

Harvey Guthrie Jr., leader during historic period for Episcopalians, dies

“He was a tireless advocate of racial and gender justice in the church,” a colleague said, “often at great cost to his own career.”

People in the [January 31, 2018](#) issue



Harvey Guthrie Jr. Photo courtesy of the Guthrie family.

Harvey Guthrie Jr., former Episcopal seminary dean, died on December 17 in Oxnard, California, where he had been recovering from hip surgery.

During Guthrie’s tenure as dean, Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, became the first Episcopal seminary to allow ordained Anglican women to

celebrate the Eucharist in its chapel and the first Episcopal seminary to admit openly gay and lesbian students to degree programs.

Guthrie participated in a historic period in the life of the Episcopal Church as a deputy to its general conventions from 1973 to 1982, as a leader in the movement for the ordination of women, as a participant in the deliberations leading to the 1979 revision of the Book of Common Prayer, and as an advocate for the recognition of gay and lesbian unions and the ordination of openly gay and lesbian people.

“Harvey Guthrie’s leadership on social issues was transformative and profound,” said Gary Hall, an EDS trustee. “He was a tireless advocate of racial and gender justice in the church, often at great cost to his own career.”

Bookended by parish ministry in New York and Michigan, Guthrie’s long academic career began in 1950 as a fellow and instructor at General Theological Seminary in New York City while earning his Th.D. in Old Testament.

Guthrie joined the faculty of Episcopal Theology School, a predecessor to EDS, in 1958. He was dean from 1969 to 1974 and dean of Episcopal Divinity School from 1974 to 1985. He also served as chair of the council of deans of Episcopal seminaries.

He was president of the Association of Theology Schools from 1980 to 1982.

Guthrie wrote numerous books, including *God and History in the Old Testament* (1960) and *Theology as Thanksgiving: From Israel’s Psalms to the Church’s Eucharist* (1981). —Canticle Communications and the Guthrie family