

Harvard Divinity Today

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Rev. Peter J. Gomes Dies at 68

Longtime Divinity School professor and “Harvard’s Pastor” was considered one of America’s foremost preachers.

The Harvard community lost one of its most influential and beloved sons on Monday, February 28, when the Rev. Peter J. Gomes died from complications from a stroke. He was 68. Gomes, Plummer Professor of Christian Morals at HDS and Pusey Minister in the Memorial Church, was a Baptist minister and widely regarded as one of America’s greatest preachers.

In a message to HDS staff, students, and faculty, Dean William A. Graham said: “Peter Gomes was unique and uniquely Harvard’s, from the moment he arrived at HDS from Bates College in 1965. A more colorful colleague none of us in the Divinity School or the Faculty of Arts and Sciences could ever imagine, nor a more faithful friend and steady presence. We will remember his constancy, humor, and equanimity, which all of us would do well not only to celebrate as we consider what we have lost, but also to try to emulate as we are able.”

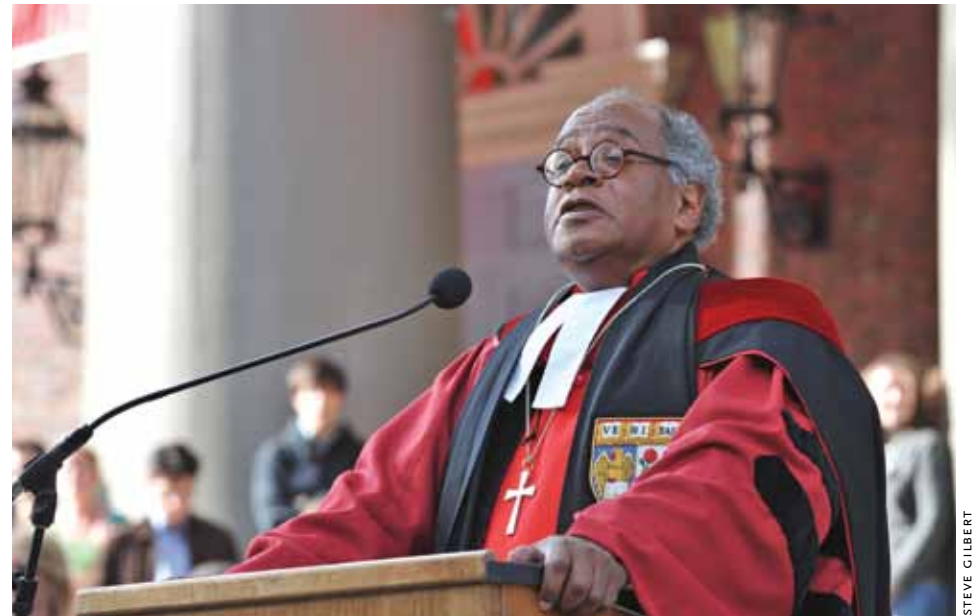
Gomes was born in 1942 in Boston, but he was educated in the Plymouth, Massachusetts, public schools and was

a long-time resident of the town. He received an AB degree from Bates College in 1965, and he was ordained by the First Baptist Church of Plymouth in 1968, the same year he received an STB degree from Harvard Divinity School.

After spending two years in various capacities at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Gomes returned to Harvard in 1970 as assistant minister in the Memorial Church. In 1974, he was named the Plummer Professor of Christian Morals and Minister in the Memorial Church, where he was, until his death, a steadfast and venerable presence.

In 1991, Gomes shocked many in the Harvard community when he came out as a homosexual during a protest held in Harvard Yard in response to homophobic remarks printed in a campus magazine. Gomes received nationwide notoriety and was afterward a strong advocate for gay rights.

“His courageousness in coming out as a gay man made a real difference, not least among Harvard undergraduates at the time,” wrote Dean Graham. “We



STEVE GILBERT

On September 10, 2009, Peter Gomes presided over a ceremony in Harvard Yard to commemorate the retirement of Harvey Cox as the Hollis Professor of Divinity.

should not forget how thoroughly Peter believed in having the courage of one’s convictions.”

Gomes was presented with the Preston N. Williams Black Alumni/ae Award by HDS in 2006 and was the recipient of 39 honorary degrees. He was an Honorary Fellow of Emmanuel College at the University of Cambridge, England, where the Gomes Lectureship is established in his name.

He was also a prolific author. His most recent books are *The Scandalous Gospel of*

Jesus: What’s So Good About the Good News? (2008) and *Strength for the Journey: Biblical Wisdom for Daily Living* (2004). His *New York Times* best-selling books include *The Good Life: Truths That Last in Times of Need* (2003) and *The Good Book: Reading the Bible With Mind and Heart* (1998). ✠

Read Harvard University’s official obituary of Peter Gomes at news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/03/rev-peter-j-gomes-dies-at-68.

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THE IRREPLACEABLE PETER

by Harvey Cox

I first met Peter Gomes when I was a rookie faculty member. He was assigned to me as an advisee upon his arrival as a first-year student at HDS in 1965. Maybe someone thought we would be a suitable match since we were both Baptists—a tribe not well represented at HDS at the time. From the start Peter charmed me, and we savored a friendship that lasted until his death. I was so newly arrived when Peter first appeared in my office that I knew precious little about the courses and seminars from which he could choose. No matter. Peter already knew exactly what he wanted, as he did for the rest of his life. He took charge of himself with, I am sure he would add, considerable help from God.

After Peter's graduation and his return to Harvard from Tuskegee, he told me the students there used to follow him around the campus like an ambulating Socrates Redivivus. At first he wondered why. Then a student confessed that they had never heard a black man "talk the way I talked." I am sure they meant his elegant New England accent (later enriched by intonations from his stays at the University of Cambridge), but I think that was only partially true. Actually, few people—including me—ever tired of hearing Peter talk. Intelligent, witty, insightful, and profoundly empathic, he could almost instantly "connect" in an uncanny way. He was one of the few people I know who made you feel regretful when the conversation ended.

There are thousands of anecdotes about Peter Gomes. Many have begun circulating since his death. My favorite one illustrates just how comfortable Peter was in his own skin. One day, he told me, when he was in the Memorial Church office and the secretary was out to lunch, he impulsively answered the phone.

"Is this Memorial Church?" a women's voice inquired.

"Yes, madam, it certainly is," Peter answered.

"What time is the service this Sunday?" the caller asked.

"At eleven o'clock as always," he replied.

"And will that stout little colored man be preaching?" asked the caller.

"Yes, madam," Peter said, "I SHALL be preaching."

Few people could tell a story like this about themselves, but Peter could because he was so enormously happy to be who he was, and to be doing what he did. And what he did he did with gusto, scrupulosity, and style. His courses were always heavily subscribed. The prose he crafted crackled, and his books became bestsellers. *The Good Book* is still one of the best and most readable introductions to the Bible I know about. His contributions to faculty meetings and committees, especially tense ones, were pertinent and judicious. His gentle spirit often quieted nascent storms before they broke.

Peter was everywhere at Harvard. His seemingly simultaneous presence all over campus caused some to wonder if he had perfected the art of bilocation. He was a superb host. His dinner bell and the famous meals served in his candlelit dining room were both high-table tasteful and gently raucous. Every inch of wall space in his home was chock-a-block with books, posters, photos, and Harvardiana. Visiting Sparks House,

continued on next page

Recent Events at HDS



HDS PHOTOGRAPH/JONATHAN BEASLEY

At “Mass Incarceration and Moral Leadership” on March 8, the Rev. Kaia Stern, MTS ’99, spoke about connecting the spiritual leadership of today with real solutions on how to receive formerly incarcerated individuals back into society. Stern is the director of the Prison Studies Project at Harvard, and her work focuses on transformative justice, human rights, and the education of prisoners.

Irreplaceable Peter

continued from previous page

if not exactly a lesson in modern home décor, always produced a vivid experience of what “lived in” can mean at its best.

Since I was the Hollis Professor, Peter insisted I should fulfill my ancient responsibility to lead the faculty ranks in the annual Commencement procession. I was reluctant at first, but eventually I did so. Soon, however, I became aware that no one ever noticed me, since I was marching just behind Peter, who was placed there to give the benediction. Everyone among the throngs of students and guests was waving at him, and he was waving back. For me, it was like sailing a small bark in the wake of the HMS *Queen Mary*.

When, one day, I told Peter I was considering activating a neglected Hollis Professor’s privilege of grazing a cow in Harvard Yard, he swelled with enthusiasm and his eyes sparkled. Here was yet another in the trove of Harvard traditions he loved to nourish! But when I sug-

gested that my bringing a bovine into the Yard might arouse our vigilant security personnel to eject both her and me, Peter drew himself up to his full height. “They wouldn’t DARE,” he sniffed. We did graze the cow, Harvard security smiled, and Peter presided over that rollicking and memorable day with supreme poise.

Now, Peter Gomes, an irreplaceable presence at the institution he loved and served, is gone, at least from here. But when I heard about his out-of-season death, it reminded me of something he said to me a few years ago. “Did you hear,” he asked me on our way to Signet House for lunch, “that the pope has just announced that Hell is not a ‘place,’ but a condition?” He seemed a bit chagrined. I told him that, yes, I had heard that report from the Vatican. “Well,” Peter continued, “I DO NOT agree. Because then maybe Heaven is not a place either. But I know that it IS, and furthermore [and here he became quite emphatic], I AM GOING THERE!”

Farewell, old friend. I am sure that wherever “there” is, you are there. 🐄

ON FEBRUARY 15, ROBERT D. PUTNAM, Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy at Harvard, spoke at the Divinity School about his latest book, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, co-written with David Campbell of the University of Notre Dame. The book is the result of vast, detailed research on religion in American society. Among the duo’s findings that Putnam shared: many Americans still believe in a higher power, but not all identify with any particular religion. The number of people who claim no religious affiliation has risen steadily over the last two decades—from 5 to 6 percent in 1990 to nearly 17 percent today.

The reason for the shift in the level of religiosity in the United States, Putnam said, was that people, especially young people, viewed religion as ultra-politicized. For those who remain religious, Putnam found that two-thirds of those who had changed religious views had done so in order to align their religious tradition closer to their political leanings.



HDS PHOTOGRAPH/JONATHAN BEASLEY

Robert D. Putnam

“Much of the polarization in America is driven by politics, not by religion,” Putnam explained.

The talk was sponsored by the HDS Student Initiative on Religion and Government and the Office of Student Life.

Read more about Robert Putnam’s presentation at the Divinity School in the *Harvard Gazette* online: news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/02/church-of-one.



STEVE GILBERT

The HDS Noon Service is a staple of religious and spiritual life on campus. Hosted by a different group each week throughout the academic year, this weekly service allows the entire community to gather with companions across the many respective traditions represented at the Divinity School. On February 7, Noon Service was hosted by Harambee, students of African Descent at HDS. Above, MDiv candidate Nicole Saxon performed an African dance during the service.

Jordan Selected as Luce Fellow in Theology for 2011–12

Mark D. Jordan, Richard Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Divinity, has been named one of seven Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology for 2011–12. The announcement was made in February by the Association of Theological Schools.

In his year-long Luce project, Jordan plans to write a book on Thomas Aquinas's teaching about the dependence of Christian ethics on incarnation and sacrament.

"The book will offer a new reading of the structure of his great *Summa*," Jordan said, "but it is more concerned to make constructive use of his argument that Christ's passion extends into sacraments

as vivid teaching for embodied souls that have made themselves savage. This account of embodied divine pedagogy not only speaks to contemporary programs of Christian ethics, it suggests more concrete ways of conceiving ethical formation within the church—that is, within a community of scriptural and sacramental enactment."

The goal of the project, titled "Incarnation, Sacrament, and Christian Character in Aquinas," is to discover new models for understanding incarnation and sacrament as effective scenes of Christian moral formation, according to Jordan.

"While I hope that the book will be

of interest to specialists in Aquinas and medieval theology, I am more concerned to enter contemporary debates about the relation between Christian worship and Christian ethical persuasion," explained Jordan. "I return to Thomas's classic argument about the ethical need for incarnation and sacrament, not so much to save it from misunderstandings as to reconstruct in modern idiom its main account of how human lives can be reshaped into Christian characters that are lived out across time."

Established in 1993, the Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology program is supported by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, honoring Henry Luce III. The Association of Theological Schools, located in Pittsburgh, is the accrediting and program agency for graduate theological education in North America.



Mark D. Jordan

JUSTIN KNIGHT

HDS Names Ahmed Ragab as the Watson Assistant Professor of Science and Religion

Ahmed Ragab, physician, historian, and scholar of the medieval and modern Middle East, has been named the Richard T. Watson Assistant Professor of Science and Religion at Harvard Divinity School, effective July 1, 2011.

Ragab was a visiting lecturer at Harvard Divinity School for the 2009 fall semester, and since 2008 he has been a postdoctoral fellow and then lecturer in the Department of the History of Science at Harvard. He holds a medical degree from Cairo University and a doctorate in the history of science from the Ecole Pratiques des Hautes Etudes in Paris.

"It is a pleasure and honor to join Harvard Divinity School and to be part of a long tradition of scholarship and a flourishing, ever-growing intellectual community," Ragab said. "HDS has cultivated a solid tradition of diversity and serious critical scholarship, relying on a group of the most prominent scholars in their fields and a community of promising, dedicated students."

Ragab's work includes the history and

development of medieval Islamic sciences, the relationship between science and religion in the medieval and modern Middle East, the history of medieval Islamic hospitals, and the intellectual and cultural history of women in the region.

His research and teaching show a combination of critical engagement with contemporary debates and a technically accomplished comparative range and historical depth. He has completed monographic studies of institutionalization and modernization in medieval and early modern science or medicine within Islamic cultures and he writes on contemporary questions at the foundations of science and religion.

"Before we undertook the Watson search, a group of faculty spent a year reflecting on current debates about science and religion," said Mark D. Jordan, chair of the search committee and Richard Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Divinity at HDS. "We wanted to compare the state of the field to our curriculum for preparing students, but we also wanted to see

how HDS might help to advance some of those debates. We imagined that the ideal candidate would be creatively engaged with contemporary questions, but would also bring cross-cultural fluency, a commitment to religious comparison, and much historical depth. In Ahmed Ragab, we were delighted to find a candidate who answered all of our hopes."

At the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Cairo, Ragab was a researcher and directed the organization's Science and Religion and the History of Science programs. In 2008, he was a researcher for the project "Public Policies, Professional Practices and Agents' Conduct Regarding the Risk of Avian Flu (Egypt, France, India, Niger, UK, Vietnam)." From 2003 to 2007, he served as a physician at the Kasr al-Aini Cairo University Teaching Hospital.

He is the author of numerous articles and papers. He has two book projects underway: "Science and Religion in Medieval Egypt" and "Anatomy, Medicine, and Religion in the Ottoman Middle East," both of which are set for publication in 2011. He is also a member of the Commission on History of Science and Technology in Islamic Societies.

"I would like to thank the faculty and the deans of the Divinity School for invit-

ing me to join this flourishing community. I look forward to contributing to the School, to its scholarly community, and to helping HDS students satisfy their intellectual



Ahmed Ragab

COURTESY AHMED RAGAB

curiosity and to learning from them new and fresh views and ideas."

The professorship is funded by Richard T. Watson, AB '54, JD '60, and is intended to advance research and thinking on the interrelations of science and religion via multidisciplinary and cross-faculty initiatives.

A former member of the University Visiting Committee to HDS and a longtime member of the Committee on University Resources, Watson is managing partner of the Cleveland law firm Spieth, Bell, McCurdy & Newell Co., LPA, and he serves as chancellor of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio.

Peter Gomes, In Pictures

Clockwise from right: Gomes sits in a pew inside the Memorial Church in December 2001; Gomes officiates as graduates in the Baccalaureate Procession arrive at the Memorial Church in 2009; with Jersey cow Faith in the background, Gomes processes to the Campus Green during the retirement celebration for Harvey Cox in September 2009; the Harvard Coop stocks a collection of books by Gomes following his death; Harvard President Neil L. Rudenstine presents a silver urn to Gomes in November 1999 to honor his 25 years as minister in the Memorial Church; Gomes outside of the Memorial Church in 1974; Gomes's student photo in the 1966–67 HDS Portrait Directory; after addressing the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 2000 as part of Speaker of the House Thomas M. Finneran's Lyceum series, Gomes receives a book from Finneran.



GOMES, Peter J.
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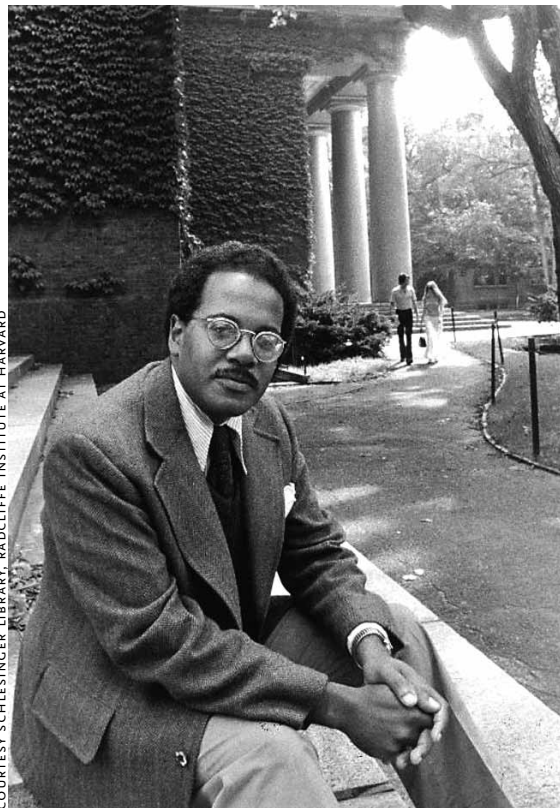
STEVE GILBERT



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Recent Faculty Books



Life Within Limits: Well-being in a World of Want

by Michael D. Jackson (Distinguished Visiting Professor of World Religions)
Duke University Press

The sense that well-being remains elusive, transitory, and unevenly distributed is felt by the rich as well as the poor, and in all societies. To explore this condition of existential dissatisfaction, Jackson traveled to Sierra Leone and revisited the village where he did his first ethnographic fieldwork in 1969–70 and lived in 1979.



Heaven's Bride: The Unprintable Life of Ida C. Craddock, American Mystic, Scholar, Sexologist, Martyr, and Madwoman

by Leigh Eric Schmidt (Charles Warren Professor of the History of Religion in America)
Basic Books

Ida C. Craddock was by turns a secular freethinker, a religious visionary, a civil-liberties advocate, and a resolute defender of belly-dancing. By the end of her life, she had become a favorite of free-speech defenders and women's rights activists. This biography explores the life of this forgotten nineteenth-century mystic, who occupied the seemingly incongruous roles of yoga priestess, suppressed sexologist, and suspected madwoman.



Confronting Vulnerability: The Body and the Divine in Rabbinic Ethics

by Jonathan Schofer (Associate Professor of Comparative Ethics)
University of Chicago Press

While imparting their ethical lessons, rabbinic texts often employ vivid images of death, aging, hunger, defecation, persecution, and drought. Schofer examines these texts to explore why their creators thought human vulnerability was such a crucial tool for instructing students in the development of exemplary behavior.



Transforming Graduate Biblical Education: Ethos and Discipline (Global Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship)

edited by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity) and Kent Harold Richards
Society of Biblical Literature

This collection of essays, originating in seminars held at the Society of Biblical Literature annual and international meetings, explores the current ethos and discipline of graduate biblical education from different social locations and academic contexts and includes international voices of well-established scholars who have urged for change for some time alongside younger scholars with new perspectives.

Faculty and Staff Notes

Giovanni Bazzana, Assistant Professor of New Testament, published “Basileia—The Q Concept of Kingship in Light of Documentary Papyri,” in *Light From the East: Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament*, edited by P. Artz-Grabner and C. M. Kreinecker (Harrassowitz, 2010), and “The Bar Kokhba Revolt and Hadrian’s Religious Policy,” in *Hadrian and the Christians*, edited by M. Rizzi (De Gruyter, 2010). **Aisha Beliso-De Jesús**, Assistant Professor of African American Religions, gave a talk at Harvard’s David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies’ Cuban Studies Seminar, titled “Transnational Santeria: Ritual Media, Tourism, and Religious Subjectivities Between the U.S. and Cuba,” and presented “The Sexual Politics of Intimacy and Ritual Tourism in Cuba” at the Latin American Studies Association meetings in Toronto. Her dissertation, “Becoming Santeria: Media, Religion, and Cultural Politics Between Cuba and the United States,” was a semifinalist for the

Outstanding Dissertation Award for the American Association for Hispanics in Higher Education. In November 2010, she presented “Ruminations on Marginality: Where’s the Cuban Palestinian?” at the National Women’s Studies Association annual meetings in Denver and organized the session “Blurring Latinidad” for the Association for Latino and Latina Anthropologists at the American Anthropological Association’s 2010 annual meeting in New Orleans, where she presented “The Latinization of Santeria: Who’s a Better Witch in Multicultural America?” **David Carrasco**, Rudenstine Professor of the Study of Latin America, delivered “There Will Be Blood: Ritual Violence in the Conquest of Mexico” at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York, in November 2010. He also gave the keynote lecture, “Imagining the Past and Remembering the Future,” at the El Paso Museum of History at the opening ceremonies for the traveling exhibition “Threads of Memory: Spain and the United States” on January 22. He presented the paper “Promise and the Labyrinth: Re-membering Mircea Eliade”

and showed excerpts from his film of Eliade’s visit to the University of Colorado (1982) at an AAR session on Mircea Eliade’s legacy. **Emily Click**, assistant dean for ministry studies and field education and Lecturer on Ministry, was the keynote presenter at “Principles of Mentoring for Ministerial Reflection,” a day-long conference in October 2010 at Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan, for students and field education supervisors. She published “Ministerial Reflection” in *Welcome to Theological Field Education*, edited by Matthew Floding (Alban Institute, 2010) and “Field Education as Practical Theology” is forthcoming in *The Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2011). She was an invited participant at the Collegeville Institute Seminar on Integration in Theological Education, in Collegeville, Minnesota, in December 2010, and, as a keynote panelist at the Biennial Conference of the Association for Theological Field Education in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on January 22, 2011, she delivered a presentation titled “Context, Culture, and Plaza.”

Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Parkman Professor of Divinity and Professor of Comparative Theology and director of the CSWR, will receive an honorary degree from the College of Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts, during the school’s Commencement in May. **Baber Johansen**, Professor of Islamic Religious Studies and director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard, saw his book *Muhammad Husain Haikal, Europa und der Orient im Weltbild eines Aegyptischen Liberalen* translated into Arabic by Khalil Al-Shaikh. **David Lam-berth**, Professor of Philosophy and Theology, presented the closing keynote address, “James, Pluralism and Religion,” at “William James and the Transatlantic Conversation: A Centenary Conference,” which took place in October 2010 at the Rothermere American Institute at Oxford University. **Jon Levenson**, List Professor of Jewish Studies, reviewed Stephen Prothero’s *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World—and Why Their Differences Matter in the Jewish Review of Books* 3 (Fall 2010). **Kevin Madigan**, Winn Professor of Ecclesiastical History, led a

roundtable at the conference “The Bible at the End of the Middle Ages: The Exegesis of Reform,” held at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in October 2010, and responded to a panel at the conference “Pius XI and the Italian Racial Laws” at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, also in October. He published the article “Two Popes, One Holocaust” in *Commentary* (December 2010). **Dan McKanan**, Ralph Waldo Emerson Unitarian Universalist Association Senior Lecturer in Divinity, published “The Implicit Religion of Radicalism: Socialist Party Theology, 1900–1934,” in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78/3 (October 2010). At the Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Convocation, held in October 2010 in conjunction with the annual meeting of Collegium, he delivered a paper, “The Three Faces of Charles H. Vail,” and led the workshop “Teaching Unitarian Universalist History to Seminarians.” In November 2010, he gave the talk “Margaret Fuller and 1848: Forging a United Radical Tradition” at Arlington Street Church in Boston as part of the Margaret Fuller Bicentennial Conversations Series. At the American Society of Church History meeting in January, he served as a panelist in a session titled “Authors Meet Critics: Christian Nonviolence in the Twentieth Century” and as a respondent to the panel “Religion and the Reforming Spirit in America.” In February, he participated in “Religions and Violence: Global Perspectives,” a panel discussion at the Center for the Study of World Religions. **Laura Nasrallah**, Associate Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, published a co-edited volume (with Charalambos Bakirtzis and Steven J. Friesen), *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē: Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, in the Harvard Theological Studies series. She wrote the introduction and the chapter “Early Christian Interpretation in Image and Word: Canon, Sacred Text, and the Mosaics of Moni Latomou.” She has also been promoted to full professor, effective July 1, 2011. **Kimberley Patton**, Professor of the Comparative and Historical Study of Religion, published an intervention on the funeral of George Jacobs, Sr., at the tercentenary commemoration of the Salem Village

witch hysteria in 1992, titled, “The Dead Are Not Dead,” with Stephen A. Mitchell, Neil Price, et al., “Witchcraft and Deep Time—A Debate at Harvard,” in *Antiquity* 84 (2010). At the 2010 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Atlanta, she responded on behalf of religious studies to the plenary address of Frans de Waal, “Morality Before Religion—Empathy, Reciprocity, and Fairness in Our Fellow Primates.” **Stephanie Paulsell**, Houghton Professor of the Practice of Ministry Studies, gave the Doris Beauvais Lecture at the First Church in Cambridge in October 2010, titled “Lost in the Mystery of God: Childhood in the History of Christian Spirituality.” In December, she presented the lecture “‘I slept, but my heart was awake’: The Song of Songs as a Resource for Contemporary Christian Spirituality,” in the Spirituality Matters series at All Hallows College in Dublin. **Mayra Rivera Rivera**, Assistant Professor of Theology and Latina/o Studies, published “Glory: The First Passion of Theology?” in *Polydoxy: Theologies of the Manifold*, edited by Catherine Keller and Laurel Schneider (Routledge, 2010). In March, she received a Lilly Theological Research Grant for 2011–12. **Jonathan Schofer**, Associate Professor of Comparative Ethics, published the chapter “The Different Life Stages: From Childhood to Old Age” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*, edited by C. Hezser (Oxford University Press, 2010). He co-organized a workshop called “Shaping a Third Wave of Comparative Religious Ethics” at Indiana University, where he presented the paper “How Does the Study of Rabbinic Ethics Change the Study of Comparative Religious Ethics?” and he gave a presentation in the Department of Religious Studies, Yale University, titled “False Fixity, Vulnerability, and Rabbinic Ethics,” as part of the school’s Ancient Judaism Workshop. He presented two papers at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies in December 2010, and he gave a talk on teaching rabbinic texts that centered on a course he taught at HDS and the University of Wisconsin. **Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza**, Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity, published several articles: “Critical Feminist Biblical Studies: Remembering the

Struggles—Envisioning the Future,” in *New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Views*, edited by Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu (Skylightpath, 2010); “The Rhetoric of Inquiry,” in *Rhetorics in the New Millennium: Promise and Fulfillment*, edited by James D. Hester and J. David Hester (T&T Clark, 2010); “A Republic of Many Voices: Biblical Studies in the Twenty First Century,” in *Foster Biblical Scholarship: Essays in Honor of Kent Harold Richards*, edited by Frank Richel Ames and Charles William Miller (Society of Biblical Literature, 2010); “Dansen,” in *Een derde Testament: Bevrijdende Schriftlezingen*, edited by Paul De Witte et al. (Garant, 2011). In January, she gave a seminar on a feminist rhetorical interpretation of 1 Peter and a workshop on Luke 1 at the Augustana Theologische Hochschule in Neuendettelsau in Germany. **Jane Smith**, Senior Lecturer in Divinity and associate dean for faculty and academic affairs, gave the lecture “The Future of Islam in America” at Hartford Seminary’s celebration, *The Muslim World Journal at 100 Years*, in October 2010. She published, with Yvonne Haddad, “The Anti-Christ and the End of Time in Christian and Muslim Eschatological Literature” in *The Muslim World* 100 (October 2010). **Charles Stang**, Assistant Professor of Early Christian Thought, presented “The ‘Twin’ in the Literature of Thomas, Mani, and Plotinus” at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting in November 2010 and “How a ‘Nestorian’ Remembers the Alexandrian and Antiochene Traditions” at the annual meeting of the American Society of Church History in January. He has also been named to the advisory board of the *Journal of Early Christian Studies*. **Andrew Teeter**, Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, continues in his research position as Hugo-Greifmann-Fellow at the Theological Faculty of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. He delivered a paper, “Literary Form, Exegetical Function, and the Dynamics of Their Correlation at Qumran,” at the 2010 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. **Ronald Thiemann**, Bussey Professor of Theology, has been appointed the North American representative to the International Lutheran Roman Catholic Commission on Chris-

tian Unity by the Lutheran World Federation. The group is preparing for the joint commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Luther’s 95 theses in Wittenberg, Germany, in 2017. He gave two keynote lectures in the fall: one at the conference “Awakening to Wonder: Re-enchantment in a Post-Secular Age” at Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, and the other at “Reforming Reformation: International Conference on the Future of Reformation Scholarship” at Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Both lectures drew upon material from his new book project “Sacramental Realism: Literary Art as Social Criticism,” which he plans to complete during his current sabbatical leave. He also served as respondent and moderator at the most recent Business Across Religious Traditions program in New York. **Jonathan Walton**, Assistant Professor of African American Religions, published “For Where Two or Three (Thousand) Are Gathered in My Name! A Cultural History and Ethical Analysis of African American Megachurches” in the *Journal of African American Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2011.



Gisela Ashley, staff assistant for major gifts in the Office of Development and External Relations, left HDS on February 11. **Lad Dell**, admissions officer at HDS, and **Beth Evers**, chief financial officer, left HDS in February to pursue other career opportunities. **Jeff VonWald**, program and events assistant for Student Services and a member of the HDS community for more than 10 years, as a student, staff member, and alumnus (MDiv ’04), left HDS in March to begin a joint position with his wife, Julie Rossate, MTS ’02. They will live in Beit Jala, just outside of Bethlehem in the West Bank, for an anticipated four-year term, coordinating a program for young adults from the United States who volunteer for a year of solidarity, service, and mutual sharing and learning with Palestinian Christian communities there. **Tom Woodward**, who first joined the Office of Development and External Relations in September 2001, holding several different positions in the office since, left HDS in February.

JANUARY TERM

Stories From the Borderlands

New opportunities during January Term allow students to experience learning outside the classroom.

As part of January Term 2011, 10 Harvard Divinity School students, along with Maritza Hernandez, associate dean for enrollment and student services, and Matthew Myer Boulton, Associate Professor of Ministry Studies, traveled to the Arizona/Mexico border to meet with migrants who had crossed the border and to learn about organizations helping those who had been deported. BorderLinks, an Arizona-based host organization, helped the group meet with local organizers and communities of faith. Here, HDS students Kye Flannery, Vincent Cervantes, and Jack Davidson share how the experiences have influenced their lives, research, and ministerial interests.

Pilgrimage in the Desert

by Kye Flannery, MDiv candidate

Imagine walking through the desert for three to five days, carrying your most important belongings on your back, and moving toward an uncertain future and from a past so economically bleak that somehow this trek seems like a necessary evil. There is a crunch of gravel under your feet. You do not rest; if you are slow, you may be left behind, and in this no man's land, no one will know where to start looking for you.

Sometimes you come across things that other people have left behind—backpacks, clothing, or food wrappers. If you are lucky, just when you start to run out of the two gallons of water you can carry, you find a water station set up by an aid organization, like the Samaritans. If you are still luckier, the water station will not be monitored by the border patrol and your pilgrimage will continue.

In January, I went with a delegation of HDS students to visit the Arizona/Mexico

border. It was part of an initiative that is gaining steam at the Divinity School—using January term for experiential learning on the premise that getting outside the classroom brings to life the things we are learning in the classroom. Divinity School meets school of life.

The mission of our Arizona-based host organization, BorderLinks, is to get folks from across the country more intimately connected with the issues and stories at the border—to move us beyond rhetoric and rumor, to find out why people cross the border and what happens to them when they do. Our team leaders introduced us to local organizers and communities of faith and brought us to Nogales, Mexico, to meet with migrants who had crossed the border and to learn about organizations helping those who had been deported.

For me, this trip was a continuation of earlier work and a deepening of earlier questions. I traveled with a group of Unitarian Universalists to stand against Arizona Senate Bill 1070 at the end of July 2010, when the Phoenix-area UU congregations called for help. Many Latinos in Phoenix felt under attack, as the bill seemed to sidestep federal authority to create a system of enforcement based on racial profiling. The protest began with an interfaith rally, and the day was spent marching in solidarity with the grassroots organizations from Latino neighborhoods that were working to combat the bill. Many of the marchers I spoke with voiced the desire to be treated with respect in their neighborhoods and on their streets. This raised big questions for me about who we consider to be “American” and how exactly our economic policies create a system in which a portion of the work-

force is both necessary and invisible.

In January, I witnessed again the toll that our lack of coherent immigration policy was having on individual people. We spent time in Nogales speaking to deportees about their experiences and witnessing their exhaustion and their anguish. In shaky Spanish, I asked how they were, what had brought them to this border town, and what they hoped to do next. I didn't want to pry. I was surprised to find that, having been through significant trauma, a number of the migrants wanted to talk. (A word they use in Mexico for talking about something difficult, sort of getting it off your chest, is *desahogarse*, which means “undrowning oneself.”) We heard about family members across the border, the kind of work the migrants hoped to get, some about their experience of deportation, and what their next move might be.

Many of the migrants were disoriented and depleted. Many had no money, not even for a phone call. Some had little hope of getting back into the United States but were planning to try to cross again. One woman had been separated from her husband while in detention and had been deported without him. She was far from home, penniless, and terrified that her husband might not be getting the medicine he needed for his diabetes. We placed a call to try and locate him, but the

enormity of what we couldn't do for her weighed heavily upon us.

Even in the midst of this dire situation, some of the travelers talked about a faith that knew no boundaries. As one man, Victor Manuel, said, “God does not forget his children.” He planned to make his way to Ciudad Juarez, a much more dangerous city than Nogales, and try his luck at crossing the border there. He showed me the phone numbers of his brother in Texas and his sister in Toronto. The numbers were written inside a pocket-sized Bible, which he had managed to keep with him all the way from El Salvador. I promised him I would call and let them know where he was.

Our last day in Nogales, we take a short hike into the desert on some of the trails used by migrants and the coyotes—the smugglers who bring people across the desert, sometimes stripping them of their valuables, sometimes leaving them in the desert to die or to get picked up by the border patrol, or sometimes delivering them safely to their destination.

Our group is somber. We find a tattered sweatshirt that has been left behind in a tree. Our guide tells us what it is like to live in the neighborhood nearby. Migrants walk out of the desert and knock on a door asking for work and needing food and urgent medical attention. The



HDS students walk a desert trail outside Nogales, Arizona. Many migrant workers travel these trails yearly to harvest fruit and vegetables on farms in the United States.

KATE DECONINCK

bodies of migrants are sometimes found by hikers; looking at this harsh desert landscape, it seems likely that many will never be found. The savage beauty of the desert outlines clearly the desperation in taking this route anywhere. What keeps the migrants going? The landscape doesn't seem to change. How easy it would be to lose one's way.

I find myself walking quite deliberately, mindfully, feeling each step, as if it is not only mine, as if I am tracing the footsteps of others. In fact, I am. I am walking in the footsteps of the migrants. How do they come this far? Why do they risk life and limb?

We get to the top of an incline and stop.

Turning around, the valley is spread out below us, and in the distance: homes, cars, greenery, wealth.

And I think, in the heat, of what it means to walk as a pilgrim in the desert, on a pilgrimage that could end in many kinds of tragedy. There are snakes and sharp cactus and javelina; there are border patrol agents and dishonest coyotes who may decide halfway through the trip to leave you behind or who may steal the valuables you brought to help you with this new start. And there is always, always, the merciless sun. It is a pilgrimage that could end in death. But, somewhere to the north, there is a promised land.

What can I do, as someone who already lives in heaven?

One thing I can do is to step outside, to start to try to understand it from a distance, from the outside looking in. That is what HDS made possible for us.

We begin to walk back into the land of milk and honey, ready for dinner. But we do not walk alone, and when we look down at the valley, we do not look as only ourselves. Our eyes see double. The desert stays with us, in our eyes and in our feet. We step over the barbed wire as strangers in a strange land, as pilgrims who seek to wash the dust from their feet and to find themselves arrived, to find themselves home.

Queer Studies at the Border

by Vincent D. Cervantes, MDiv candidate

"Why did you cross?" This was the question that set the context for most of our

conversations while we sat with migrants in Nogales, Sonora (Mexico). The most powerful answer, and the most common, was "para sobrevivir" (to survive). Many of the stories we heard during our time at the U.S./Mexico border were stories of survival. Every day, individuals and families looking for a better life on the other side risk it all in hopes of surviving just another day.

These stories of survival and crossing the threshold in hopes of liberation and freedom sound all too familiar. They resonate with many of the "coming out" stories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals. I have come to understand LGBTQ folk as border crossers in their own right. Border crossers travel across lines in hopes of surviving another day, and yet they are met with resistance and questions about their origin. In many cases, they are forced back to the other side.

I embarked on our trip to Tucson, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora, in hopes of understanding the relationship between queerness and border studies with more clarity. As we heard about the history of the border and the region, I began to ask questions about identity and citizenship, and I started to rethink the way I understand how space is occupied. As I heard the personal story of one young man named Victor, who came into the United States and lived on a train for one year and in a park for another, I began to question the cost of survival and the ways in which society practices hospitality. Through listening to the stories of the migrants and those engaged in work at the border offering support to those in transition, I have been able to use their personal experiences as a springboard for critical engagement.

One of the most pressing theological questions I left our trip with was, "How are we acting as good neighbors?" I find this question to be at the intersection of LGBT/queer studies and border studies. As I rely on personal narratives in my research, I am interested in how these migrants' stories and the stories of LGBTQ folk serve as a critical witness that instructs us on what it means to serve those around us as good neighbors. The stories I heard about rejection, trauma,

and fear have motivated me and have inspired my work in this field, and I try to move forward with their stories, so their voices and their calls for good neighbors may be heard.

Preaching Through Experience

by Jack Davidson, MDiv candidate

We could have read stories about border crossing right here in Cambridge. We could have met with migrant workers in Boston. We could have researched border policies from the comfort of Andover-Harvard Theological Library. But if we had not actually taken the long pilgrimage to the U.S./Mexico border, then we could not have had the invaluable learning experience of touching the metal of the wall at the border, feeling the heat of the desert on our skin, or seeing the look of defeat in the desperate eyes of the recently deported. When I returned to Boston, I tried preaching a fiery sermon about the blatant racism, classism, and sexism on the border, but I received some very negative reactions from the congregation. My problem was that I was trying to preach *about* an experience. Instead, I had to find a way to let the church share in my experience—a way to preach *through* an experience.

I decided to bring the experience of the dividing wall into worship. I set up a large projection screen down the middle of the congregation, with projected images of the actual wall that divides Sonora and Arizona. The inability to see fellow congregants was more of a sermon than I could ever preach. Here are a few excerpts from the spoken reflection, based on Ephesians 2, that accompanied the experience of that division:

This wall here . . . divides the city of Nogales, Arizona, from the city of Nogales, Mexico. It is made out of recycled metal from the Vietnam and Gulf Wars, *violence recycled into division*. . . This wall here . . . funnels countless border crossers into the desert to die a painful death. Hundreds are found dead each year . . . *violence recycled into division, recycled into violence*. . .

Paul wrote to a divided world, saying, "You are no longer strangers and aliens,



JACK DAVIDSON

Tracy Howe, MDiv candidate, examines a mural on the wall dividing Nogales, Mexico, from Nogales, Arizona.

but you are citizens with the saints . . . members of the household of God." That is the ultimate of Christian acts . . . taking existing forms of hate and division, then recycling them into unity and compassion. . . .

All too often, human institutions build walls that *recycle violence into division*, like this wall here. But God works in a very different way. God recycles human violence into hope. God recycles swords into plows. God recycles the crucifix, a violent government tool of torture and oppression, into the cross, a symbol of new beginnings and love. That is the cross, the central symbol of our faith. *Violence recycled into hope*. Hate recycled into compassion; oppression recycled into human understanding; walls recycled into bridges; . . . division recycled into the United Body of Christ.

After the spoken reflection, I invited members of the congregation to write a note and post it on the wall—a letter to a divided world—just as Paul had written to a divided world, and just as the citizens of Nogales had written to a divided world through murals and crosses. What would you have written on your sticky note? What walls in your life, either tangible or metaphorical, would you want to address? How would you help a congregation experience an injustice that is happening 2,500 miles away? How would you inspire them to compassionate action? 🙏

Alumni Memories of Peter Gomes

Peter Gomes's life, though perhaps too short, was rich and his legacy boundless. He touched countless people, professionally and very personally, and influenced generations, through his writing and his sermons, his teaching and his friendship. Many alumni who have been touched by his ministry and his life wished to share their stories and reminiscences, some of which are published here.

WHEN PETER STOOD UP TO SING A HYMN, he sang it with the vigor of the newly converted. His voice bellowed and his eyes rarely met the page, for he knew every word, every tune. I would nearly break into laughter at the force of his voice, but I relished those times. I thought: "This is what it must mean to be filled with love for your God." His devotion was pure and contagious and unashamed. This remains; this gives me hope.

*Taylor Lewis Guthrie Hartman, MDiv '10
Louisville, Kentucky*



THOUGH PROFESSOR GOMES WOULD surely scoff, I have begun to reflect on his life and impact on me in the way I would a passage from scripture. Not the prescriptive kind—this would not be a bad thing—but the Professor himself told us in the first day of class that he did not intend to create any clones of himself. ("You couldn't even if you wanted to.") And not the boring kind—though he himself certainly loved genealogies. I will remember Professor Gomes as a parable: Short, wholly captivating, and for those bold enough to look a bit harder, a curiously subversive testimony on what is good and right and necessary in our lives and in our world.

*Scott Dickison, MDiv '10
Dallas, Texas*



I MET PETER WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE Divinity School in the fall of 1966. He was our dorm proctor and clearly a remarkable character even then with his three-piece suits, pocket watch, and wire-rim glasses. He was also a wonder of transformation. This small, shy, nearsighted youth with the giant intellect and dry wit was the sweetheart of the blue-haired dowagers at the Plymouth Society. He went on to Bates, then Harvard, then taught at Tuskegee, then returned to Harvard in 1970. In 1991, during a surge of antigay sentiment on the Harvard campus, Peter publicly announced that he was gay, at the risk of his position and prestige, effectively bringing the whole matter out into the open. In 2006, he walked into the town hall in Plymouth and changed his lifelong party affiliation. The town clerk looked at him suspiciously and said, "Does your mother know what you're doing?" On February 28, Peter went through the greatest transfiguration of all: He got his wings. His presence and voice will be missed.

*Rob McCall, BD '70
Blue Hill, Maine*



I KNEW PETER FROM SINGING IN THE choir at the Memorial Church while an MTS student in the late 1970s. This was well before Peter came out in 1991. As an out divinity student myself, and as one of the organizers of the gay seminarians conferences that took place at HDS in 1979–80, to me and others I knew, Peter was an anomaly from another era who threw great sherris and teas, was a lovely man, and was full of charm and mystery. We all learned some of the source of that mystery in 1991 when he came out as a gay man. His continued outspokenness brought wholeness and integrity to all of our lives, not only because of who he was, but because of who he had been. Coming out right at the end of the first decade of the AIDS tragedy and 20 years into the

cultural awakening to the lives and experiences of gay men and women, Peter went overnight from being a beloved fixture at Harvard to being a hero to gay seminarians everywhere—past, present, and future.

*Brad Prunty, MTS '80
New York, New York*



MY TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT MEMORIES of Peter Gomes were the two times I encountered him offering prophetic words: first, "you are not important," and second, "you are so very important."

The first, in the Sperry Room, to a gathering of new HDS students thinking themselves so very special for being at Harvard. He reminded us that there are many more important people, more important causes, more important things than us and Harvard. I heard, "Keep your eyes and ears on the One who calls you here and who will call you out from here." Peter Gomes was sure about the One who calls.

The second, in one of those tiny rooms in Andover, to a small gathering of the

HDS Christian Fellowship while eating a meal as meager as the group's feelings about their place at HDS. Peter reflected on his own Christian misfittedness, the places he'd been called to, the convictions he held and their occasional clash with the powers that be. He reminded us that we are each called; we are, each one of us, uniquely able to offer ourselves to God, to humanity, to the academy, to the world. . . . We are each so very special. Peter Gomes was sure about his call to minister to Harvard's students and faculty alike.

As I remember Peter's great life, and the tender soul I enjoyed most especially over soup in Andover, I am thankful for his devotion to God and for his service to all of us as one who was sure of God and of God's call on his life. There is no doubt in my mind that he right now enjoys great surety of both his absolute insignificance and his incredible significance.

*Monica Burns Mainwaring, MDiv '06
San Diego, California*



REV. GOMES HAD AN INCREDIBLE PRESENCE; he could turn basic greetings and



Taylor Lewis Guthrie Hartman, MDiv '10, with Gomes, Dorothy Austin, associate minister in the Memorial Church, and Scott Dickison, MDiv '10. Hartman writes that they all had on their "Peter" glasses, which Austin and Dickison already wore.

COURTESY TAYLOR LEWIS GUTHRIE HARTMAN

salutations into an occasion. In sermons and speeches, I often marveled at his ability to be brutally honest and charming at the same time. Though his reputation preceded him, he still made time to be an engaged and even compassionate mentor. I'll always appreciate the stories and advice he offered.

*Shaundra Cunningham, MDiv '10
Spartanburg, South Carolina*



I WAS A TEACHING FELLOW FOR PETER Gomes for his two popular undergraduate courses: "The Christian Bible and Its interpretation" and "The History of Harvard and Its Presidents." They were delightful years, a highlight of my time at Harvard. Professor Gomes was beloved by undergraduate students because of his exhaustive knowledge of and passion for the subjects he taught. It was infectious. More than simply a brilliant orator, he created a memorable experience for the students taking his courses, which accounted for his continued popularity over the years. He had his finger on the pulse of the student body unlike any other. He was very gener-

ous to his teaching fellows, mentoring us and inspiring us to reach higher pedagogical heights, and showing us many acts of kindnesses. In a way, he personified Harvard and became the unofficial guardian of its customs, secrets, and memory. He was an institution within the institution. He is irreplaceable. He will be missed.

*Mark Scott, PhD '08
Columbia, Missouri*



PETER GOMES HAD A TRUE SENSE OF OCCASION. He officiated at my ordination in 1985 along with others, but it was he who hallowed the moment with his uplifting, inspiring words. Just as he had done in my homiletics class, which overflowed with 21 students due to the departure of several professors, he reached out to a very diverse audience with his universal message of love and duty to others. Thank you, Peter. You will be missed.

*Helene N. Wolff, MDiv '85
Potomac, Maryland*



Gomes speaks with Harvard Divinity School student Shaundra Cunningham, MDiv '10, during Wednesday Tea, a weekly tradition he hosted at Sparks House.

PETER WAS MY FAVORITE TEACHER. HE was always so extremely supportive, and encouraging to me. He was an inspiration to me, and to so many of us, and I shall never forget him. One day I had a chance to sit with Peter and discuss a delicate situation I was facing regarding a co-worker at work. After listening carefully, Peter sat back and sighed thoughtfully. "My deah," he intoned, "One must learn when to trust a person and when merely to enjoy them."

*Carla Mortensen, MTS '79
Portland, Oregon*



WHILE ATTENDING HARVARD DIVINITY School in the early 1990s, I was a member of the Memorial Church choir. Unfortunately, choir members had to get up pretty early Sunday mornings in order to rehearse and then be in our places before services would start. We sat behind a large, ornate, carved wooden screen at the back of the church while Peter Gomes would lead services from the chancel. Safely out of Peter's field of vision, and mostly eclipsed by the choir screen, I would often fall asleep until nudged by a companion to wake up when it was time to sing.

I suspect Peter heard about this, but chose not to do or say anything to me. However, one Sunday I not only fell asleep, but began to dream, and began talking—loudly—in my sleep. I'm told it actually interrupted his sermon.

Later that morning, Peter and I had a little discussion in his office. He asked me if his sermons were not entertaining enough. Mortified, I said no, I was just a hard-working student who didn't get enough sleep. He nodded and said, "Well, please try and sleep on your own time, in your own house!" I think I was pretty alert after that.

*Richard Taylor, MDiv '94
Pacifica, California*



Rev. Peter Gomes speaks during the Morning Service before Commencement inside the Memorial Church on June 4, 2009.

OF ALL THE MANY HOURS PETER AND I shared over the past 64 years—some in class together, some working together, some simply talking together—three stand out for me.

Peter and two of his classmates, Neil Gerdes and Mike Taylor, attended my ordination in Rutland, Vermont, in 1967. They made a bet on how long the Hollis Professor's sermon would be. It turned out George H. Williams preached for 34 minutes; I believe Peter won that bet. A year later I read scripture at Peter's ordination in Plymouth, where a much more succinct sermon was given by C. Conrad Wright. And in 1977 Peter preached at my installation at Dennis Union Church on Cape Cod.

While I am sadder than I can say to lose such an old friend, I am also tremendously grateful for the deep, lasting bonds between us, rooted in our experience at HDS, strengthened by our shared commitments to ministry, and sustained for decades by respect, affection, and sheer enjoyment at being together.

*David M. Powers, STB '67
Dennis, Massachusetts*

In the Classroom or on the Court, a Focused Passion for Teaching

By Jonathan Beasley

It may be at Georgetown University or at the Library of Congress. It may be at a day school in Bethesda, Maryland, or on a basketball court in Washington, D.C. But there is a good chance that, at a given point during a day, Sam Potolicchio is teaching.

A doctoral candidate in American government at Georgetown, Potolicchio, MTS '06 and graduate of HDS's Program in Religious Studies and Education (PRSE), is an assistant visiting professor at Georgetown's School of Continuing Studies' Semester in Washington program, where he teaches courses to undergraduate students from around the world who spend a semester in Washington as interns while also studying at the school.

Potolicchio also serves as a lecturer on American federalism and electoral politics for the Open World Forum, teaches Latin to fifth-graders, and coaches a youth basketball team. Recently, his teaching and efforts to bring different groups together were recognized by the Association of American Colleges and Universities



Potolicchio teaching the details of zone defense to his middle-school basketball team.

(AACU), who honored him as one of eight recipients of the 2011 K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award, in a ceremony at the AACU's annual conference, held in San Francisco.

The award recognizes doctoral-level graduate students who "show exemplary promise as future leaders of higher education; who demonstrate a commitment to developing academic and civic responsibility in themselves and others; and whose work reflects a strong emphasis on teaching and learning," according to the AACU's website.

It was while he was a freshman at Georgetown that Potolicchio in effect began his teaching career—as a youth basketball coach in Washington, D.C. For seven years his youth team, the "Hoyas," played out of the Jelleff Boys and Girls Club in Washington. This is the first year they are playing not in a league, but rather, against varsity sports teams. The team is simply too good; since Potolicchio took the helm of the squad, they have had six undefeated championship seasons.

"It started as a social experiment," he explained. "I put five kids from inner-city D.C. and five kids from a prep school together just to get them working together, because they never see each other in the course of a day."

His ultimate goal with this team, he said, was to get groups of kids together who do not normally interact, and he thought basketball was an effective, engaging way to do that.

"I didn't play varsity basketball in high school—I was a ski racer—but I just fell in love with that moment when kids have a breakthrough, and they really start to improve and become more confident," he said.

Before coming to HDS, Potolicchio was thinking about becoming a Catholic priest, having gone through the Catholic



Sam Potolicchio, MTS '06, speaking to a group of Ukrainians at the Library of Congress.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults in college. At the same time, he was also interested in public service.

"Priests cannot run for elected office, but I wanted to study the intersection of theology and politics, because I thought at the time the rhetoric about religion and politics was just overblown," he said. "I wanted to get a better understanding of it, so Harvard was the perfect place to go, because I could study government and religion, and I could work in this special program at HDS in religion and secondary education."

Though he had no classroom teaching experience upon entering the PRSE, Potolicchio was able to lean on his experience as a coach in order to ease the transition. Ultimately, it was during the classes he taught and the training he received through the PRSE that his passion for academic instruction and his fervor for the Xs and Os of coaching came together.

"The PRSE was the best experience of my life, because that is where I recognized my talent for teaching," he said. "I also had a perfect model in Diane Moore. Her energy and her inspiring example were incredible."

As part of the PRSE—which is temporarily suspended, pending new permanent funding—Potolicchio taught at Belmont High School. It involved one semester of watching a teacher in the classroom and

another semester of teaching.

"Sam's enthusiasm for teaching and learning was readily apparent when he came to HDS and only grew stronger throughout his years in the PRSE," said Diane Moore, director of the PRSE and Professor of the Practice in Religious Studies and Education. "It was a pleasure to watch him hone his gifts as an educator."

After leaving HDS and returning to Georgetown, Potolicchio was selected by the Library of Congress to be its lecturer on American federalism and electoral politics for the Open World Forum, where he speaks to post-Soviet Republic dignitaries and to politicians and educators. In mid-December, he returned from an eight-country lecture tour where he spoke at universities around the former Yugoslavia that his students had attended.

When I spoke with him, he had just finished teaching at Georgetown and was on his way to his high school alma mater, the Landon School, located in Bethesda, Maryland, to teach Latin to fifth-graders. Later in the evening, he would coach his basketball team.

"I think to be a good teacher, you have to be involved in a whole host of different teaching arenas," he explained. "It is not just teaching different subjects, it is also teaching different people, different ages, different situations, and it has made me a much better teacher." 🌱

C. Conrad Wright, Renowned Scholar of American Unitarianism, Dies at 94

Conrad Wright, Professor of American Church History Emeritus at Harvard Divinity School, died peacefully at home in his sleep on February 17, 2011, at the age of 94.

Wright was a prominent scholar of American Unitarianism, and he had a significant relationship with and effect on HDS during his 33-year career.

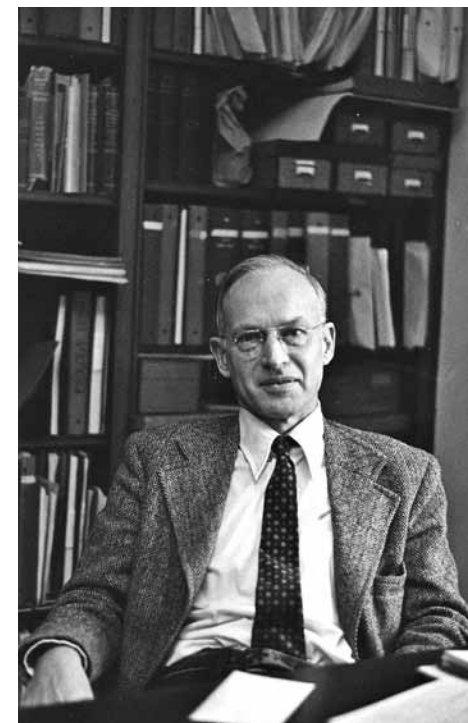
Born on February 9, 1917, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Wright was the son of C. H. C. Wright, a professor of French at Harvard, and his wife, Elizabeth Woodman Wright. He attended Browne and Nichols School, graduated from Harvard College in 1937, and went on to earn an MA in 1942 and a PhD in 1946 from Harvard. He was awarded an LHD from the Meadville Theological School in 1968

and from the Starr King School for the Ministry in 2004.

During World War II, Wright served in the 112th General Hospital of the United States Army. After the war, Wright taught for eight years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before coming to teach at Harvard in 1954. He retired formally in the fall of 1987, although in retirement he taught a course a year for the next two years. His career included a turn as the School's registrar and a major role in the education of HDS Unitarian students. When student demonstrations in 1969 disrupted Harvard, he served on a University-wide committee, chaired by Watergate prosecutor and Harvard Law School professor Archibald Cox, to find a way to calm the situation.

Wright was a member, regular attendee, occasional preacher, and clerk at First Parish in Cambridge (Unitarian Universalist), the congregation in which he had grown up. He later served as treasurer at the stately church, which dates back to the founding days of Harvard. Active in denominational affairs as well, he was a frequent consultant on matters of history and polity. In addition, Wright was president of the Unitarian Historical Society from 1962 until its 1968 merger with the Universalist Historical Society, and he was the longtime editor of its journal, the *Proceedings of the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society*.

Wright was John Bartlett Lecturer on New England Church History in addition to being Professor of Church History. He researched and wrote extensively on the



HDS PHOTOGRAPH

C. Conrad Wright

Recent Alumni Books



The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity

by David Brakke (MDiv '86)
Harvard University Press



Hinduism and Law: An Introduction

edited by Timothy Lubin (MTS '89), Donald R. Davis Jr., and Jayanth K. Krishnan
Cambridge University Press



Genuinely Ghanaian: A History of the Methodist Church Ghana, 1961-2000

Casely B. Essamuah (MDiv '95)
Africa World Press



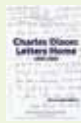
The Soul of Adolescence: In Their Own Words

by Patricia Lyons (MDiv '98)
Church Publishing Incorporated



Biography of a Mexican Crucifix

by Jennifer Scheper Hughes (MDiv '96)
Oxford University Press



Charles Olson: Letters Home, 1949-1969

edited by David Rich (MTS '05)
Cape Ann Museum



The Eucharist and Ecumenism: Let Us Keep the Feast

by George O. Hunsinger (BD '71)
Cambridge University Press



What Would Bonhoeffer Say?

by Alfred E. Staggs (ThM '84)
Parson's Porch Books



Architects of Piety: The Cappadocian Fathers and the Cult of the Martyrs

by Vasiliki M. Limberis (MTS '79, ThD '87)
Oxford University Press



The Papacy Since 1500: From Italian Prince to Universal Pastor

edited by James Corkery and Thomas Worcester (MTS '80)
Cambridge University Press

history of Harvard and the Divinity School. He believed that the diversity and pluralism that HDS enjoys today is in line with the openness of the School's founders.

"He was as committed to Unitarian Universalism as he was to the School and University," said David D. Hall, Bartlett Research Professor of New England Church History at HDS. "Generous and exacting at one and the same time, Conrad set the standard for writing about his tradition and its place in the broader religious and cultural history of our country. And when his career was feted in the early 1990s, former students fondly recalled his presence at their ordinations."

Wright's first work and magnum opus was *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America* (1955). That volume received the Carnegie Award of the American Historical Association. He is the author of *The Liberal Christians* (1979), editor of *Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism: Channing,*

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C. Conrad Wright

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Emerson, Parker (1986), and co-author of *A Stream of Light: A Sesquicentennial History of American Unitarianism* (1975). He also published another monograph, *Congregational Polity: A Historical Survey of Unitarian Universalist Practice* (1997); two volumes of his collected essays, *The Unitarian Controversy: Essays in American Unitarian History* (1994) and *Walking Together: Polity and Participation in Unitarian Universalist Churches* (1989); and an edited volume of readings, *Religion in American Life: Selected Readings* (1972).

Wright was honored with the 1982 Katzenstein Award, which is granted by the HDS Alumni/ae Association. On his retirement in 1987, HDS presented him with a hand-colored engraving of the 1836 Harvard bicentennial procession from the meetinghouse of First Parish to the Yard, a fitting recognition of his life-long devotion to these two institutions.

Wright is survived by his son Conrad Edick and daughter-in-law Mary of Medford, Massachusetts; son Nielson of Centerville, Virginia; daughter Elizabeth and son-in-law Jonathan Seiger of Silver Spring, Maryland; and six grandchildren. His wife, Elizabeth, died in 2005. 🕊

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Miss out on the latest alumni gathering? Didn't receive that faculty update? Send your updated email address to alums@hds.harvard.edu and stay connected.

HDS has active alumni groups on both LinkedIn and Facebook. Search for "Harvard Divinity School Alumni" at www.linkedin.com and www.facebook.com, or write to alums@hds.harvard.edu for information about signing up. Also, stay current on School news by visiting the HDS News and Events page or by following HDS "tweets" on Twitter. More information can be found at www.hds.harvard.edu/news or at www.twitter.com/HDSNews.

Harvard Divinity School is

Educating students to teach, serve, lead, and build a better world.



PHOTO: Stephanie Mitchell/Harvard New Office

SERVING THE PLANET:

A better world starts here

The HDS Community Garden, just one of Harvard Divinity School's many sustainability efforts, was planted as a joint project of the student group EcoDiv and members of the HDS Green Team. "The idea is that we build community around the food we grow," said Timothy Severyn, MTS candidate and co-coordinator of the HDS Community Garden.



Support The HDS Fund

Help support HDS students, whose education informs world-changing action.

Visit www.hds.harvard.edu/gifts, or contact Anissa Potvin, annual giving coordinator, at 617.495.5084 or giving@hds.harvard.edu.

Calendar



MARCH 12–20

Spring Recess



APRIL 13
NOON

Noon Service
**Billings Preaching Prize
Finals**

Andover Chapel

APRIL 13
5:15 PM

The Annual Greeley Lecture for Peace and Social Justice
**Beyond Distinction, Beyond Difference: Transforming Lives in Delhi's Slum
Communities**

Kiran Martin
Sperry Room, Andover Hall

APRIL 21
NOON

WSRP Lecture
Sanctifying Ordinary Work—Catholic Laywomen and the Service Economy

Bethany Moreton
Braun Room, Andover Hall

APRIL 28
5:15 PM

Hindu Studies Colloquium Series
A Song in the Making of a Mahatma

Neelima Shukla-Bhatt
Common Room, Center for the Study of World Religions,
42 Francis Avenue

MARCH 31, 2011
4 PM

Border and Immigration Vigil

Harvard Divinity School Borderlinks group
Braun Room, Andover Hall



APRIL 11
4:30 PM

**Art, Faith, and Storytelling: Interfaith Narrative Inspired by the Harvard Art
Museum Collection**

Participants include Stephanie Paulsell, Swami Tyagananda, Rabbi Norman Janis, Hillary
Collins-Gilpatrick, and Celene Ayat Lizzio.
Common Room, Center for the Study of World Religions, 42 Francis Avenue



MAY 26

Commencement

*For the most up-to-date information on all
Harvard Divinity School events, please check the
Public Events Calendar at www.hds.harvard.edu.*