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Longtime faculty member Donald L. Berry, who introduced Holocaust course, dies

By [Rebecca Costello](#) on January 17, 2013



Donald L. Berry retired from Colgate in 1994 after having started his career teaching in the Department of Philosophy and Religion in 1957. (Photo by Andy Daddio)

Donald L. Berry, Harry Emerson Fosdick Professor of philosophy and religion *emeritus*, who introduced one of the nation's first college courses to explore the implications of the Holocaust for Jewish and Christian theology, passed away on Tuesday, January 15, at home in Hamilton, N.Y. He was 87 years old.

Berry, who retired from the Colgate faculty in 1994, began his career at Colgate in 1957 as a member of the Department of Philosophy and Religion and served as associate university chaplain until 1964, when he began teaching full time. He taught a wide range of courses, especially New Testament and Contemporary Theology, as well as in the General Education Program, instituting the Holocaust course in 1970.

He held a number of administrative posts at Colgate, including department chair and director of the summer IBM Program for Executives, and chaired the inauguration committees for two Colgate presidents, Vincent Barnett and Thomas A. Bartlett.

In 1988, he was named the Harry Emerson Fosdick Professor of philosophy and religion, and in 1992 received the Sidney J. and Florence Felten French Award for Inspirational Teaching.

Also an Episcopal priest, he was ordained in 1950 in the Congregational Church, now part of the United Church of Christ, and served parishes in Marion, Ind., and Norwalk, Conn. After moving from the Colgate

chaplaincy, he renewed his interest in the Anglican tradition, and was confirmed in the Episcopal Church in 1965. He was ordained to the diaconate of the Episcopal Church (1971), and to the priesthood (1972).

While a professor at Colgate, he also served as part-time supply priest in many parishes in the Diocese of Central New York, and was interim at several local parishes. He was also rector at St. George's (Chadwicks) from 1976 to 1990.

He was actively involved in diocesan affairs, serving on the Commission on Ministry, Committee for the Continuing Education of the Ordained, the Ecumenical and InterReligious Affairs Commission, and the search committee for the 10th bishop of the diocese. For 18 years, he was a reader for the General Ordination Examinations of the national church.

A member of the American Academy of Religion and past president of its Eastern-International Region, Berry was also a member of the Society for Values in Higher Education and The Conference of Anglican Theologians. He was the author of many reviews and articles in scholarly and professional journals, along with six books, including *Mutuality: The Vision of Martin Buber* (1985, recently reissued) and *How to Listen to a Sermon* (2011). He earned his degrees from Goshen College (BA), the University of Chicago (BD), and Yale University (STM, PhD).

His survivors include his wife, Wanda Warren Berry (professor of philosophy and religion, *emerita*), of Hamilton; daughter Martha and her two sons; daughter Ruth and her husband; and three nephews, Bruce Keith, David Malott, and William Malott.

A requiem mass will be celebrated at St. Thomas' Church in Hamilton at 10 a.m. Friday, January 25. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts can be made to Colgate University (designated for student financial aid) or to St. Thomas' Church (designated for the music fund) in Hamilton. For more information about services or to leave a condolence message, please go [here](#).

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Donald L. Berry



Donald L. Berry, retired Colgate University professor and Episcopal priest, died on January 15, 2013, at home in Hamilton, New York. He was 87 years old.

He was born in Goshen, IN, September 3, 1925, the son of William Thomas Berry and Florence Adele Depew. He was educated in the Goshen City Schools, and, in 1943 enlisted in the US Army. After a period of military service, he attended Goshen College, from which he was graduated in 1947. He received his BD Degree from the University of Chicago in 1950, and STM [1954] and Ph.D. [1959] degrees from Yale University.

He joined the Colgate University faculty in 1957 as Assistant [then Associate] University Chaplain and member of the Department of Philosophy and Religion, moving into full-time teaching in 1964. He taught a wide range of courses, especially New Testament and Contemporary Theology, as well as the General Education Program. He introduced in 1970 one of the nation's first college courses to explore the implications of the Holocaust for Jewish and Christian theology. He held a number of administrative posts at Colgate, including department chair, director of the summer Program for Executives, and chaired the Inauguration Committees for Presidents Barnett [1963] and Bartlett [1969].

In 1988, he was named the Harry Emerson Fosdick Professor of Philosophy and Religion, and was the 1992 recipient of the Sidney and Florence Felton French Award for Inspirational Teaching. He retired from Colgate in 1994.

He was a member of the American Academy of Religion and was past president of its Eastern-International Region. He was a member of the Society for Values in Higher Education and The Conference of Anglican Theologians [past president].

He was the author of many reviews and more than 40 articles in scholarly and professional journals, and six books: *Mutuality: the Vision of Martin Buber* [1985], *Traveler's Advisory* (a volume of poetry) [1990], *A Perspectival Approach to the Study of Religion* [1991], *Through a Glass Darkly: the Ambiguity of the Christian Tradition* [2006], *Holy Words and Holy Orders* [2009], and *How to Listen to a Sermon* [2011].

Throughout his years in Hamilton he was an active participant in the Hamilton and Sherburne Community Choruses, the Hamilton Operetta Society, and the Hamilton and Sherburne Music Theaters. He was baritone soloist in a number of works, including Brahms' A German Requiem, Bach's Magnificat, and Handel's The Messiah. His many stage roles include the Grand Inquisitor ["The Gondoliers"], Sir Roderick ["Ruddigore"], Matt ["Take Me Along"], Colonel Pickering ["My Fair Lady"], Ben Franklin ["1776"], The Learned Judge, ["Trial By Jury"], Papa Yoder ["Plain and Fancy"], PooBah and Mikado ["The Mikado"], and Noye [Noye's Fludde"]. He was also organist and choir master at St. Thomas' Church, Hamilton, from 1970-1972, and a past president of the Hamilton Club.

He was ordained in 1950 in the Congregational Church, now part of the United Church of Christ, and he served parishes in Marion, IN, and Norwalk, CT. After moving from the University chaplaincy, he renewed his interest in the Anglican tradition, and was confirmed in the Episcopal Church in 1965. He was ordained to the diaconate of the Episcopal Church [1971], and to the priesthood [1972]. While a professor at Colgate, he also served as part-time supply priest in many parishes in the Diocese of Central New York, and was interim at parishes in Chenango Bridge, Hamilton, Baldwinsville, Clinton, Utica, Mexico, New Hartford, Chittenango, and Sherburne. He was also rector at St. George's [Chadwicks] from 1976-1990.

He was actively involved in diocesan affairs, serving on the Commission on Ministry, Committee for the Continuing Education of the Ordained, the Ecumenical and InterReligious Affairs Commission, and the Search Committee for the 10th bishop of the diocese. For 18 years, he was a Reader for the General Ordination Examinations of the national Church.

His **survivors** include Wanda Warren Berry, his wife of 55 years; their two daughters, Martha Louise Berry and her sons, Samuel Thomas Evans and Benjamin Michael Evans of Canastota, and Ruth Elizabeth Berry and her husband Michael Boardman of Evans, GA. He also is survived by three nephews, Bruce Keith of Sycamore, IL, David Malott and his family of Blanchester, OH, and William Malott and his family of Plattsburgh, NY. He was predeceased by two sisters, Evelyn Keith of Melrose Park, IL, and Vada Malott, of Blanchester, OH.

A **Requiem Mass** will be celebrated at St. Thomas' Church, Hamilton, NY, on January 25 at 10 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, please make **memorial gifts** (designated for student financial aid) to Colgate University, Hamilton, NY, or to St. Thomas' Church (designated for the music fund) 12 Madison St., Hamilton, NY.

The ashes later will be interred at the Colgate cemetery.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Burgess & Tedesco Funeral Home, 25 Broad St., Hamilton. To sign the Book of Memories or send a condolence go to www.burgessandtedescofuneralhomes.com.

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