

## In Memoriam: Ewert Cousins 1927–2009

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**Ewert H. Cousins**, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus at Fordham University, and internationally renowned theologian, died in his home on Saturday, May 30, at age 82 after enduring 2 years of difficult health challenges. Dr. Cousins served as the Director of Fordham's Spirituality Program. As the chief editorial consultant for the innovative 107 volume Paulist Press series, *The Classics of Western Spirituality*, he forged new ground in inspiring interreligious dialogue. This seminal opus brought together the best scholarship in the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions and created the impetus for numerous worldwide interreligious conferences, bringing members of different faiths together in dialogue.

Dr. Cousins was the General Editor of the 25-volume series, *World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest* (Crossroads). He authored the provocative and prophetic text, *Christ of the 21st Century* and *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*. His other publications include *Process theology: Basic Writings*, *Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey into God*, *the Tree of Life*, *the Life of Saint Francis*; *Global Spirituality Toward the Meeting of Mystical Paths*, and *Hope and the Future of Man*. Cousins had a profound ability to integrate the wisdom of religion, spirituality, theology, philosophy, depth psychology, and literature. His vast and synthetic mind could easily encompass the nature of the psyche, according to Carl Jung, a psychological perspective that he found most harmonious in relation to some of the most critical and reflective insights of religion and theology. *The Journal of Religion and Health: Psychology, Spirituality, and Medicine* was most honored to have him serve on our Editorial Advisory Board for nearly 10 years.

Cousins was born and raised in New Orleans, joined the Society of Jesus at age 18, and entered seminary studies at Grand Coteau, LA. In his early Jesuit years, he worked on the Rosebud Reservation where he found himself deeply drawn to the vibrancy and depth of Native American spirituality. This experience ignited a yearning to explore the religious experience of a diversity of cultural traditions, including a 1-year study of Islam at the Tantar Ecumenical Institute in Bethlehem, Palestine, and many trips to India to study

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Hindu spirituality. His education continued at Spring Hill College (B.A.), St. Louis University (S.T.L.), and Fordham University where he completed his Ph.D. in Philosophy with a concentration on Medieval Theology. He left the Jesuit Order in 1960 and joined the Fordham University Faculty of Classics and the Theology Department where he taught from 1960 until 2002.

He also taught as visiting professor at New York University, Barnard College, and Columbia University in religious studies. As past President of the American Teilhard de Chardin Association (1971–1975), he taught at the Foundation beginning in 1964. During his tenure, he organized a conference on “Hope and the Future,” which involved German and American theologians, and a conference on the ecological issues of “Limits to Growth” with members of the Meadows team at the New York–New Jersey Federal Trade Commission. He was also a member of the Advisory Board, Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, Co-Convener, Commission on World Spirituality, and was consultant to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 1973–1984. In 1975, he coordinated the Spiritual Summit Conference at the United Nations where he had the privilege of introducing Mother Teresa to the assembly.

Ewert Cousins touched the lives of persons whom he met because he was always open to discovery. He was ever-curious, accompanied by an innate and keen intelligence that drew seeking minds toward his magnetic presence. He had the most admirable quality of “willingness.” He was willing to serve on many doctoral committees with candidates undergoing their rite of passage. Never soft, he was a persistent inquirer into the inner and outer worlds of human nature in relation to God. At the same time, he always displayed a cheerful optimism and appeared to others as a person of passionate and confident faith in the innate bridge between the human and divine. Cousins was predeceased by his first wife Kathryn McCambridge and survived by his second wife Janet Kvamme Cousins, son Hilary, daughters Sara and Emily, and six grandchildren. A wake was held on June 5th and the funeral mass on June 6 at the Roman Catholic Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, CT.