

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WJK Mourns Death of Executive Editor Stephanie Egnotovich

Louisville, KY—WJK is deeply saddened to report the death of our dear friend and colleague, Stephanie Egnotovich. Stephanie passed away on Monday, April 13, 2009, in Arlington, Virginia, after a brief illness.

Stephanie had been with WJK since 1992, most recently as executive editor. During that time she worked on some of the very best, and best-selling, books that WJK has published over the last twenty years.

“This is a tremendous loss for us, personally as well as professionally,” said David Dobson, editorial director for WJK. “She was the consummate editor and a tireless advocate for her authors. She had a tremendous combination of gifts: the ability to tease out the possibilities in the germ of an idea, a superb gift for the language, a knowledge of the academic and publishing fields that ran both deep and wide, and a wonderful sense of humor and wit. Above all, she was a joy to be around.”

Some of the books she worked on while at the press include *African American Religious Thought: An Anthology*, edited by Cornel West and Eddie Glaude Jr., the revision of the *Women’s Bible Commentary* by Carol Newsom and Sharon Ringe, *Hagar, Sarah, and Their Children: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, edited by Letty Russell and Phyllis Trible, *Imagining Redemption*, by David Kelsey, and *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*, by Marjorie Thompson. Walter Brueggemann, Beverly Roberts Gaventa, John Hayes, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, Thomas G. Long, Ann Weems, J. Philip Wogaman, and Gary Dorrien are among the many other authors she worked with over the years.

One of the authors she worked closely with for many years was the late William Sloane Coffin. In the preface to his award-winning and best-selling book *Credo* he wrote of Stephanie: “Seldom has an author owed so much to an editor.”

“Stephanie was genuinely beloved by her authors, perhaps because we knew that she genuinely cared about us and our work,” said Beverly Roberts Gaventa, Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary. “A private woman herself, she respected the writer’s need for privacy, but she also delighted in getting to know us. She listened graciously when things were going badly, she read

carefully and respectfully, and she rejoiced with our small victories. Her infectious joy in living triumphed over even in seasons of her own adversity. We will powerfully miss her.”

“I was quite dismayed to learn of Stephanie’s death,” said Walter Brueggemann, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary. “This will be a great loss to the enterprise of theological publishing as well as an immense loss of a fine friend to so many of us. Over the years she helped to edit a good bit of my work, and I always found her to be not only professionally competent but personally engaged with what I was doing. She was a consummate professional with a willing and generous heart. It will be hard to imagine our common work without her navigating skills. My work is better because of her and I will grieve her loss in deep ways, even as I give thanks to God for her.”

“She was much more than an editor to me,” said the poet Ann Weems. “She was a very dear friend who was adamant about allowing me to speak my faith in poetry. I weep with the rest of you!”

“She was the best editor I’ve ever worked with—and one whose wisdom I trusted to the hilt. I will miss her sincerely as a friend, an editor, and an all-around wonderful human being,” said Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, Professor of Homiletics at Yale Divinity School.

Patrick D. Miller, Professor of Old Testament Theology Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary and a senior consultant to WJK, said, “Stephanie was a superb editor, vigorous in pursuit of quality projects and gently candid when she did not think a proposal was satisfactory in substance or in practical terms. She was the first editor to engage me in a direct way about my manuscript. The result was a much improved book and my realization of how crucial the assistance of a good editor can be to a book’s success. Like many, I am sure, I shall remember her most for her friendship that transcended the editor-author relationship. Her warm smile was always the first thing I saw when we would run into each other.”

Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, Eisenberger Professor of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, said, “Stephanie had a marvelous sense for what would work and what was needed. She knew I had a book in the making before I knew it myself. Her knowledge of audience and of feminism made every edit she proposed in my manuscripts worth working on, and her collaborative and supportive style made every chapter better.”

“My association with John Knox and Westminster has been a long one,” said James L. Mays, Professor of Old Testament Emeritus at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond. “During much of that time Stephanie has been a treasured colleague. She has been both friend and skilled editor . . . perceptive, encouraging, frank, and very knowledgeable . . . and always a pleasure to visit.”

Before coming to WJK, Stephanie was managing editor for Fortress Press and, later, senior editor for Pilgrim Press. She also served as vice president for Publisher's WorkGroup.

Arrangements are pending.

Stephanie is survived by her sons, Michael and Jonathan, her daughters-in-law, Claudia Link and Kelly Egnotovich, and five grandchildren, Sophie, Caroline, Juliet, Alexander, and Anna. She was preceded in death by a grandchild, Nathalie. Her surviving siblings are Gregory, Douglas, and Joanne Dobrzynski.

Condolences may be sent to the family at 821 Larch Valley Court, Leesburg, VA 20176. Donations in Stephanie's memory may be made to the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation, 383 Main Avenue, 5th Floor, Norwalk, CT 06851.
www.multiplemyeloma.org.

A Web page has been set up for friends to leave their cherished memories. It can be accessed at <http://stephanie.wjkbooks.com>.