

**F**OR MANY OF HIS STUDENTS, H. EVAN RUNNER WAS more than just a professor of philosophy at Calvin. He was a mentor, a teacher, a prophet and a father. He was inspirational and confrontational. And he had a life-changing impact on Calvin students that causes ripple effects around the world yet today.

Runner died of cancer on March 14, 2002. At his memorial service Runner's former students attested to the zeal and zest that Runner brought to his teaching and to their scholarship.

Professor Al Wolters, of Canada's Redeemer University, said simply: "His students were much more than students. They became friends and disciples. I was one of those." Wolters noted that when he finished his thesis at the Free University in the Netherlands, where Runner had also taken his doctoral degree, he dedicated it to two people. One was his father. The other was Runner. "He was like a father to me," said Wolters. "And he was my one teacher, my magistro. I thank God for that."

Harry Fernhout, president of the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) in Toronto, noted that Runner in many ways was responsible for the creation of the ICS. In the 1950s Runner gave inspirational leadership to the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship (AACs) in Canada. In 1967 this Association opened the Institute for Christian Studies, a Christian graduate school where faculty and students explore Runner's vision of an integral, interdisciplinary philosophy as a key component to a thorough Christian contribution to education and culture.

In fact, in April 2001 the ICS honored Runner's contributions to its founding with the creation of the H. Evan Runner Chair in the History of Philosophy,

installing Dr. Robert Sweetman as the first holder of the new chair. At an event held on Calvin's campus to celebrate the new chair, which Runner, despite his already failing health was able to attend, Calvin president Gaylen Byker paid tribute to the strength of Runner's vision for a thoroughly Christian approach to philosophy and noted that Calvin's new core is still shaped by his influences.

Indeed in 1993 Runner was awarded the prestigious "Faith and Learning Award" by the Calvin Alumni Association. The award is granted by the Association to honor a current or former Calvin College faculty member who has successfully and consistently integrated faith and learning in the classroom. This recipient is a master teacher, making a significant impact on Calvin students in training for a life of service in God's Kingdom.

Runner was born January 28, 1916 in Oxford, Penn., and attended West Philadelphia High School and then Wheaton College in Illinois before going on to do graduate work at a number of institutions, including the University of Pennsylvania, Westminster Theological Seminary, Theologische Hogeschool in the Netherlands, Harvard Divinity School, Westminster Theological Seminary and the Free University in the Netherlands. He taught high school English and Latin from 1943-1945 at Eastern Academy in Paterson, N.J. and then taught at Calvin from 1951-1981.

He and his wife, the former Elisabeth Hendrika Wichers, were married from December 1947 until her death in October 2000. They have three children, Evan, Cathy and Jocelyn, and many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

*Phil deHaan,  
Calvin's media relations director*

## H. Evan Runner 1916-2002

