

Ex-RCA seminary head reinstated to ministry

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A Reformed Church in America minister, fired seven years ago as president of an RCA seminary for presiding over his lesbian daughter's same-sex wedding and defrocked by delegates of the 2005 RCA Annual Synod, started 2012 with his clergy credentials restored.

Norman J. Kansfield presided over daughter Ann's wedding to her partner in Massachusetts in 2004 shortly after such ceremonies became legal in that state. Kansfield, who turned 65 in 2005, retired on a church pension that year and taught part-time at Drew University Theological School.

Kansfield, who was president of New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Jersey, sought to end his clergy suspension. He remained active in church life and supported Room for All, an unofficial caucus with a dozen congregations seeking full inclusion of gay and lesbian members in the denomination.

A classis (regional group) of RCA congregations announced in November that it had voted to restore Kansfield to the ministry in a ceremony held October 18 at Hawthorne (New York) Reformed Church.

Kansfield told the *Century* that in 2005 he renewed his public vow that he would not perform another same-sex marriage until authorized to do so within the RCA. "The content of my confession/repentance is confidential," Kansfield said in an e-mail. "At the time of my reinstatement, the [Rockland-Westchester] classis was well aware of my work with Room for All, and in particular, my workshop at the group's recent national conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan."