

Robert H. Schuller, televangelist and Reformed pastor, dies at 88: People

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Robert H. Schuller, a televangelist and Reformed pastor, died April 2 at age 88, according to the Hour of Power ministry he started.

He was diagnosed with esophageal cancer in 2013.

After becoming one of the nation's best-known pastors, Schuller watched his mega-church empire crumble amid huge debt and family squabbles over leadership. In 2011, he lost his Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California—which once had more than 10,000 members—to bankruptcy.

Despite the tragedy that marked the end of Schuller's career, Richard Mouw, former president of Fuller Theological Seminary, said Schuller was “one of the great church leaders in the 20th century.”

Schuller was devoted to the Protestant tradition and maintained the “dignity of worship,” wearing a clerical robe on international television and having a renowned choir and “one of the finest organs in the world,” Mouw said.

The author of more than 30 books, including five New York Times best sellers, Schuller was best known for his four decades of televised Sunday services, Hour of Power. From the Crystal Cathedral, Schuller's program was broadcast in five languages and 50 nations, with a worldwide audience of 20 million per week.

Schuller was ordained in 1950 by the Reformed Church in America, having received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Hope College and a Master of Divinity degree from Western Theological Seminary. In 1955, he was sent to Orange County, California, to establish a church.

Wes Granberg-Michaelson, RCA general secretary emeritus, said Schuller was the most widely known minister of his denomination.

“As international television broadcasting opened up new markets, the Hour of Power was often there, and watched by those—including church leaders, kings, generals, and prime ministers—who now had access to satellite TV,” he said. —Religion News Service