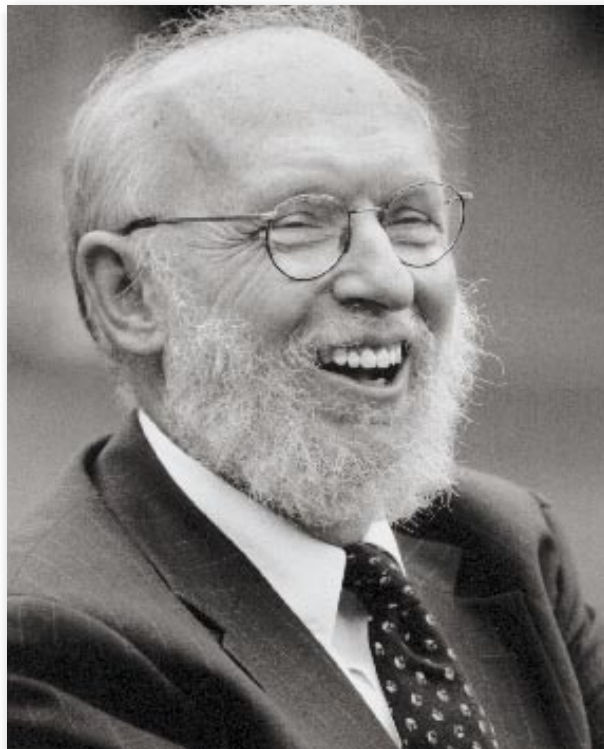


YDS BIDS FAREWELL TO “THE DAVIDS”

by Gustav Spohn '73 M.A.R.

TWO DAVIDS, BOTH GREAT teachers and wonderful friends, retired on exactly the same day after many years on the Yale Divinity School faculty. What could be more timely than to invite David Kelsey and David Bartlett to take a (slightly humorous) look at each other? That is precisely what happened at the annual Yale Divinity School spring faculty dinner on May 3, 2005. Each spoke briefly, yet eloquently, about the other—and entertained the audience as well.

Bartlett, the Lantz Professor of Preaching and Communication, came to Yale Divinity School in 1990. Using Bartlett's curriculum vitae as the framework of his reflections, Kelsey reflected, “The plot of the narrative outlined by David Bartlett's CV is driven by a stubborn struggle against the power of academic specializations to divide what many of us believe God has joined together: disciplined study of Scripture and the actual practice of preaching. In his own person he puts the lie to the old adage that in theological education those who can, preach, and those who can't, teach. David's CV is the narrative of how he has managed to spend his life



David Bartlett '67 B.D., '69 M.Phil., '72 Ph.D., who served for many years as academic dean, will perhaps be missed most for his outstanding preaching classes.

doing both with unexcelled power and grace. Such persons are very rare in theological education, and places like YDS especially need as many of them as they can find. In his retirement the school's loss is great.”

Kelsey, the Luther A. Weigel Professor of Theology, began teaching at Yale Divinity School in 1965. Bartlett said of Kelsey, “*To Understand God Truly* is the title of David's book on theological education, and part of what we cherish about him is that rare insistence that the true love of God must always include love of the truth. That passion is evident in every book and article David writes, in every class he teaches, and in his persistent, forty-year, nagging insistence that this school exists always and only for the loving service of God... David's love of neighbor is also a love of truth. One thing his students and colleagues admire in him is his astonishing ability to say what we wanted to say better than we could say it. He is generous toward other theologians and generous to his conversation partners. How many times have we heard him clarify our last statement in such a way that we not only know he gets it, we discover that we begin to get it too. I am never more clear, articulate, or insightful than when he reshapes what I just said.”

Kelsey's plans for retirement are formidable:

“My hope going into retirement has been that I'll be able, without interruption, day-after-day, to sit in front of my computer and finish a writing project I've already been working on for so long it has become a byword among acquaintances, a source of amusement among my friends, and a threat to domestic tranquility. It's a book of theological anthropology. It is preposterous, after all, that the time it takes a theologian to complete a book on *anthropos* should begin to approximate the time it took *anthropos* to evolve in the first place. So I have found the best attitude for me to adopt in retirement is that I'm entering an unusually long sabbatical (the “long sabbatical”?) that's pretty much like every sabbatical I've been fortunate to have.

“We expect to continue to live in the home we love in Branford, Connecticut. My wife, Julie, is deeply engaged by her ministry at Grace and St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hamden, Connecticut, and is not about to retire. We're both in good health. We have children and

grandchildren scattered from Alaska to Massachusetts whom we are eager to see more often; we hope that the greater flexibility of my schedule will make it easier for us to find more times when we can both be free to do that. And then there are bound to be unexpected developments, and we hope to swing gracefully with them.”

When asked about his plans after retiring from YDS, Bartlett admitted that he's also quite busy:

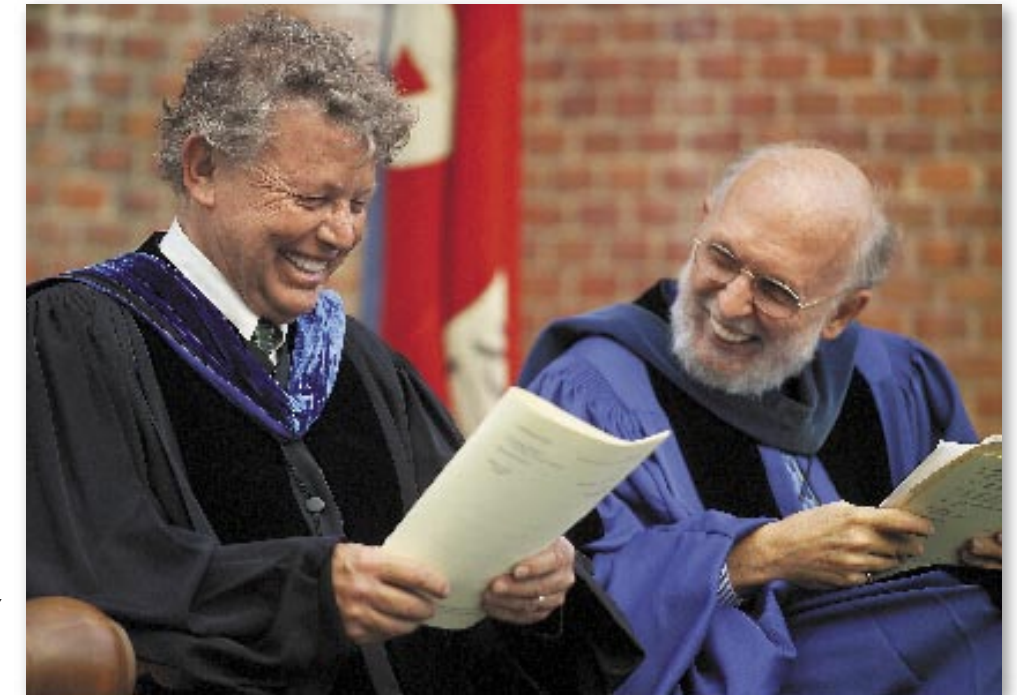
“I have accepted a three-year appointment as professor of New Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, a seminary that primarily trains pastors for Presbyterian parishes. I have just completed writing the section on Matthew for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge's (SPCK's) new volume, *The Fourfold Gospel*, and have agreed to serve as co-editor with Barbara Brown Taylor for Westminster/John Knox's new multi-volume resource for lectionary preaching. I'm also leading adult education series at two different Atlanta churches this year and will have some opportunities to preach.

“Carol, my wife, continues to work as a clinical social worker, now at the North Georgia United Methodist Children's Home, where she has primary responsibility for ten adolescent girls. We continue, of course, to have strong ties to Yale. I'll return to team teach a continuing ed course with Bob Wilson next summer, and our plan is (really) to retire to our home in North Haven in three years.”

To read the full texts of David on David, visit http://www.yale.edu/divinity/notes/050601/notes_050601_david.html.



David Kelsey '58 B.D., '60 M.A., '64 Ph.D. in the classroom, where he often did his finest work at YDS.



Kelsey and Bartlett at Commencement 2004.