Religion at the Heart from the Start
Message from the Dean

Dear HUSD Community,

Our commemoration of Howard University School of Divinity’s Vision 100 Centennial Convocation continues with a push for alumni and friends to contribute in support of the Vision 100 goals. Meanwhile, our participation in the University’s sesquicentennial celebration has only just begun: The Time is Always Now!

In this issue of The Divinity Magazine, we conclude the 2016-17 academic year with a multitude of special memories to share, new wisdom for the meaning of these days, and a renewed sense of our calling as a community. This has been a year of fresh and provocative conversations at the School of Divinity. To start, we proudly kicked off the academic year with a focus on our University’s historic legacy and the School of Divinity’s central place therein. This spring, we turned our attention to new frontiers, evidenced in a series of exciting program and curriculum updates.

New programming at the School of Divinity in religion and science, restorative justice, and Islamic studies are the most recent permutations of our historic mission as a social justice institution. We are a community of learned and engaged scholars faithfully advocating in houses of worship, institutions of higher learning and the public square. At HUSD, we speak truth to power and in love. Our legacy is agency.

HUSD’s legacy grows with the retirement this year of distinguished faculty members Delores H. Carpenter, M.Div. ’69, Ph.D. and Michael Willett Newheart, Ph.D. Rev. Shirley A. Gravely-Currie, M.Div. ’06, MBPA has also retired, having served first as our masterful development director and then as major gift officer. Finally, I would be remiss not to mention the conclusion of my own term of leadership as dean of the School of Divinity after ten years of service. HUSD, there is no more venerable institution in all of theological education. It has truly been my honor to serve!

Inside the pages of this issue, you will have the chance to learn more about the late and much beloved Dr. Gene Rice, the members of the HUSD Board of Visitors, the advancements achieved through fifteen years of Pillar of Faith awards, and the United Church of Christ’s fundraising work to secure $1.5 million dollars and endow the American Missionary Association Chair for the Ph.D program. With all of you, we celebrate 150 years and move Forward Stronger with confidence in the God of our ancestors who calls us for the transformation of this world.

We are HUSD – leading with Head and Heart!

Alton B. Pollard III, Ph.D.
Dean
About This Issue

This Sesquicentennial Issue of The Divinity Magazine celebrates the 150th anniversary of the chartering of Howard University in 1867. This issue also examines the study of religion and its role in the establishment and the ongoing success of the University. Read about the School of Divinity’s history, as well as the exciting new frontiers in curriculum, research and programming that are already propelling the school into the bright future envisioned by its founders more than a century and a half ago.

“The Time is Always Now!”

Contents

4 Advancement Developments
6 AMA Pillar of Faith Update
8 Religion at Howard: At the Heart from the Start
15 A Gift of Service
18 Getting to Know the HUSD Board of Visitors
22 What’s Happening at HUSD
24 Dr. Gene Rice: Beloved Servant of Howard University School of Divinity
26 Leading with Head and Heart: News and Updates
The mission, vision and work of Howard University School of Divinity is supported by its alumni, parents and friends in a variety of ways. The generosity of our beloved community helps HUSD enroll the brightest and most promising students, ensures the quality of our academic programs and facilities, and inspires others to give in kind. Gifts both great and small have both an immediate and long term impact on the future of Howard and its students.

Through the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 2017, we continue the request from Vision 100 Convocation Chair, Dr. Cheryl J. Sanders, that each alumnus/a and friend of HUSD consider making a gift of $100 or more to the Vision 100 Centennial Convocation Fund. The fund supports three HUSD initiatives: programming for recruitment, leadership development events for divinity students and fellowships for emerging scholars in residence.

In addition to the many endowed scholarships referenced here, donors are invited and encouraged to consider contributing through the one of the following options:

**Planned Giving** - For donors looking for secure income during their lifetimes as well as tax benefits for themselves and their heirs, planned giving can be a solution. Planned gifts are extremely flexible and provide an array of strategies to respond to different financial climates and individual and family needs and goals.

**Retirement Plan** - As a donor, regardless of your age, retirement gifts will not affect your current assets. They can be made by designating a modest percentage to Howard University as a beneficiary of your retirement plan.

**Bequests** - Increasingly, bequests, or legacy gifts, are being considered by donors during difficult economic times because they offer economic flexibility.

**Charitable Gift Annuity** - This entails a donor giving a lump sum to HUSD, which in turn gives the donor a fixed percentage annual payment and a tax deduction. The older the donor, the larger the payout percentage is. Upon the death of the donor (or on the death of both the donor and another person designated by the donor), the original sum goes to Howard. While payout schedules are lower in a down economy, they also offer donors the advantage of a sure bet.

**Charitable Remainder Trust** - Money or assets are given in trust to a charity such as Howard University. In February of each year, the assets are valued and a percentage payout to the donor (or commonly, the donor’s children) is determined. At the end of the trust’s term, the assets become the property of the charity (Howard University).

**Charitable Lead Trust** - This is the flip side of a charitable remainder trust. The charity gets annual payments based on the assets’ value during the term of the trust. At the end of the term, the donor’s beneficiaries get the assets. In a down economy, charitable lead trusts can be a tax-effective way to transfer money to the next generation while benefitting a favorite charity in the meantime.
The vision to endow the American Missionary Association (AMA) Chair for Religious Studies is on the verge of being realized, with more than $1.2 million raised to date. That we are within reach to endow this chair, a key milestone in establishing the long-awaited Ph.D. program, is thanks in no small part to a committed group of volunteers made up of United Church of Christ (UCC) Friends of Howard University School of Divinity, as well as HUSD staff. For the last 15 years, these volunteers have worked to endow this chair to memorialize the AMA’s role in the founding of Howard University and the School of Divinity.

A Protestant-based abolitionist group founded in Albany, New York in 1846, the American Missionary Association sought to eliminate slavery, educate African Americans and promote racial equality and Christian values. In honor of these efforts, the funds raised will directly support a historic Ph.D. program focused on biblical studies, African-American religious studies, ethics and public policy.

The primary fundraising vehicle has been the Floyd Jenkins Pillar of Faith Awards Program, which has honored community leaders, local and national, who have demonstrated the values of the namesake. The initiative kicked off with a $500,000 grant from the United Church of Christ. However, the reality of reaching $1.5 million to endow the chair depended on the generosity of committed donors. The fundraising program was conceived in 2001 and was named in honor of the late James Floyd Jenkins, a layman, community advocate and founding member of the UCC Friends of HUSD. Jenkins was instrumental in leading discussions on the historical connection between the UCC, AMA and Howard University.

The Pillar of Faith award is designed to recognize individuals like Jenkins who have had an extraordinary impact on students, peers, academic institutions, churches and the global community. The award also recognizes and encourages excellence in ministry, and honors clergy and lay leaders whose accomplishments have transformed and enhanced their communities. Since the first annual fundraising awards program in 2002, 144 honorees have been recognized for their vast and varied contributions to society.

“The AMA Endowed Chair will provide resources for the expansion of faculty and staff, student aid, curriculum development, capital improvements, and technology,” said Dr. Alton B. Pollard III, dean of the School of Divinity. “Through strong partnerships with committed donors that help to endow this historic program, HUSD can further its tradition of educating and forming religious leaders, scholars and clinicians for cutting-edge solutions in the communities they serve.”

Expressing profound appreciation to the dedicated members of the planning committee he went on to say, “On behalf of the School of Divinity, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Central Atlantic Conference of the UCC, Anita Jenkins, widow of the late James Floyd Jenkins, and all who have joined us on this providential journey and supported this critical need.”

For more information on how you can support the AMA religious studies Ph.D. program and help further this important work, please visit Giving.Howard.edu or call (202) 806-0500.

Rev. Shirley A. Gravely-Currie, MBPA, M. Div. ’06, is a former major gift officer for Howard University assigned to the School of Divinity. Since 2009, she spearheaded the Pillar of Faith awards program on behalf of the School of Divinity.
The School of Divinity is a graduate and professional school of Howard University, one of the leading comprehensive research-oriented, private universities in the nation. HUSD offers several degree programs, which not only reflect the African-American cultural and religious tradition, but also deliver unparalleled educational experiences and prepare graduates for careers of excellence. School of Divinity degree programs include: Master of Divinity (M.Div.), M.Div./Master of Business Administration, M.Div./Master of Social Work, Master of Arts in Religious Studies, and Doctor of Ministry.

The School of Divinity actively seeks and recruits the most talented and motivated students from all backgrounds. Located in the nation’s capital, our students are afforded the unique opportunity to be active participants in the work of local churches of all denominations, as well as with nonprofit organizations and other community building programs. Through the Washington Theological Consortium, HUSD students are able to explore the many connections among the various faith communities in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Upon graduation, students are well prepared for pastoral ministry, university, hospital and military chaplaincies, teaching, social justice and public policy advocacy, lay ministry and leadership, and research vocations in their respective fields of specialty.

NEW MDIV/MSW DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM – FALL 2017
This fall, the Howard University School of Divinity and School of Social Work will launch a new, dual degree Master of Divinity/Master of Social Work (M.Div./MSW) program. The M.Div./MSW dual degree will provide an integrated course of study to prepare graduates for leadership in both social service agencies and ministry. The degree will provide them with the clinical and administrative skills needed to serve contemporary congregations and organizations. Due to the sequential nature of the dual degree program, applicants will only be admitted in the fall semester and must be full-time students.

NEW MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERRELIGIOUS CHAPLAINCY – FALL 2018
Starting Fall 2018, HUSD will receive candidates for the new Master of Arts in Interreligious Chaplaincy Program, the first of its kind in the country. The program addresses the growing need for an academic program designed for Christian and Muslim chaplains who are committed to becoming exemplary scholar-practitioners in intercultural and interreligious contexts.

Our distinguished community of scholars, theologians and researchers from around the world invites you learn more about the opportunities that await you at the School of Divinity. Pursue your calling with us as we fulfill our mission “to educate and equip academic and religious leaders to serve the Church and society and celebrate the religious and cultural heritage of African Americans, the African Diaspora, and Africa.”

TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE VISIT DIVINITY.HOWARD.EDU OR CALL (202) 806-0710.

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Alumni Updates

GOALS OF THE HUSD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

1. TO KEEP ALUMNI INFORMED
   a. Develop an accurate directory of contact information (specifically focusing on e-mail addresses).
   b. Establish satellite associations in some of the cities where Divinity School Alumni reside.
      - The purpose of the satellite associations is for alumni who live in the respective cities to help the School of Divinity alumni maintain contact with graduates and help support alumni activities, programs and events.
      - Satellite associations also work closely with the Howard University Alumni Association Clubs in their respective areas. It is our hope that this will further generate support for the HUAA as a whole as well as the HUSDAA in particular.
   c. Planning meet and greets for new officers and members

2. TO SUPPORT HUSD
   a. Work closely with dean and HUSD Student Government Association
   b. Host the Convocation Alumni Banquet to:
      i. Honor HUSD Alumni and
      ii. Raise Scholarship Funds for HUSD

3. TO FOSTER A SENSE OF PRIDE IN ALMA MATER

At the Vision 100 Convocation Banquet, HUSD alumni were honored in the following categories:

2016 HONOREES

PASTORAL/MINISTRY
- Blair Alexander ’15
- Melody N. Brown ’07
- Melvin Clifton Green ’88, ’95
- Ruth D. Harvey ’94
- Debra Gail Winston Lopez ’03
- Peggy Miller ’05
- Seretha B. Pearsall ’11
- Ella Redfield ’90

PROFESSIONALS AND EXECUTIVES
- Shirley A. Gravely-Currie ’06

EDUCATION/PUBLICATIONS
- Darryl Sims ’99

COMMUNITY BASED/POLITICAL/LEGAL AND JUDICIAL
- Allie B. Latimer ’87, ’88

CHAPLAINCY/COUNSELING
- Viola Bradford ’12, ’14, ’17
- Cecilin L. Chisholm ’02
- Clarence L. Cross Jr. ’74
- Betty M. Green (M.Div. Candidate)
- Glenda Jennings Harrison ’94
- Troy Fernando Statton ’05

HUSD ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS 2015-2017

Robert G. Childs, President
Joseph A. Fobbs, 1st Vice President
Carl Bently, 2nd Vice President
Joyce E. McPhail, Recording Secretary
Joi Orr and Darryl Owens, Corresponding Secretaries

Oran Young, Treasurer
Audrey Daniel, Chaplain
Aubrey Winbish, Parliamentarian

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SCHOOL OF DIVINITY HONORS DAY
May 12, 2017, 3-5 p.m.
Dunbarton Chapel, Houston Hall
West Campus

HOWARD UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT
May 13, 2017, 10 a.m.
Main Campus

A DECADE AS DEAN: CELEBRATION
HONORING DR. ALTON B. POLLARD III
May 19, 2017, 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Dining Room, Houston Hall
West Campus

ORIENTATION FOR NEW, TRANSFER
AND FORMER STUDENTS
August 14-16, 2017

FIRST DAY OF CLASSES,
FALL 2017 SEMESTER
August 21, 2017
Holy Cross Hall, West Campus

HUSD 101ST CONVOCATION:
“ADVANCING OUR PROPHETIC
LEGACY”
November 8-10, 2017
As Howard University celebrates its sesquicentennial year, the School of Divinity, like many family members at a milestone birthday, reflects on our own relationship to the family legacy. Just as the study of religion was at the core of the founding story of Howard University, the School of Divinity continues to play an important role in the University’s bright future.

First conceived after a monthly prayer meeting at the First Congregational Church in Washington, D.C. in 1866, church members and leading abolitionists met the next day and agreed to establish the Howard Theological Seminary. It was named for General Oliver Otis Howard, commissioner of the Freedmen’s Bureau, who was present on both evenings.

The vision for what would become Howard University swiftly evolved. Only two weeks later, the idea expanded to become The Howard Normal and Theological Institute for the Education of Teachers and Preachers. By the time the incorporation of The Howard University was signed into law by President Andrew Johnson on March 2, 1867, founders embraced the unique opportunity for this new institution seated in the nation’s capital. Howard was created, in large part, to respond to the vast unmet needs of more than four million people recently freed from enslavement by the Emancipation Proclamation. The intent to prepare ministers in the spirit of excellence in learning and service has been central to the University’s purpose from its installation. Its anticipated reach has since stretched from local communities to across the nation and the globe.

Within the university’s first two years, several departments were established, including law, medicine, rhetoric, English literature, Latin and Greek. Professors from these new departments began informal outreach to advance the study of religion, inviting local Black ministers to participate in classes that focused on Bible study and sermon preparation. In 1870, the Theology Department was organized.

Mordecai Wyatt Johnson, a trained theologian, began his tenure as university president in 1926. Not long after, the School of Religion was established in 1932, marking the academic elevation of the study of religion. Under these new, elevated standards, only college graduates with a bachelor’s degree from a recognized school were admitted. Faculty were also better prepared, and all had access to improved resources including a new, larger space in the Carnegie Building, and a library that grew to nearly 40,000 volumes. In 1939, the American Association of Theological Schools first granted accreditation under the leadership of esteemed Dean Benjamin E. Mays. When it did, Howard became the only Historically Black theological school to gain its accreditation solely based on its own academic program.

More than 150 years after its establishment, Howard University is home to a School of Divinity on the cutting edge of building bridges, working across disciplines and reaching out to find students in nontraditional settings. In that spirit, the school will launch a new certificate program for chaplaincy in interreligious studies in 2018, which you’ll read about in the story, “A Mecca for Islamic Studies: Groundbreaking Interreligious Chaplaincy and Other Initiatives at HUSD.”

In addition to preparing Christian and Muslim chaplains, HUSD is working to help address the questions about humanity, identity and purpose that invariably arise through scientific studies. Funded by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), HUSD is concluding a three-year pilot program to integrate science into theological education. Learn about it in the second part of this feature, “HUSD Explores the Age-Old Relationship Between Religion and Science.”

Another way that HUSD is building relationships for the future and bringing people together is through the Inside/Out program, which connects students from universities and students who are incarcerated. Through the readings and dialogue, students integrate their theoretical knowledge with lived experiences, pondering spirituality in the context of the prison industrial complex and the cradle to prison pipeline. The third story in this feature, “Inside/Out: HUSD at the Forefront of the Penal Instruction Movement,” explains this important initiative.

The School of Divinity is poised to provide a moral imperative for Howard University to continue to respond to the great needs and complex global concerns of our time. As we anticipate the future, we reflect on the words of early Howard theologian John Ewell, D.D. “However great may be the future expansion of the University – and may its usefulness have a manifold increase – may that department with whose thought it had its birth ever have an honored place in all its activities and in the care of its guardians.”
New Frontiers in Curriculum at the Howard University School of Divinity
A Mecca for Islamic Studies: Groundbreaking Interreligious Chaplaincy and Other Initiatives

By Dana Sealy, M.A. ’17

The Islamic studies program at Howard University School of Divinity has made great progress. Led by Zainab Alwani, Ph.D., associate professor and founding director, the program has placed students and faculty at the forefront of current events and intriguing conversations within the Christian and Muslim communities. The program’s extensive course work and authentic, hands-on methodologies continue to foster critical thinking.

The HUSD Islamic studies programs are designed to bridge the gap between the Muslim and Christian communities by giving students a deeper understanding of both religions through dialogue and reconciliation. This unique concentration is being supported by grants, scholarships, and study abroad opportunities.

“Although the goal of the program is to have the students eventually assume positions of interreligious leadership in their own communities and actively apply their instruction in a real-life setting,” says Alwani, “the study of Islam and the Islamic world also opens opportunities for personal and professional advancement.”

Howard University is widely reflective of the growing significance of Islam in the U.S. and within its student, staff and faculty composition. The Islamic studies program is consistent with the University’s position as a culturally diverse, comprehensive, research intensive and Historically Black private university with a vision ‘to expand its international footprint and role and provide environment of open discourse.’ These commitments are key parts of the school’s mission to celebrate the religious and cultural heritage of African Americans, Africans and the Diaspora. Likewise, within our theological vision to relentlessly ‘search for truth’ is embedded the very notion that God is not the exclusive prerogative of any one religious tradition, and that higher education, dialogue and fellowship can promote social justice and peace.

The School of Divinity has created a new Doctor of Ministry degree program launching in the fall of 2018 to train Muslim and non-Muslim students in Interreligious Chaplaincy. With Dr. Jay-Paul Hinds set to serve as one of the initial co-directors for the program, approved students will complete the two-year, forty-eight credit hour Master of Arts curriculum and an additional twenty-four hours of study to complete the Master’s in Interreligious Chaplaincy. The D.Min. in Islamic studies is in progress, which will attract students to join for the 2018-2019 school year.

In the spring of 2012, Alwani introduced HUSD World Café Dialogue as part of the course curriculum. Facilitated by interfaith leader Taalibah Hassan, the program draws together dozens of notable Christian and Muslim scholars, interreligious community professionals, and students from the School of Divinity and Washington Theological Consortium to engage in a group dialogue designed to expand participants’ world view, while renouncing fear and distrust.

The dialogue is one of many innovative activities, field trips, and lectures coordinated by Alwani and her students as part of the Islamic studies courses at the School of Divinity. While customary coursework in Quranic studies, Ethics, Hermeneutics, Islamic Jurisprudence, and the Arabic language are requirements, additional classes in Chaplaincy and other interreligious courses are in the works to attract both Christian and Muslim students, as well as students of other faith traditions.

Alwani has authored and co-authored a wide variety of publications in both Arabic and English, including textbooks, book chapters and scholarly articles on topics such as Muslim women’s scholarship, domestic violence, Quranic studies and family law. Some of her latest publications include: “Socioeconomic and Gender Justice in the Quran”, “Modern Challenges in Poverty and Wealth in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam” and the article “An Analytical Reading of the Methodology of the Quran’s Structural Unity (al-wahda al-binaiyya) iyya li-l-Qur’ân” in the Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice. She co-edited a special issue of the MuslimWorld Journal, and is currently editing the inaugural issue of the Journal of Islamic Faith and Practice. Additionally, she is working on two book projects dealing with Muslim women and children in the age of war and destruction and Muslim women’s religious scholarship.

Dana Cooper-Sealy, M.A. ’17 is the first woman to receive a master’s degree in Islamic studies from HUSD along with a certificate in Muslim-Christian studies from the Washington Theological Consortium.

DR. ZAINAB ALWANI ISLAMIC STUDIES ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

The School of Divinity is grateful for the newly-established Zainab Alwani Islamic Studies Endowed Scholarship. This endowment is a dedicated source of funding meant to support the students and enhance the teaching and research mission of the certificates and degrees in Islamic studies. The endowment can provide financial support for the School of Divinity for generations to come. Awards are available to matriculating graduate students with a concentration on Islamic studies or who enroll in the Interreligious Chaplaincy Program. Students must be willing to serve as either a researcher or graduate assistant to the associate professor of Islamic studies and may produce a final product for possible publication in peer review journals.
HUSD Explores the Age-Old Relationship Between Religion and Science

Howard University School of Divinity (HUSD) is among 10 theological schools involved in a pilot project to integrate science into theological education funded by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). In this new venture, seminary faculty are, under the advice of scientists, addressing the findings and questions raised in science and technology to demonstrate the relevance of their subject matter to what’s going on in the world.

HUSD has approached this project from the perspective of its unique history and mission. The guiding vision of the School of Divinity’s founders and their successors has been the design of theological education for religious leadership in the pursuit of justice for the marginalized and oppressed.

Such a collaboration of scholars across the university is in fulfillment of the university’s mission, especially in addressing the questions about our humanity, identity, community, and purpose that are inevitably raised through scientific studies and applications of the human genome to matters of health and well-being in minority populations. At the University Sesquicentennial Event in February, sponsored by the School of Divinity and the National Human Genome Center, this vision of using science as a way to demonstrate and explain theology was dubbed “Soul Genomics.”

The three-year project, which nears its close in May 2017, has resulted in the creation of numerous resources including syllabi, videos, study guides, and reports for faculty at other theological schools. These invaluable resources and findings may be accessed at the AAAS website www.scienceforseminaries.org and on HUSD’s own site www.hureligionandscience.org.

“Such a collaboration of scholars across the university is in fulfillment of the university’s mission, especially in addressing the questions about our humanity, identity, community, and purpose …”
What is your theological anthropology?

What is the difference between moral intuition and moral reasoning?

In what ways can you identify the circumscription of your moral agency?

These are just a few of the thought-provoking questions posed by Dr. Harold Dean Trulear, associate professor of applied theology, to students in Howard University’s new Inside/Out Prison Exchange Program. Different from a typical School of Divinity class, Inside/Out is an initiative that brings education courses to the District of Columbia Jail, with students divided evenly between seminarians and “inside students” or jail residents.

Students from universities and students who are incarcerated are brought together to learn the rationale of the criminal justice system, restorative justice, the prison industrial complex and the cradle to prison pipeline. Through the readings and dialogue, students will be able to integrate their theoretical knowledge with lived experiences. The program began in 2015 and brought Howard University into the growing number of higher education institutions offering courses in America’s prisons and jails.

“We don’t use the term inmates,” said Dr. Trulear, whose own experience of incarceration informs his teaching. “The term used in this project is ‘inside students.’ I use ‘residents’ to free us from stigma.” He began teaching in Sing Sing Prison in New York in 1991 as part of New York Theological Seminary’s Master’s program there. His experience has informed his teaching and his motivation to help these students. He also directs a national research and demonstration prisoner reentry project called Healing Communities USA.

“Normal recidivism rates for those returning from incarceration range from 40 to 60 percent nationally,” said Dr. Trulear. “But with persons who attend college in prison, the rates go down into the single digits.” Several HUSD faculty members have been recruited to present guest lectures and lead discussions with the program’s nearly 30 participants. Along with Dr. Trulear, Dr. Gay L. Byron, associate dean for Academic Affairs and professor of New Testament and early Christianity; Dr. Michael Willet Newheart, professor of New Testament language and literature; Dr. Jay-Paul Hinds, assistant professor of pastoral care, practical theology and psychology of religion; and Dr. Leah Gaskin Fitchue, visiting professor from Virginia Union University, comprise the Inside/Out teaching team.

Fitchue encouraged several students from Virginia Union University Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology to register through the Washington Theological Consortium. Virginia Theological Seminary and Reformed Seminary have consortium students in the class as well. Divinity students have reported that the discussions in this class are among the best they’ve had at the school.

Dr. Bahiyah Muhammad, Inside/Out director and associate professor of sociology, shares Dr. Trulear’s vision that Howard can one day be part of a network to deliver instruction in penal settings for credit and even full degrees. She teaches the course “Inside-Out: Crime and Justice Beyond the Wall,” a unique opportunity to explore issues of crime and justice from inside a correctional facility. It is through this exchange that Dr. Muhammad hopes to critically analyze and challenge the current U.S. system that has resulted in the highest incarceration rate in the world.

Dr. Trulear is optimistic about the prospects for students of this program. “Some of the best students I’ve had in my four decades of seminary teaching have been prisoners,” he said, “Today they are pastors and bishops, professors and social workers, non-profit agency directors and government administrators. I expect the same from this cohort at D.C. Jail.”

HUSD hopes to make its participation in the university’s Inside/Out program a regular part of the curriculum. University faculty is stepping forward to engage persons impacted by the criminal justice system. HUSD students, faculty, staff and members of the Board of Visitors have all expressed excitement and support for the work being done. Standing in its tradition of truth and service, the School of Divinity will be at the forefront of these efforts.
Committed to the advancement of the Howard University School of Divinity (HUSD) and a champion of those in need, Rev. Shirley A. Gravely-Currie has unceasingly worked to develop the vital support needed to make the programming, recruitment, research and scholarships of our nationally-recognized school possible.

Rev. Gravely-Currie began her career at HUSD in 2005, in the Office of The Journal of Religious Thought, where she served as assistant to Dr. Cain Hope Felder, professor of New Testament language and literature. She earned her Master of Divinity degree in 2006 and assisted Dr. Felder until she was recruited to serve as the school’s director of development in 2008 by Dean Alton B. Pollard III.

As director, Rev. Gravely-Currie raised funds on behalf of the School of Divinity and coordinated numerous development activities including HUSD Day at local churches, the annual James Floyd Jenkins Pillar of Faith Award and the establishment of numerous scholarships. She also helped to secure a three-year, $500,000 grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. which established the Forward Stronger Initiative to strengthen, sustain and advance the Howard University School of Divinity by helping to build capacity to raise funds.

As part of the University’s restructuring of the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, Rev. Gravely-Currie’s role evolved last year to that of major gift officer, where she managed prospects from not only the School of Divinity, but also from the Schools of Education, Arts & Sciences, Liberal Arts, Medicine and Communications.

In addition to her work at Howard, Rev. Gravely-Currie has dedicated her life to serving and advocating for abused children, at-risk youth, victims of domestic violence, cancer patients, and the spiritually disenfranchised, among others. An active member of Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church in Washington, D.C. since 1981, she is part of the church’s Caring Ministry Team, has taught Vacation Bible School and served on the Administrative Slate of the church. She has also supported women diagnosed with breast cancer as a breast cancer navigator for Smith Center for Healing and the Arts.

She has received numerous awards, including the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of the Nation’s Capital Henry W. Edgerton Civil Liberties Award for her courageous leadership against War on Drugs policies that disproportionately affect minorities in the District of Columbia. She also holds a bachelor’s degree in business education and a master’s degree of business and public administration.

She and her husband Ulysses Currie, Maryland State Senator, are residents of Prince George’s County and have one son, Aris Ulysses.
For more than 26 years, Dr. Michael Edward Willett Newheart has served Howard University School of Divinity as a devoted faculty member, unceasingly supporting students and fellow faculty in the research and examination of the scriptures and of themselves.

He joined HUSD as an assistant professor in 1991 and went on to become an associate professor in 1997, before becoming a full professor of New Testament language and literature in 2006.

Prior to his time at Howard, he began his career at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1986. He served as an adjunct professor at several distinguished schools including Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Nazarene Theological Seminary, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and William Jewell College. He was also taught at Saint Paul School of Theology and spent time as a foreign missionary in Costa Rica with the Southern Baptist Convention in 1987.

Dr. Newheart is a poet and an exegete. He has written several books and publications, including My Name is Legion: The Story and Soul of the Gerasene Demoniac, for which he has continued an art project reviewing paintings throughout the world; Word and Soul: A Psychological, Literary, and Cultural Reading of the Fourth Gospel; and Wisdom Christology in the Fourth Gospel. His self-described “theological ramblings” also include “The Soul of the Father and the Son: A Psychological (yet Playful and Poetic) Approach to the Father-Son Language in the Fourth Gospel” (1999) and “A Poetic Journey,” Journal of Religious Thought (2005).

Currently, he is working on a book comparing the letters of Paul during his imprisonment to other spiritual leaders and ordinary souls in the criminal justice system. He seeks to provide spiritual alternatives to violence and is a “green teacher,” speaking of a “green Jesus” who respects and promotes love for creation and ourselves.

Dr. Newheart has often been awarded for his work and leadership including a Featured Teacher at Howard University Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Assessment; for Exemplary Syllabus in the Howard University Humanities Division; Honorable Mention in Scripture from the Catholic Press Association; and the Distinguished Professor Award from Howard University School of Divinity Student Government Association.

Dr. Newheart holds a Ph.D. and an M.Div. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a B.A. from William Jewell College. He is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature.

He and his wife Joy have two adult daughters, Ana and Miranda.
Delores Carpenter, M.Div., Ph.D., ‘69
Professor of Religious Education

A world renowned preacher, celebrated pastor, and respected university administrator and educator, Dr. Delores Carpenter has based her extraordinary career on her deep-rooted belief that all aspects of worship and liturgy are breeding grounds for Christian education.

Upon her graduation from the School of Divinity in 1969, Dr. Carpenter became the first woman in the University’s history to earn a Master of Divinity degree. She returned to alma mater in 1982 as an assistant professor of Religious Education and became a full professor in 1999.

She was exposed to a variety of Christian faith traditions from a very early age, especially through the influence of her mother and grandmother, and was called to preach at the young age of 14. Dr. Carpenter was the first woman ordained in the Progressive Freewill Baptist Church and transferred her credentials to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1973. She served as senior pastor of the Michigan Park Christian Church for 25 years and in 1993 was heralded as “one of America’s greatest preachers” by EBONY.

Dr. Carpenter’s primary research has been on Master of Divinity graduates nationwide who are African American women, from 1972–1999. Her findings are described in her book, A Time for Honor: A Portrait of Black Clergy Women, which provides helpful data on the paths clergywomen take. The book also proposes ways for congregations to collectively break the “stained-glass ceiling” through the acceptance and use of the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation. She is also the visionary and editor of the best-selling African American Heritage Hymnal and the author of numerous articles and book chapters on religious education, liturgy, hymnology and homiletics within African American Christian traditions.

Always generous with her time and talent, Dr. Carpenter is the founder and chair of the board of the African Heritage and Cultural Institute of America, Inc. She has also served many important roles within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), including as president of the National Convocation, and has been a long-time member of the Religious Education Association.

Her legacy at Howard University is her conviction and declaration that Christianity is the “harmonious synthesis of disparate facets: pastor and professor; sermon and song; Christian education and Christian faith; not competing but complementary.”

Dr. Carpenter has two daughters, Jane Carpenter-Rock, Ph.D. and Susan A. Carpenter Blomquist, AIA.
Alton B. Pollard III, M.Div., Ph.D.  
Dean of Howard University School of Divinity  
Professor of Religion and Culture

With selfless commitment to students, faculty, alumni and the entire School of Divinity community, Dr. Alton B. Pollard III has served Howard University faithfully for a decade, providing leadership and care “with head and heart.”

Throughout his career and his tenure at Howard University, Dean Pollard has been a steadfast leader, scholar and teacher helping “to equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12). His work and research focuses on African American religion and culture, sociology of religion, Black church studies, theological education and leadership, faith and health, and American religious cultures.

Dean Pollard has played a crucial role as champion for the advancement of HUSD, making connections with alumni and the local community and helping to secure major gifts and grants, including serving as principal investigator for the program “Equipping the Saints: Promising Practices in Black Congregational Life” and, more recently, for a $500,000 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to build an innovative, more inclusive approach to fundraising within the school. This grant permitted the launch of Forward Stronger HUSD, an initiative to strengthen, sustain and advance Howard University School of Divinity.

An ordained Baptist minister, he has served congregations in Tennessee (AME), Massachusetts and North Carolina. He is an associate minister at Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ in Washington, DC, board member and consultant to numerous organizations. He has lectured, preached and traveled throughout Africa and the Diaspora.

His record of service and spiritual leadership led him to be selected to serve on the White House Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS under the Obama administration. He has also provided leadership as chair of the Commission on Accreditation for Association of Theological Schools in the U.S and Canada, and recently concluded his term as chair of African American CEO’s and CAO’s in Theological Education.


Dean Pollard holds a bachelor’s degree with honors from Fisk University in B.A. with honors in religion and philosophy and business management, an M.Div. from Harvard University Divinity School and a Ph.D. from Duke University’s department of religion.

He and his wife Jessica Bryant Pollard, a high school counselor, have two adult children.
Board of Visitors

GETTING TO KNOW THE HUSD BOARD OF VISITORS

The Board of Visitors of the Howard University School of Divinity serves in an objective advisory capacity to enhance the work of the administration, faculty and staff of HUSD. As an outside group of distinguished individuals, the board provides insights, access to resources, community support and a vehicle for alumni engagement with the mission and vision of HUSD. The Board of Visitors advises the president, the provost, the HUSD dean and the Board of Trustees. The chair the board is also a member of the Howard University Board of Trustees. We invite you to learn about our esteemed members of the HUSD Board of Visitors and the invaluable experience and contributions they bring in their service to the School of Divinity.

The Honorable Marie C. Johns
BOARD CHAIR

The Honorable Marie C. Johns is founder and president of L&L Consulting, LLC, and has been a leader in business, community and government service for more than 30 years. She was nominated by President Barack Obama and unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve as deputy administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) from 2010 to 2013.

In addition to other duties, Mrs. Johns chaired the president’s Interagency Task Force on Veterans’ Small Business Development, and advocated for Start Young, an SBA/U.S. Department of Labor initiative that provides entrepreneurial training to Job Corps students.

Prior to government service, Mrs. Johns held senior positions in the telecommunications industry, including as president of Verizon-Washington. Under her leadership, the company developed and implemented a regulatory plan that served as a model for the corporation. Her efforts helped produce the SEEDS program (Students Educated for Economic Development Success), which prepared students who had dropped out to complete their high school requirements and receive technical training for jobs in the telecommunications industry. More than 200 students were employed as a result.

She is the recipient of numerous business and civic awards and has chaired several boards including the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Leadership Greater Washington and the D.C. Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Johns serves on the Howard University Board of Trustees and was the founding board chair of the HU Middle School of Mathematics and Science until her appointment to the SBA.

She received both her Bachelor of Science and Master of Public Administration degrees from Indiana University.

Rev. Barbara Williams Skinner
BOARD VICE CHAIR

Rev. Barbara Williams-Skinner has made an indelible imprint in American public policy, government, diversity, and community relations as a trusted advisor, public policy strategist, faith and community leader, author, lecturer, educator, executive coach, and mentor. Considered one of Washington’s most influential leaders in the faith community, Rev. Williams-Skinner is included in 2008’s “Presidential Who’s Who Among Business and Professional Achievers.” She also served on the White House Faith Counsel, focusing on the issues of human trafficking.

She was the first female executive director of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and continues to serve as an advisor to the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and CBC members. Rev. Williams-Skinner and her late husband, Tom Skinner, co-founded the CBCF Prayer Breakfast nearly 30 years ago.

She earned a B.A. from San Francisco State University and a Master of Social Work and J.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles. She also earned her M.Div. and D.Min. from HUSD.

She is the mother of two adult daughters through marriage, grandmother of 11, godmother of seven, and trusted advisor and friend to countless mentees and protégés across the nation.
**Rev. Geoffrey A. Black**

Rev. Geoffrey A. Black, a graduate of Lincoln University and Yale Divinity School, was elected general minister and president of the United Church of Christ (UCC) in June 2009, and served until 2015 when he retired. In a prior role, Rev. Black served as conference minister of the New York Conference United Church of Christ.

As a local church pastor, Rev. Black served on several committees and held a number of elected offices. He was chairperson of the New York Conference Commission on Mission Priorities and also served as moderator of the conference.

Since leaving office in 2015 and following a sabbatical, Rev. Black has resumed active participation in the mission and ministry of the United Church of Christ with an approach that he calls “selective engagement.” With this approach, he serves as visiting professor of Leadership and Ecumenical Studies at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Additionally, he accepts speaking and preaching engagements to support the Joseph Evans Scholarship of the United Church of Christ and shares in the leadership of Jazz for the Journey, a national ecumenical symposium focused on the intersection of Jazz and worship.

Rev. Black and his wife, Patricia reside in Lakewood, Ohio. They are active members of South Haven United Church of Christ in Bedford, Ohio.

**Rev. Delman Coates, Ph.D.**

Rev. Delman Coates has served as the senior pastor of Mt. Ennon Baptist Church in Clinton, Maryland since 2004, where the church’s ministry campus and land holdings have expanded to accommodate some 9,000 members. They have also established and incorporated the Mt. Ennon Development Corporation (MEDC). In October 2009, Outreach Magazine named Mt. Ennon one of the 100 Fastest Growing Congregations in the U.S.

Rev. Coates is the recipient of many prestigious awards. In 2008, The African American Pulpit honored him as one of the 20 to Watch. The Root also named Rev. Coates as one of their 100 African American Achievers and Influencers in 2013. The same year, the American Civil Liberties Union honored Dr. Coates for his commitment to advancing civil rights and liberties for all, while Ebony selected him as one of their Power 100.

He is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, the Morehouse College Board of Preachers, the NAACP, and a board member of the Parents Television Council and the National Action Network.

Rev. Coates holds a bachelor’s degree in religion from Morehouse College, a Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School, and both a master’s degree in philosophy in religion and a doctorate in New Testament and early Christianity from Columbia University.

Dr. Coates and his wife Yolanda Walsh Coates have been married for 21 years and are the proud parents of four children: Nathaniel, Joshua, Ava Marie and Leah Blair.

**Rev. James Coleman**

Rev. James Coleman accepted the Call and was installed as pastor of All Nations Baptist Church on May 18, 1991. His leadership roles include serving on the Executive Board as a past president of the National Association of Student Affairs, as executive committee member of the NAACP for Washington, D.C., as past chairman of the board of Hearts and Homes for Youth, and as former president of the Missionary Baptist Ministers’ Conference of Washington, D.C. and vicinity. He served as assistant dean for the department of Residence Life at Howard University until his retirement in 2006.

Rev. Coleman is a contributing author of the book titled, “Many Voices - Multicultural Responses to the Minor Prophets.” His Doctoral publication is titled, “Laity Empowerment.” He has also contributed to several articles. He is a recipient of the coveted Sadie M. Yancey Award in the field of student affairs work in higher education, as well as the prestigious recognition of Roll On Productions for his exemplary leadership contributions to Gospel ministry.

Rev. Coleman received a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Illinois State University, a master’s degree in counseling psychology from Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana, and both a Master of Divinity and a Doctor of Ministry degree from The Howard University School of Divinity.

**Rev. Henry P. Davis, Ph.D.**

Rev. Henry Pinckney Davis III has been preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ since 1982, having been licensed and ordained at the St. Paul Baptist Church of Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, under the pastoral leadership of his father, Dr. Henry P. Davis, Jr. His preaching is relevant, challenging, and inspirational. In 2000, Rev. Davis was called to pastor the First Baptist Church of Highland Park in Landover, Maryland. He formerly pastored the Second Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem, New York (1993-2000) and the Community Baptist Church in Lakehurst, New Jersey (1988-1993).

Rev. Davis has been the recipient of numerous awards and citations, including being inducted into the Martin Luther King Jr. Board of Preachers at Morehouse College of Atlanta, Georgia in 2007.

Rev. Davis is a native of Wichita Falls, Texas, and studied at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He later graduated from Norfolk State University with a B.A. in English; Fairleigh Dickinson University with a master’s in public administration; New Brunswick Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity; and United Theological Seminary with a Doctor of Ministry degree.

Rev. Davis and his wife Weptanomah have one daughter and one son.

**Rev. Sidney D. Fowler, Ph.D.**

Rev. Sidney D. Fowler assumed pastoral leadership in October 2011. During recent years, he has served as interim senior minister at Westmoreland Congregational UCC in Bethesda and Hope UCC in Alexandria. He also directed the lectionary project of the Human Rights Campaign and teaches with Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation.

Prior to 2005, Rev. Fowler served for 14 years on the national UCC...
Roland J. Hill, Ph.D.
Roland J. Hill is a pastor in the Allegheny East Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the former director of Stewardship & Development for the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and founder and pastor of The International Association of Godpreneurs (IAG). Dr. Hill has been in ministry for 40 years and is the author of 18 books, including Theo-Economics, God’s Wealth System, Unlocking the Wealth Potential of Individual and Nations; Wealth Without Guilt; and Wealth: It’s in Your Worship, Not Your Works.

Along with his wife, Dr. Susie M. Hill, Dr. Hill has conducted presentations worldwide in the religious and business community, sharing his passion for Stewardship, “Theo-Economism”, and “Godpreneurship.” He has served as a pastor and as a professor at Southwestern Adventist University, Richland College, and Oakwood University.

Christal Jackson
Christal M. Jackson is the founder of Head and Heart Philanthropy (HHH), a social impact agency focused on improving social, economic and educational outcomes for communities of color. She was recently recognized by Essence for her ability to convene and curate the best and brightest in this area. Ms. Jackson attributes her success to having been groomed for leadership by the church, serving as an intern with the Children’s Defense Fund to create a marketplace for multi-million dollar initiatives focused on solving complicated social issues.

She became an entrepreneur nearly ten years ago when she launched Jackson and Associates Group, LLC, a boutique fund development and branding firm focused on serving the philanthropic needs of socially conscious people and community organizations. This venture was the launching pad for her work with some of the biggest names in sports, politics and entertainment.

Named one of EBONY’s Future 30 Leaders of America, Ms. Jackson’s work in the social impact sector has garnered numerous awards and recognition. She is the author of Women of Color Pray: Voices of Strength, Faith, Healing, Hope, and Courage, and serves on multiple boards including Harlem Tech Fund and Motown Museum of National Leadership Council.

Aimee Laramore
Aimee Laramore unites a strong interest in organizing and development with core business principles that reinforce effective management and organizational operations. She is director of seminary advancement at the Christian Theological Seminary and has more than 20 years of diverse private and public sector professional experience, with a client base spanning the gamut from health care to small business to national non-profits. She has served as consultant, coach, fund developer and strategic planner with a diverse array of organizations committed to making a difference in the lives of people.

Ms. Laramore is highly valued by clients for her penetrating insights into organizational challenges and her practical and effective analysis of potential solutions. In the arenas of fund development, strategic planning and organizational development, she is regarded as a consummate professional and highly skilled practitioner.

Ms. Laramore obtained her Bachelor’s degree from Purdue University, and earned her MBA from the University of Toledo. Ms. Laramore is a graduate of the Center for Third World Organizing and the Pratt Institute for Economic Development Internship Program.

Rev. Tony Lee
Rev. Tony Lee is the founder and senior pastor of the Community of Hope A.M.E. Church in Hillcrest Heights, Maryland. Community of Hope is recognized throughout the region for its innovative ministry, social engagement and community outreach. The church has gained national recognition for its work around HIV/AIDS, violence prevention, community/police partnerships and educational advocacy. The church’s work is also highlighted in the documentary “The Gospel of Healing.”

Rev. Lee is a contributing author for the books Being A Black Man: At the Corner Of Progress and Peril and Reach: 40 Black Men Speak on Living, Loving & Succeeding.

Rev. Lee is the board chair for the nonprofit Community Builders, a convener for the National Coalition Of Black Civic Participation’s Black Male Initiative and is an HIV Ambassador for the NAACP. He is also an on-air radio personality in the D.C. area for CBS Radio’s WPGC 95.5 FM.

Rev. Tony Lee holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Maryland at College Park and a Masters of Divinity degree from the Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

He is the proud son of Mr. Orlando W.E. Lee and Rev. Nancy T. Lee.

Annie “Annie” Mahon
Annie Mahon is an author, ordained Buddhist mindfulness teacher. She is founder of the Circle Yoga Cooperative in Washington, D.C., the Opening Heart Mindfulness Community, D.C. Community Yoga, and D.C. Yoga Week. Ms. Mahon has been writing and teaching about mindfulness, parenting, stress management and yoga since 2004. Her blog, RawMindfulness.com, is a hit with the mindfulness and yoga community and led to a book of her collected essays, Words to be With. Ms. Mahon’s latest book, Things I Did When I was Hungry: Navigating a Peaceful Relationship with Food, documents her search for sanity in her eating-disordered family life and reveals how mindfulness helped her go beyond the search for perfection and learn to love the moment.

Annie holds certifications in yoga, focusing and massage therapy and dabbles in Nonviolent Communication (NVC). She holds both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in Computer Science from the
University of Michigan, as well as a master’s in religious studies from Howard University School of Divinity.

When she is not visiting her children, teaching, traveling with her husband, drinking Jasmine tea with honey, writing or walking her dog, she practices yoga and mindfulness with her community in D.C.

Mike Muse
Mike Muse is the co-founder of Muse Recordings; a celebrated record label with a reputation of quality and innovation. With the label’s debut album release, “Marc’s Project”, an instant buzz was created. This allowed Muse Recordings’ artists to establish partnerships with the NFL (Super Bowl), NBA (summer tour), McDonalds (commercial, jingle, promotion), Starbucks (partner, acoustic tour), and Chrysler. Muse Recordings has also partnered with rap artists Sean “Diddy” Combs and Nelly on social awareness projects, as well as the United Nations “Standup” concert in New York’s Time Square. As part of the NBA’s Rhythm-n-Rims Tour, Muse Recordings’ artists shared the stage with major music superstars.

Mr. Muse has received numerous awards and recognitions. He serves as chairman of the board of directors for the Holcombe Rucker School of Community Research, a member of the board of directors for Brooklyn Child and Family Services, a co-chair of the junior committee for the Mayor’s Funds’ Fête de Swifty, and serves on the Board of Advisors for Wharton School of Business’ Whitney Young program. He has been featured twice on the cover of Crain’s magazine, an instant buzz was created. This allowed Muse Recordings; a celebrated record label with a reputation of quality and innovation. With the label’s debut album release, “Marc’s Project”, an instant buzz was created. This allowed Muse Recordings’ artists to establish partnerships with the NFL (Super Bowl), NBA (summer tour), McDonalds (commercial, jingle, promotion), Starbucks (partner, acoustic tour), and Chrysler. Muse Recordings has also partnered with rap artists Sean “Diddy” Combs and Nelly on social awareness projects, as well as the United Nations “Standup” concert in New York’s Time Square. As part of the NBA’s Rhythm-n-Rims Tour, Muse Recordings’ artists shared the stage with major music superstars.

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What’s Happening at HUSD
DR. GENE RICE: 
BELIEVED SERVANT OF 
HOWARD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

By Rev. Delores “Didi” DeLegall Rice, M.Div. ’90

I am deeply honored to be invited to prepare this tribute to Dr. Gene Rice for his devoted service to Howard University School of Divinity. He was my professor, my friend, and, in the providence of God, my dear husband for his final years. Dr. Rice was loved by so many in his beloved community and that love was received, cherished, and returned multiplied. We all miss him!

- Didi Rice

For more than half a century, Dr. Gene Rice was a beloved professor of Old Testament language and literature. The years that Dr. Gene Rice served at the Howard University School of Divinity were, to him, years spent on ‘Holy Ground’. He loved the school and saw a vision of its destiny to become one of the most important theological schools in the nation and the world. Always available to his HUSD family with a listening ear and a heart full of compassion, he genuinely cared for others, offering encouragement, consolation or whatever help was needed.

A GENTLE SPIRIT
A scholar with a quiet, gentle spirit, Gene had a deep love for God and all of creation. He radiated such peace that anyone who encountered him felt more peaceful in his presence. I never saw such a generous, giving person. He had the soul of a mystic who seemed to see the world through God’s eyes:

The glory and goodness of life;
The divine image of God in each person; and
Peace, justice and compassion throughout the world.

He began to manifest this gentle spirit at a young age. At only three years old, when his father was shot and killed, Gene was separated from his mother and three brothers, and taken by his great uncle and
aunt to live on their farm at the foot of beautiful Cumberland Mountain. Lacking playmates, Gene learned to be at home in the silence of nature and developed a deep reverence for the beauty and sacredness of life. His peaceful outlook aligned with the lyrics to one of his favorite songs, “Morning has Broken” by Cat Stevens:

“Morning has broken, like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken, like the first bird,
Praise for the singing, Praise for the morning,
Praise for it springing, fresh from the word.”

At age 19, he joined the U.S. Marine Corps during WWII, was wounded at Iwo Jima, and awarded the Purple Heart. After serving his country, Gene earned his Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary of Columbia University in New York. As a young man, he married Betty Jean, with whom he had two children, Jane and Jon. They created a cherished family.

When he grew older, Gene’s spirit resonated with his grandmother’s Quaker faith, a tradition which sees something of God in every human being, a divine spark that could ignite during silent worship inspiring someone to speak a word from the Lord. He spent most of his life immersed in the sacred treasures of scripture, soaking up wisdom and Spirit. He learned not to “spend his money on that which was not food, but to eat what was good” (Isaiah 55:2).

A CAREER OF TEACHING AND GIVING
Teaching was one of Gene’s great joys. For his students who loved the Bible, he made scripture come alive and his classes were rewarding and inspiring. He taught them how to understand and interpret it and, at the beginning of each new class, created a sense of community so that each student felt accepted and appreciated. In his Faith Development and Spiritual Formation classes, he introduced students to the hidden power in the words, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

Over the years, former students would write, call, and visit their beloved professor, thanking him for believing in them and inspiring them to pursue their dreams. I can still hear him saying, “You have a gift from God that is uniquely your own, you can do something that nobody else can do. So, go on; give God something to work with.”

Gene also wrote and published many articles on the presence and contribution of Africans in the Bible. He was painfully aware of how the Bible has historically been misused and abused to justify slavery and the oppression of African American people. His love and deep concern for dignity and justice made him determined to do what he could to help.

Some of his writings include three hymns, meditations on the Psalms, and a play, “The Apple of God’s Eye.” In the final scene of this play, based on the Creation Story in Genesis, Abraham speaks words that could have been said by the professor himself:

“I am most alive and most truly myself when I am connected to God. Then it’s as if all things become new, I feel in touch with and akin to all creation, and my heart is filled with wonder, peace, and love — it’s the most incredible joy. I am convinced that God desires this for everyone.”

Likewise, inward reflection was a big part of Gene’s spirituality. In “The Inward Journey in the Psalms,” a collection of meditations inspired by Howard Thurman, he shares:

“Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all on an inward journey because we are basically spiritual beings. We cannot live by bread alone... We have a fundamental need to experience transcendence and to know the ultimate meaning and purpose of our life.”

Gene was a man blessed by God and he knew it. He spent his life fulfilling his divine purpose - with a family he loved, doing work he loved, in his Beloved Community. When he had retired from HUSD and his dear wife Betty Jean Rice went home to glory, God did not leave him alone, but blessed him a second time with a wife and kindred spirit in yours truly, Didi McCoy Rice.

For 51 years, Gene remained in devoted service to HUSD. Its students, faculty and staff were his Beloved Community. As I reflect over the time we were blessed to share, I recall that my beloved husband began each day in silent communion with God. In his last weeks he was working intently to create his final offering:

A Liturgy to Begin the Day with God

This is the day the Lord has made,
Let us rejoice and be glad!
Today is a gift of incredible worth,
A gift from the One who made heaven and earth.
The image of God am I...
The image of God are we,
We are members of one family,
We are sister and brother made to love one another,
And to live in harmony.
Leading with Head and Heart

Read the latest news and happenings of those at HUSD serving the Church and society and celebrating the religious and cultural heritage of African Americans, the African Diaspora and Africa.

Student, Faculty and Staff News

HUSD Students Attend 2017 Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference

A group of HUSD students attended the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference (SDPC) February 20-22, 2017. The conference, which represents a cross section of progressive African American faith leaders and their congregations in the United States, was themed “The Inward Journey: Return, Remember and Renew.”

Through education, advocacy and activism, the conference seeks to strengthen the individual and collective capacity of thought leaders and activists in the church, academy, and community.

HUSD students representing the Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry programs joined the conference, including Sam Perryman (M.Div.), Samoris Hall (M.Div.), Trey Daniels (M.Div.), Brandon Greene (M.Div.), Benity Brunache-Sewell (M.Div.), Jonathan Wade (M.Div.), Siera Toney (M.Div.), Brandon Slaughter (M.Div.), and Paula Hall ’12 (D.Min.). The students participated in seminars, attended the keynote address and the banquet and assisted Serena K. Parks ’04, ’10, HUSD admissions and retention coordinator, with recruitment.

Alternative Spring Break

2017 HUSD students, staff, and alumni spent their spring break this year in service to others. As part of the 2017 Howard University Alternative Spring Break (ASB) program, participants were immersed in unique cultures to provide immediate assistance and to reflect on the challenges prevalent in communities throughout society in various locations across the country and internationally.

The School of Divinity was heavily represented in this years program. Current students Eric Jones (M.A.) and Loria McLeod (M.Div.) participated in the program in Haiti. David Belton (M.Div.) and Brandon Slaughter (M.Div.) participated in Memphis, Tennessee. Siera Toney (M.Div.) participated in Lumberton, North Carolina. HUSD staff members, Serena K. Parks ’04, ’10, admissions and retention coordinator, and Tracie West, administrative assistant to the dean, served as advisors for ASB St. Louis, Missouri and ASB Chicago, respectively. Cecil Duffie ’16, Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel assistant dean for religious life, served as an advisor for the program in Flint, Michigan.

Spring 2017 Faculty-Student Colloquium Series

The Spring 2017 Faculty-Student Colloquium Series lecture was presented by Cheryl J. Sanders, Ph.D., HUSD professor of Christian ethics and senior pastor of Third Street Church of God in Washington, DC. Dr. Sanders’ lecture was titled, “From Capstone to Mecca: Black Intellectuals and the Social Gospel at Howard University”. Responses were presented by Dr. Alton B. Pollard III, HUSD dean; Jennifer M. Long, Master of Arts (Religious Studies) candidate; and Veronica Miles, Ph.D., visiting professor of preaching, Wesley Theological Seminary. The Faculty-Student Colloquium promises to help build collegiality and collaboration among faculty and students.

Alumni News

Angela Sims, M.Div. ’98, Ph.D., academic dean and Robert B. and Kathleen Rogers Chair in Church and Society, served as the 2017 Nannie Helen Burroughs lecturer on March 6, 2017. Her topic was “Curating Truth: Black Elders’ Memories of Lynching Culture as an Embodied Ethic of Veracity.”

Sims is associate professor of ethics and Black church studies at Saint Paul School of Theology in Overland Park, Kansas. She spent two years interviewing African Americans who grew up in what theologian Dr. James Cone calls “the shadow of the lynching tree” for her “Remembering Lynching” project housed at Baylor University’s Institute for Oral History. Her book, Lynched: The Power of Memory in a Culture of Terror, was released in September 2016.

James H. Buck Jr., M.Div. ’11, has been installed as senior pastor of Grace Baptist Church of Germantown in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Rev. Clarence Luckey, M.Div. ’07, Ph.D., was elected president of the NAACP’s Lawton, Oklahoma chapter.

Cecil Andrew Duffie, M.Div. ’16, was appointed assistant dean of religious life at Howard University’s Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel.

Terence Mayo, M.Div. ’16, was recently selected to be a New Economy Maryland Fellow by the Institute for Policy Studies. This professional development fellowship builds power to create change in the great state of Maryland and beyond by training participants in mastering a compelling conceptual framework for transforming Maryland into a more equitable, environmentally sustainable and democratic state. Participants also learn how to write for a broad general audience in the op-ed and blog formats. Mayo’s focus will be on progressive issues centered around religious freedom, public education and minority communities.

Melissa N. McQueen, M.Div. ’14, was ordained in the United Church of Christ and installed as pastor and teacher to Many Voices: a Black Church Movement for Gay and Transgender Justice on October 9, 2016.
In Memoriam

Rev. Nathaniel Majekodunmi, M.A., D.Min. ’10
Rev. Majekodunmi passed on March 25, 2017
leaving behind his wife, Wuraola, seven children
and thirteen grand children, and many other
family members and friends. Rev. Dr. Nathaniel
Olakunle Majekodunmi was born in Abeokuta,
Ogun State, Nigeria, a descendant of Chief
Majekodunmi, a warrior and a pioneering
member of the establishment of Abeokuta, the
city state of the Egba people of the Yoruba tribe
of Nigeria. He received a B.A. in philosophy from Morgan State University and an M.A.
and D.Min. from Howard University. He was a registered chaplain and a recipient of
many distinguished awards. He retired as an administrator at Social Security Services
of Maryland in 2015.

Rev. Vernard L. Caples Jr., M.Div ’05 died
November 11, 2016. He is survived by his wife,
Maggie A. Caples, daughters Chandra and
Stephanie Caples, grandson, Wendell E. Foster III,
sister Jacquelyn McFadden (James), and a host of
other relatives and friends.

Rev. Clinton D. McNair, Ph.D. died March 16,
2017. He served as director of the Doctor of
Ministry Degree Program and associate professor
practical theology at HUSD from 1982-1993. His
work at HUSD was consequential, leading to the
appointments of Dr. Cameron Byrd and other CPE
directors to the HUSD faculty. While at Howard,
he also served as senior pastor of the Martin
Luther King, Jr. Baptist Church in Reston, Virginia.
Subsequent to leaving HUSD, Dr. McNair served
as dean of doctoral studies, and professor of intercultural studies at United Theological
Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. He retired in 2014 and relocated to private practice in
South Carolina.

Rev. Marian Denise Starks Martin, Ph.D. ’12 died
on March 20, 2017. She is the mother of Shauntell
Smith, and is survived by four grandchildren,
three great-grandchildren, six siblings, and many
nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.