

Nancy Hardesty, pioneer evangelical feminist, dies

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Nancy A. Hardesty, one of the founders of evangelical Christian feminism, died April 8 in Atlanta after two years of treatment for pancreatic cancer. She was 69.

Hardesty, in recent years a professor of religion at Clemson University, co-authored an influential book in 1974 with Letha Dawson Scanzoni that presented new interpretations of biblical passages frequently used to limit women's roles in church and society. The book, *All We're Meant to Be: Biblical Feminism for Today*, was originally published by Word Books and in two more editions by other publishers.

In an essay three months ago, "Some Thoughts on Living and Dying," Hardesty said she had her share of "disappointments, slings and arrows" but also felt she lived a charmed life through her writing and teaching. "So many people have shared with Letha and me how our book . . . changed their lives," she said.

Together with a few others, the co-authors founded what is now called the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus. It "became a place of refuge and fellowship for many at the same time as it had tremendous impact on institutions such as Fuller Theological Seminary," wrote Julie Ingersoll in an online tribute on Religion Dispatches. The Ohio native also helped found *Daughters of Sarah*, a Christian feminist magazine published in Chicago from 1974 to 1995.

Hardesty earned a master's degree in journalism at Northwestern and worked as an editor at the *Century* and *Eternity* magazine before pursuing a Ph.D. in the history of Christianity at the University of Chicago. Her dissertation, directed by Martin Marty, was later published in the 1990s as "*Your Daughters Shall Prophecy*": *Revivalism and Feminism in the Age of Finney*.

Other books by Hardesty include *Women Called to Witness* and *Great Women of Faith*. Her last one, *Faith Cure: Divine Healing in the Holiness and Pentecostal Movements*, was published in 2003.