

# Former seminary president Honeycutt dies at 78\_11005

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**By Trennis Henderson**

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP)—Roy Honeycutt, retired president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, died Dec. 21, one day after suffering head injuries in a fall at his home in Louisville, Ky. He was 78.

Honeycutt, a noted Old Testament scholar, was elected president of Southern Seminary, also in Louisville, in 1982.

His 11-year tenure as president paralleled much of the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative shift.

Roy Honeycutt
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Many remember Honeycutt for one headline-making speech in 1984, when he declared “holy war” on the “hijackers,” a reference to fundamentalist leaders leading the effort to gain control of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Honeycutt immediately became a target in the controversy. As the seminary's board shifted to fundamentalist control, he came under increased pressure to resign. He retired in 1993, at age 67, three years earlier than he planned.

Bill Leonard, dean and professor of church history at Wake Forest Divinity School, joined Southern's faculty in 1975, the same year Honeycutt was named dean of Southern's School of Theology.

"In many ways, Roy was a bridge-builder," Leonard recalled.

Honeycutt's efforts at bridge-building included working with the five other Southern Baptist Convention seminary presidents to draft the "Glorieta Statement" in 1986.

Adopted at the height of the SBC controversy, the Glorieta Statement declared the seminary presidents' commitment "to the resolution of problems which beset our beloved denomination." But the document largely was ignored by conservative leaders, who already controlled most of the seminaries' boards.

Honeycutt was a graduate of Mississippi College, Southern Seminary and the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Prior to being elected president in 1982, Honeycutt served as provost, theology school dean and professor of Old Testament at Southern. He previously was academic dean and chair of the Old Testament department at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. He also was pastor of churches in Kentucky, Indiana and Mississippi.

Honeycutt and his wife, June, were longtime members of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville. In addition to his wife, he is survived by two children, Roy Lee and Mary Anne.

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