

People

News in the [May 19, 2009](#) issue

Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has hired **Katherine Hancock Ragsdale** to be its new president and dean. She is president and director of the liberal think tank Political Research Associates, is openly gay, and has sat on the boards of NARAL Pro-Choice America and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. On July 1 she will succeed Steven Charleston, who led the seminary from 1998 to 2008. Ragsdale graduated from EDS in 1997 and is vicar of St. David's Episcopal Church in Pepperell, Massachusetts. Ragsdale said she is excited to serve at EDS, "an institution that has long taught cutting-edge theology and been at the forefront of working to build a church and society that reflects the things we believe, the values we hold."

Jim Heidinger, editor and executive secretary of the theologically conservative Good News publishing organization since 1981, has announced that he will retire on July 1. The Good News movement was mainly known to United Methodists for its magazine, which argued evangelical positions against abortion rights and gay rights within the denomination. Heidinger recently said the UMC's official position that all people "are individuals of sacred worth" while gay sexual practice is "incompatible with Christian teaching" has served the church well for the last 25 or 30 years, according to the United Methodist News Service. A clergy member of the United Methodist East Ohio Annual Conference, Heidinger, 67, will be succeeded at Good News by Robert Renfroe, a pastor at the Woodlands United Methodist Church in Houston.

Stephanie Egnotovich, 62, who since 1992 edited the books of many noted scholars at the Presbyterian-owned Westminster John Knox Press—where she was executive editor—died April 13 in Arlington, Virginia, after a brief illness. "This is a tremendous loss for us, personally as well as professionally," said David Dobson, editorial director for WJK. Egnotovich worked with such noted writers as Cornel West, Letty Russell, Phyllis Trible, Walter Brueggemann, Beverly Roberts Gaventa, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, James L. Mays and J. Philip Wogaman. In the preface to his award-winning book *Credo*, the late William Sloane Coffin wrote of Egnotovich, "Seldom has an author owed so much to an editor." She had also held editorial

positions with Fortress Press and Pilgrim Press.