's Auburn Theological Seminary, it was recently announced. **Katharine Rhodes Henderson**, currently the seminary's executive vice president, will become president on July 1. Wheeler, who headed the Presbyterian-founded seminary for more than 20 years, will assume full-time leadership of Auburn's Center for Study of Theological Education, a think tank for theological and rabbinical schools. Auburn does not grant traditional seminary degrees, but rather serves as a research institute for issues affecting religious leaders and religious education.

Britain has barred an American antigay Christian preacher and his daughter from entering the country in order to stop them from spreading what the government described as "extremism and hatred." **Fred Phelps** of Topeka, Kansas, who has gained notoriety for picketing the funerals of American soldiers, and daughter **Shirley Phelps-Roper** had planned to protest at a February 20 performance in Britain of *The Laramie Project*, a play dramatizing the real-life murder of gay college student Matthew Shepard ten years ago. But Britain's Home Office stopped their plans to land in England before their flight left the U.S., saying that "both these individuals have engaged in unacceptable behavior by inciting hatred against a number of communities."

Browne Barr, 91, a United Church of Christ pastor in Berkeley, California, during the 1960s and '70s and dean of faculty at San Francisco Theological Seminary from 1978 to 1983, died of pneumonia in Santa Rosa, California, on February 1. When he was in his mid-thirties, Barr was named a tenured professor of preaching at Yale Divinity School. He spent 17 years as senior pastor at First Congregational Church of Berkeley during the civil and women's rights and antiwar movements. Author of six books, he was an editor-at-large for the *Century* from 1981 to 1992.