

Be it resolved that the Arts and Science Council deeply regrets the passing of Professor Leslie Dewart, a former member of the Graduate Department of Philosophy and the Centre for the Study of Religion. Professor Dewart died in Toronto on December 20, 2009, just days after his 87th birthday.

Born in Madrid, Spain in 1922, he was raised by his mother in Cuba. Coming to Canada at the age of 19, he served in the Royal Canadian Air Force in bomber-reconnaissance operations on the Atlantic Coast from 1942-1947, subsequently becoming a Canadian citizen. He then began his studies at the University of Toronto. Professor Dewart's academic interests were wide-ranging, and evolved considerably over the course of his career. He first graduated with a BA in Honours Psychology in 1951. He then enrolled in the Graduate Department of Philosophy, receiving his MA in 1952 and his PhD quickly thereafter in 1954. He began his teaching career in Philosophy at the University of Detroit in 1954, then returned to Toronto to teach at St. Michael's College in its then independent Department of Philosophy from 1956 to 1968. He was appointed to the Department of Philosophy, School of Graduate Studies in 1961. His interests in theory of knowledge and religion then led him to join the Department of Religious Studies, St. Michael's College in 1968 to 1975, and he served in the Institute of Christian Thought there from 1969 to 1979, and the Faculty of Theology from 1968 to 1988. Among his other appointments in the field were: Chair of the University of Toronto Combined Departments of Religious Studies (1970 to 1971), Professor in the later University of Toronto Department of Religious Studies (1975 to 1988) and the Graduate Centre for Religious Studies (1976 to 1988 – the year of his retirement). During this time, Professor Dewart Strongly argued for the continuation of a place for Theology in these University divisions.

During his time in Philosophy and Religious Studies, Professor Dewart served in editorial or advisory capacities for journals such as *Continuum*, *Internationale Dialog Zeitschrift*, *Concurrence*, *Studies in Religion – Sciences religieuses* and *Journal of Ultimate Reality and Meaning*.

In the late 1970's Dewart turned his attention to the study of law, receiving the LLB from the Faculty of Law, University of Toronto in 1979, and was called to the Ontario Bar in 1981.

Professor Dewart published five books during his career:

Christianity and Revolution, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1963) an analysis of the Cuban revolution.

The Future of Belief, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1963) translated into six languages, which challenged the classical metaphysical conception of God, and received wide press.

The Foundations of Belief, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1996)

Religion, Language and Truth, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), pp. 174

Evolution and Consciousness: The Role of Speech in the Origin and Development of Human Nature, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989)

His wide-ranging interests were represented in numerous scholarly articles, and other contributions, covering philosophy, theology, religion, politics, war, peace, law, and showed an abiding interest in language, truth and metaphysics. He was never far from the centre of theological controversies.

Leslie Dewart is survived by his wife Doreen, his four children from his first marriage to the late Professor Joanne McWilliam, also of the various departments concerned with religious studies, University of Toronto, and his twelve grandchildren.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be inscribed in the minutes of Council.