



Atlantic School of Theology community mourns founder

Archbishop Emeritus James Martin Hayes

The Honourable Mayann Francis, Chair of the Board of Governors, and The Rev. Neale Bennet, President of Atlantic School of Theology (AST), express the University's sorrow and gratitude on the passing of Archbishop James Martin Hayes (Holy Heart Seminary '47, Atlantic School of Theology Doctor of Divinity '87).

"Archbishop Hayes was a man of great ecumenical vision, deep faith, and generous heart," said Chair Francis. "He had boundless compassion and concern for others, especially the sick and the dying. Archbishop Hayes was a pioneer of palliative care in this region and was particularly attuned to the need for care of the spirit. And he helped people draw on their faith as a source of strength at trying times."

The Most Reverend Hayes was widely regarded as a pioneer and leader, serving as the ninth archbishop of the former Archdiocese of Halifax (1967-1990) and participating in the Second Vatican Council (1965). He also played a vital role in the founding of the Atlantic School of Theology in March 1971 – marking the first time that three denominations united to form one educational institution in Canada.

The work of Hayes as priest, bishop and Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax has been recognized nationally and internationally over the years for exemplifying courageous, thoughtful service in the face of tragedy. From the day he became a priest in 1947, Hayes devoted himself to helping people of all faiths – and those with none – in times of profound suffering. Patients and medical professionals alike have shared stories of how his compassion and care helped them, and their loved ones, navigate the difficult journeys of illness and death. Even in his retirement, he continued to make himself available to others in need, serving as a chaplain in Palliative Care with the Queen Elizabeth II Health Science Centre until April 2012.

The Atlantic School of Theology celebrated this legacy in May 2015, when Archbishop Hayes was present for the announcement of a new centre named in his honour: the Archbishop James M. Hayes Centre for Pastoral Care and Pastoral Theology focused on Human Suffering; Palliative Care; Trauma and Loss.

“Atlantic School of Theology is committed to maintaining the kind of leading-edge pastoral care and theology teaching and research that Hayes envisioned when he helped found this University,” said Rev. Bennet. “The ongoing work of this Centre will celebrate and build on the difference he has made in the lives of so many people over the years.”

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