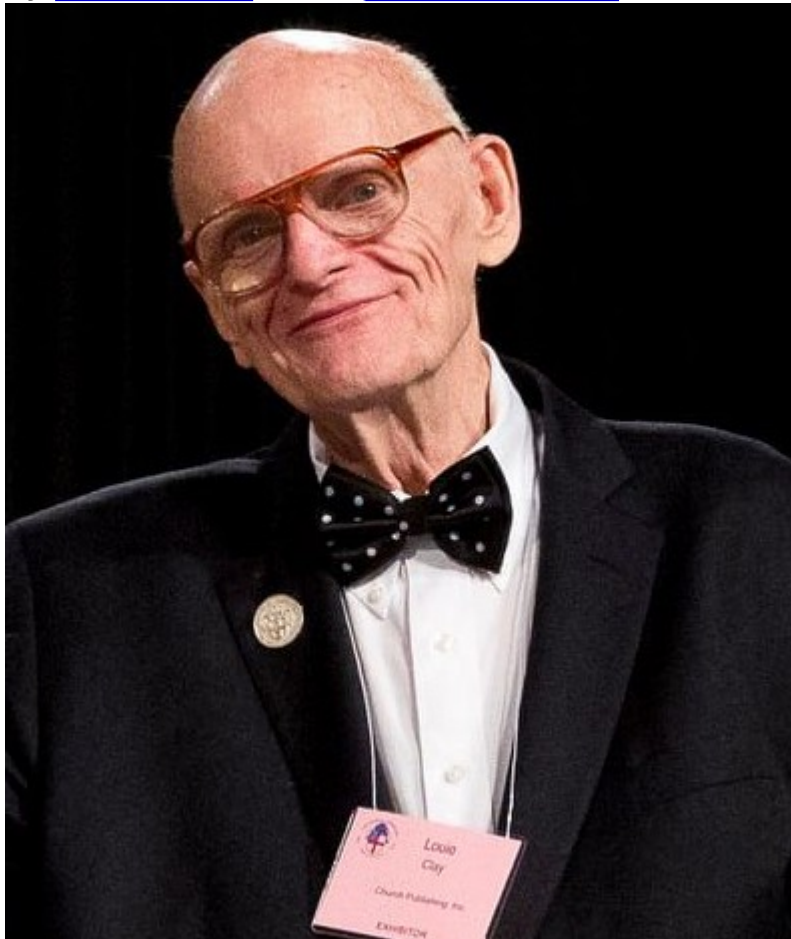


LGBTQ pioneer Louie Crew Clay dies at 82

by [Egan Millard](#) in the [January 1, 2020](#) issue



(Episcopal News Service/Cynthia Black)

Louie Crew Clay, a longtime advocate for the full inclusion of LGBTQ people in the Episcopal Church, died on November 27 at age 82 with his husband by his side, according to Elizabeth Kaeton, a close friend.

Having earned a doctorate in English, he taught at preparatory schools and universities in the United States, England, Hong Kong, and China. Most recently he taught at Rutgers University until his retirement in 2002. In 1974, he married Ernest Clay, though the marriage was not legally recognized until 2013.

In 1974, while teaching in San Francisco, he called Grace Cathedral to ask if they could help him connect with other gay Episcopalians and heard “derisive laughter”

in response. Determined to change the church's attitude, he published the first edition of a newsletter called *Integrity*, a forum for gay and lesbian Episcopalians to connect, organize, express themselves, and support each other.

"The Christian gospel is for all persons," he wrote in the first issue. "For too long has our beloved church neglected its historic mission to bring the gospel to gay people. Instead, we have typically been treated as the lowest of God's creation, too vile even to be mentionable. The hour has come for us gays to recognize that the only gift that our church has to offer us is the all-precious grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The newsletter rapidly grew into a national nonprofit organization dedicated to full inclusion of LGBTQ people in the Episcopal Church, with an official presence at every General Convention since 1977. Though it has experienced organizational turmoil in recent months—the board has faced accusations of mismanagement and lack of transparency—*Integrity's* advocacy efforts are credited with securing the most significant victories for LGBTQ Episcopalians, including official support for their access to the sacraments of holy orders and marriage.

Crew also served six terms in the church's House of Deputies, representing the Diocese of Newark, and one term on Executive Council. He was a pioneer in using the internet to spread information throughout the church and beyond.

On social media, Crew was remembered as "a holy troublemaker," "a great light," "giant of justice," and a "gift to the church." —Episcopal News Service