

# People

Feature in the [September 20, 2005](#) issue

President Bush has tapped **Laurence Francis Rooney III**, a successful Oklahoma businessman and top Republican fundraiser, as his next ambassador to the Vatican. Rooney, an active Catholic, is the chief executive officer of Rooney Holdings, a multibillion-dollar building and construction company. He is most widely known for the major fundraising role he played during Bush's 2004 reelection campaign. Rooney will replace Ambassador **Jim Nicholson**, who resigned to become Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

**Gerhard O. Forde**, 77, a Lutheran theologian who taught for 30 years at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, died August 9 after a lengthy battle with Parkinson's disease. Forde was one of 17 veteran leaders in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who in March signed a statement of "pastoral and theological concern" urging the 2005 churchwide assembly not to adopt a proposal allowing some ordinations of gay and lesbian pastors. The measure was defeated. "His ability to speak not only to fellow scholars but also to general readers in such books as *Where God Meets Man*" was cited as a model for fostering "a culture of theological wisdom" by Jonathan P. Strandjord, ELCA director for theological education.

**Walter R. Bouman**, 76, a prominent Lutheran theologian and retired professor of systematic theology at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, died August 17. Bouman, who earned his doctorate in theology at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, served as pastor and teacher in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod for years before becoming in 1977 a pastor in the American Lutheran Church, a predecessor body to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Bouman took part in the Lutheran-Episcopal dialogues that led to the full-communion relationship between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church. The author or coauthor of twelve books, he continued to teach at Trinity as professor emeritus until diagnosed in April with advanced colon cancer.