

Rev. Dr. Dorothea Ward Harvey, the first woman to be ordained in the Swedenborgian Church, died on February 23, at her home in Annisquam, MA after a long illness. She was 87.

A native of Philadelphia, Rev. Dr. Harvey attended Friends Schools from 1927 to 1939. She received her undergraduate degree from Wellesley College, after which she served in the Navy from 1943 to 1946.

Later she received her B.D. (M.Div.) in Old Testament from Union Theological Seminary in New York and her Ph.D. in Religions of the Ancient Near East from Columbia University. She did post-doctoral work at the American School in Jerusalem and Heidelberg University in Germany, and was on a Fulbright Study in India.

Dr. Harvey was the author of The Holy Center, and her work has been published in the prestigious Interpreter's Bible. She contributed an introductory article for "Rooted In Spirit: A Harvest of Women's Wisdom", published by the Swedenborg Foundation, and was the author of a number of articles and pamphlets.

Her interest in Biblical archaeology took her to excavations in Jordan, and she visited sites in Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, and Greece.

Dorothea served as a faculty member at Wellesley College, Milwaukee Downer College, Lawrence University, Urbana University and the Swedenborg School of Religion. In her retirement, she moved to Annisquam, became active in the Annisquam Village Church, and led adult education classes for a number of years.

Her students often commented on her dedication, her concern for them as whole persons, and her wealth of knowledge in her discipline of religion. She was always willing to offer extra time and support, and hosted numerous student gatherings in her home. She was very supportive of international students.

As Urbana University chaplain and minister of the Urbana Swedenborgian Church from 1971 to 1988, Rev. Dr. Harvey was always open and sympathetic to students' needs and concerns. Respect for her work as Chaplain is clear from the fact the Urbana University Chapel was named in her honor. Dorothea was a mentor for a whole generation of women and men who became leaders in the Swedenborgian Church. She was named Pastor Emerita of the Urbana Swedenborgian Church at the time of her retirement. She was elected to the Urbana University Educators' Hall of Fame in 2004.

Rev. Dr. Harvey served on the Swedenborg School of Religion Board for numerous terms spanning several decades, and later became a part-time faculty member. She was an inspiration to her students and colleagues, and she shared generously from her lifetime of experience in both non-ordained and ordained ministry. A chair in Swedenborgian theology, named in Dorothea's honor, has been established at the Swedenborg House of Studies at the Pacific School of Religion.

In a manuscript written in her later years, Rev. Dr. Harvey summed up her view of the nature of Spirit in these words: "Spirit is the creative Presence in all that is. It is the goodness in every aspect of the human being, in every feeling of the human heart. There is nothing we can learn about the depth of who we are, which is foreign to God's creation. Yes, heaven and earth are different, but rightfully and peacefully so, as each requires the other to be whole.... God's will is not alien to my own will; God's will is that I find my deepest joy."

Dorothea loved sailing and kayaking, as well as swimming in the ocean off Annisquam. She enjoyed that natural environment, and neighbors could set their clocks by the timing of her daily walks with her dog. She also loved to dance. She had many friends, and was a regular visitor to those who were ill or needed support.

The daughter of the Rev. Charles W. Harvey and Leslie (Carter) Harvey, Rev. Dr. Harvey was predeceased by her only sibling, John C. Harvey. She is survived by several cousins, a host of friends, and students whom she mentored lovingly through the years.