



The Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago

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DDH Bulletin

Spring 2017

Machado named Distinguished Alumna



Daisy L. Machado, trailblazing scholar, esteemed mentor, advocate for Latino/a theological faculty, and Disciples minister, will be honored by the Disciples Divinity House at this year's

General Assembly. The Alumni/ae Council selected her as the nineteenth recipient of its Distinguished Alumna Award at their April meeting. Established in 1979, the award is given every other year. It recognizes lifelong service and achievement.

The first US Latina to be ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and one of the first Protestant US Latinas to earn a PhD in religion, Machado is Professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She is the author of *Borders and Margins: Hispanic Disciples in the Southwest, 1888-1942*, and co-editor of *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*, as
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Alumna Owens is GMP nominee



Teresa Hord Owens is the nominee for General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In August 2005, she was appointed Dean of Students at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Alongside her work at the Divinity School, Ms. Owens serves as Senior Minister of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Downers Grove, Illinois. She is an MDiv alumna of the Disciples Divinity House and the University of Chicago Divinity School.

A native of Terre Haute, Indiana, she earned her bachelor's degree in Government with a minor in Afro-American Studies from Harvard University. She began her professional career in the area of information technology, spending twenty-three

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Celebrating 25 years



On April 28 during their spring meetings, the Board of Trustees and the Alumni/ae Council marked Dean Kris Culp's completion, last summer, of twenty-five years of service.

The celebration began with a reception and panel discussion. Current House Scholar and PhD candidate Andrew Packman moderated the panel. He observed, "Like many of you, I can attest very personally to the value of the Dean's vocation and argument clarifying, institution guiding, eyebrow raising, and generally life-enriching labors. It's nearly impossible to calculate the impact of this kind of work. Its mark is left on the texture of human souls, in stimulated imaginations, invigorated loyalties, and sharpened sensibilities."

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Congratulations, graduates



(l to r) Judith Guy, Teresa Owens, Rachel Abdoler, Keri Anderson, Dean Kris Culp, Stefan Aderhold, Associate Dean Yvonne Gilmore

On June 9, DDH marked the conclusion of the 122nd academic year with a Convocation service in the Chapel of the Holy Grail. Alumna Teresa Hord Owens was the speaker. She is the nominee for General Minister and President of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the current Dean of Students at the Divinity School. She is also Senior Minister of the First Christian Church of Downers Grove.

Congratulations to four House Scholars who received their degrees in March or June or will receive them later this year. They are: **Stefan Aderhold** (AMRS), who will return to the University of Heidelberg to continue doctoral studies; **Rachel Abdoler** (MDiv), who has been admitted to the PhD program in the History of

Christianity; **Judith Guy** (MDiv), who plans to enter pastoral ministry and was ordained at University Church on June 11; and **Keri Anderson** (MDiv/AM in Social Service Administration), who will pursue social work.

In addition, alumna **Jordan Berry** (2005) received the AM in Social Service Administration; she has accepted a position in Arizona. Three House residents also received degrees: **Ricardo Diego Suarez Rojas** (AM), **Marshall Hatch Jr** (MDiv), and **Braxton Shelley**, who received the MDiv and also a PhD from the Department of Music.

A dinner in the Common Room followed the service. The University of Chicago graduation was held the next day in the main quadrangle. ☞



(l to r) Jim Anderson, Debbie Anderson, Keri Anderson, and Nicholas Cream.

The **DISCIPLES DIVINITY HOUSE**
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Award to Machado

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well as numerous other essays. Her path-breaking leadership includes service as Union's academic dean, and, from 1996-99, as the first Director of the Hispanic Theological Initiative.

Ms. Machado earned her PhD in 1996 from the University of Chicago Divinity School as a Disciples Divinity House Scholar. She recently returned to the Divinity School to speak at a dean's forum about pedagogy.

The Distinguished Alumna Award will be presented on July 11 at the DDH luncheon during the General Assembly. Ms. Machado will speak in response. ☞

25 years

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The panel consisted of three alumni/ae: former Board President and University of Virginia Professor Larry Bouchard; Trustee and National Benevolent Association (NBA) Vice President April Lewton; and Divinity School Dean of Students and General Minister and President nominee Teresa Hord Owens.

“We’ve asked them to reflect on their vocational pursuits in light of the themes articulated in Dean Culp’s book, *Vulnerability and Glory: A Theological Account*,” Mr. Packman explained. “This afternoon we will honor the Dean’s work in the most Chicago of ways; by submitting it to rigorous examination and testing its claims. How do this book and these lives together testify to the value of this House and the Dean who has led it for the past quarter century?”

Mr. Bouchard’s comments are excerpted beginning on page 4 in this *Bulletin*.

Ms. Lewton began with greetings from her colleagues at the NBA and from the North American Pacific Asian Disciples (NAPAD). “Your support and active participation with NAPAD has meant so much; from co-chairing working groups, to serving on pastoral relations committees; you have accompanied, nurtured, and shared in our sorrows and celebrations. May you feel the love, respect, and sincere joy from NAPAD on this special anniversary!”

She continued by naming alumni/ae who “serve as institutional mark-

ers of accompaniment, hope, imagination, and vulnerability” in varied “places of innovation” within the Disciples of Christ. “In local congregations, you have ministers ... empowering, and stretching communities to be church in different ways, beyond their steeple structures and historic identities, to be witness and safe places for people to come for respite, encouragement, and meaningful solidarity.”

She noted alumni/ae who teach, “challenging students with original texts and reminding them that the power to think—critically and analytically—will help them in all aspects of their personal and professional lives.” She also cited the work of colleagues in general ministries. “With these names (and even more that I did not have time to mention) there is real commitment to the vitality and relevance of our church.”

Terri Owens remarked, “I really cannot thank Kris Culp enough, for her commitment to this institution. It will outlive you, Kris, because you’ve cared for it as an institution. It has changed as human vulnerability will do. We have been transformed.”

“The students who inhabit these halls have changed it year after year. Kris has been what she needed to be for each and every one of us. That’s why you all are here to honor her, because she has informed you and instilled in you a love for this institution, its relationship to the wider University, and the Divinity School.... I am grateful for the example that she has set for how to mentor, for how to help people negotiate this crazy thing called life, and see the possibilities,



Lee Hull Moses and Dean Culp

and maybe, just maybe, be in a place where we can all reflect just a little bit of the glory of God.”

After the panel, guests reconvened for dinner at the nearby Piccolo Mondo restaurant. Trustee Marshall Dunn offered a word of prayer before the meal. Lee Hull Moses, President of the Board of Trustees, and Alumni/ae Council President Melinda Keenan Wood read excerpts from some of the letters that alumni/ae and friends sent.

Toasts were offered by Board Vice President Pam Jones, former Board Presidents Chad Martin and Bill Crowl, Associate Dean Yvonne Gilmore, and Bill Blakemore, journalist and son of Dean W. Barnett Blakemore. Special guests also included former administrator Estelle O’Connor, Divinity School Dean Richard Rosengarten, and Divinity School faculty colleagues.

In 1991, Kristine A. Culp became the first woman to serve as chief executive of a graduate theological education institution of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She begins her twenty-seventh year of service on July 1. 

Trustees create named fund to honor Culp

During their April 29 meeting, the Board of Trustees announced the creation of a named fund in the name of Dean Kristine A. Culp. The fund was established to honor her extraordinary service to the Disciples Divinity House

Lee Hull Moses, President of the Board of Trustees, remarked, “The fund provides an opportunity to honor Kris with our gifts to the House. I can think of no better way to express our gratitude than to support the work to which she has dedicated the past 25 years.”

The fund has been launched with \$30,450 in gifts from members of the Board of Trustees. With these gifts, they mark the significance of Dean Culp’s leadership over the past twenty-five years and their shared commitment to the flourishing of the House in the future. 

L'chaim, Kris, I'chaim

by Larry D. Bouchard

Remarks given during the April 28 panel at DDH

Alumnus Larry D. Bouchard is Professor of Religion at the University of Virginia, a current DDH Trustee, and the former President of the Board of Trustees.

We have been asked to reflect on *Vulnerability and Glory* in light of our own study and work, be it in congregations, church agencies or, as in my case, academia. I have been fortunate. At TCU, in graduate school here, and while teaching at Eureka College and Virginia, I have been encouraged to study tragedy and theatrical drama, which can be delightful even as it expresses tragic suffering. Kris's book probes ambiguities of beauty and suffering that I have pondered most of my life. I am so grateful to you, Kris. These thoughts are a way of saying, "thank you."

The U of C College graduate and University of Virginia philosopher Richard Rorty considered it to be impossible to hold together one's commitment to justice and one's passion for beauty in a "single thought," or idea, by which he meant a unitary philosophical idea. As he grew up reading philosophy, he could not, try as he might, reconcile his idiosyncratic devotion to, say, wild orchids—a devotion requiring much time and energy and cash to nourish—with the pursuit of social justice for those whom history and nature leave bereft. It could be a commitment to justice represented by, say, Trotsky, or by Rorty's maternal grandfather, the social gospel theologian Walter Rauschenbusch. Humanity appears to require both justice and beauty, but they seemed to Rorty finally incommensurable. He came to think that there can be no valid and true bridge running between beauty and justice, in either direction.

Unless, he wrote, you are some kind of religious believer—as he

emphatically was not. In his autobiographical essay, "Trotsky and the Wild Orchids," Rorty does not say exactly how religious belief can unite the love of beauty with the love of justice; but I suspect he had Augustine in mind, or Calvin. It is interesting that in that essay, Rorty does not mount an argument against them; he just says that while growing into adulthood, he knew he would never have the "humility" to be religious—as if the "single idea" or belief he sought required a practice of humility *in order to be thought*. What kind of thought could that be?

It would be tedious for me to praise Kris Culp's practical theological humility, although I could definitely do that at great length! I know how to be tedious—as you will see. I can report that as I have read and re-read *Vulnerability and Glory*, I have sensed that Kris is indeed thinking through, theoretically and practically, the *unity and disunity* between *justice and beauty* or—to say it another way—Kris is thinking about coextensive relationships *that do happen* between tragic sufferings and extraordinary joys. If there is a "single thought" that can "hold together" social justice with individual, particular joys, it may well be her thought of *vulnerability*.

Kris observes that, on one hand, vulnerability has Latin roots relating it to "wound," or the susceptibility to being wounded; and so vulnerability is inextricably related to suffering. (You can't suffer unless you're vulnerable.) On the other hand, she shows that wound-ability is also *changeability*, the possibility of changing, or of being transformed; and thus vulnerability is coextensive with life and change, that is, with living. There are not two different sorts of vulnerability



but vulnerability in limitless *varieties*. To be a finite creature, or process in nature, is to be vulnerable, and vice versa: vulnerability is creaturely. So, then, is vulnerability a so-called "neutral" category for Kris? I don't think so.

Kris's reflections on Augustine suggest that vulnerability is entailed in the goodness of creation. Nothing creaturely can be, as such, inherently neutral; if created by God, its inherent character is good. So before it gets entangled with suffering or with structures of malice and harm, vulnerability—as changeability—is good. Augustine thought "evil" was a sheer *negative*: evil is the privation, the corruption, the "rusting away," as it were, of the good. Evil has, for Augustine, no "positive" existence, no efficient cause but, oddly, only a "deficient" cause. So among other things, evil would corrupt, diminish, and even threaten to destroy creaturely vulnerability. To actually be *in-vulnerable* would be to be dead. In self-destructive attempts to be invulnerable, an "evil one" or a harming social structure is one that threatens others' vulnerability, indeed threatens creation's vulnerable potentials for change and life. The tyrant desires, in a way, *dead stasis*, not transformation. Insofar as vulnerability is created, creaturely, and open toward the transformation of life into *more life*, vulnerability is good.

However, Kris might worry about a danger in my account of her account of vulnerability. The danger is that of "theodicy," about which at several points in the book she expresses cau-

tion. In theology, theodicies are arguments that purport to “justify” God’s power and goodness with the presence of evil. Theodicy might be any attempt to resolve problems of suffering and evil with a concept—such as the dichotomy of the invisible and visible church, which Kris criticizes. Theodicies attempt to justify God by applying some very good notion, some fine abstraction by which to save the face of God, or to make the finite faces of God’s glory invulnerable. Which finally brings me to the word, “glory.”

I admit to having found ideas of glory off-putting (just as I have put off reading much of Hans Urs von Balthasar’s seven-volume theological aesthetics, *The Glory of the Lord*). If *glory* is what, in some languages, elicits *praise*, then glory and praise—even praise for the glory of God—can seem discontinuous with a world fraught with tragic peril and radical evils. If glory connotes shining and luminosity, as it often does for Kris, then we may become aphasic, unable to speak at times *when* the light of good is not evident, *where* flourishing is not seen and devastation seems all. How is it that Kris so boldly juxtaposes vulnerability and glory? Three observations:

First, I think Kris would have us see that glories in life are simply there in the world, even when disconcertingly so. Ashes in the air can make for beautiful sunsets, regardless of whose ashes they are. In the pained voices of schizophrenic patients, psychiatrist R.D. Laing sometimes heard meanings like poetry. In the screaming hell of trench warfare, army chaplain Paul Tillich was comforted by Botticelli’s serene painting, *Madonna and Child with Singing Angels*. “In the beauty of the painting there was Beauty itself,” he wrote. In Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, the devastated, unchurched preacher, Baby Suggs, gazes on the glory of a color, lavender. In Shusaku Endo’s *Silence*, the hum of cicadas incessantly interrupts the silence of God. It is not



always a comfort, and is often quite disturbing when beauty and glory remain oddly there, soliciting attention in fields of devastation. Glory there, and of course glory in places of creaturely flourishing—interrupts us, pulls us up short. Brutal honesty demands that beauty and glory be noted and acknowledged, even where praise feels odd or inappropriate.

Second, Kris notices relationships of vulnerability and glory that do *not* justify suffering *nor deny* its inherently excessive character, but rather are relationships wherein glory meets suffering and becomes vulnerable anew in the presence of suffering. Glory also *meets* and *becomes* vulnerable before faces and structures of malice, injustice, neglect, and collusion. Now recall that vulnerability is the very character of creatureliness; it is the finite creature’s susceptibility to harm and also to change.

In chapter 5, “A Field of Tensions and Conversions,” it appears to me that the inherently *excessive* character of vulnerability—for we are always becoming more vulnerable, never less—implies that vulnerability will tend toward increase. And in this increase of vulnerability there may arise, from time to time, more possibilities for change and transformation, even for the renewal of life. As occasions of vulnerability increase, they may open up space for new responses, time for new encounters, and more occasions for meeting. This re-iteration of vulnerability affects those it

meets. As vulnerability—which is the plasticity of life, which can be both harmed and transformed—increases, iterates, folds and unfolds, *it becomes hard to distinguish increasing vulnerability from increasing glory*. It also appears that, together, vulnerability and glory transform the meaning of entropy. Life not only runs down but also *makes room for “more life,”* which playwright Tony Kushner and critic Harold Bloom say is the meaning of *l’chaim*.

My last observation is that, as I read Kris, the finite field of tensions and conversions is not a structure that guarantees “more life.” *The glory of God*, which works within and also is other than such structures of life, *calls* to us, *turns* our visions, our hearing, our embodied spirits toward suffering, *inviting* new responses. “New occasions teach new duties,” sings James Russell Lowell’s liberal hymn; “time makes ancient good uncouth.” The church in the world of society and nature, of cultures and environments is *given as means*, and by no means the only means, through which to meet God’s transforming grace and glory. Before faces of suffering and structures of harm, the truth is our being *called by God to move*—to serve and think and enjoy and struggle beside other persons and creatures who are bereft, vulnerable to living-not, to flourishing-not, to being-not at all. We, of course, are also such persons.

Theodor Adorno once quoted a German proverb, “Woe speaks:

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Ministering to the most of these

by Judith Guy

In their final year, MDiv students write a senior thesis, the culminating project of their work at the Divinity School. Judith Guy, a graduating House Scholar, and a participant in the Constructive Theologies Project, presented her ministry project on May 8. An excerpt follows.

Eight of us made two rows and an arch with our chairs as we squeezed together in order to see the computer screen and to participate in a Skype conversation with Rev. Dr. Dietra Wise Baker, who is a Disciples of Christ minister in the St. Louis area. She took part in some of the organizing of the Black Lives Matter protests in Ferguson, Missouri, after Michael Brown, an African-American teenager, was shot and killed by officer Darren Wilson. In our conversation, she shared her experience of being in Ferguson and her role as a pastor. She also shared her disappointment in the lack of response from many churches in the area and from the denomination.

All of us [in the Constructive Theologies Project] left this Skype session unsettled. As a group of ministers and students of theology of different races, we all shared a passion for the church and for racial justice. I was left with the question of how to engage those churches who never responded, those churches of privilege that did not respond and are not responding now.

Privilege is a complex and an ever changing social reality. People can be privileged in some areas and not in others. Privileged people are often bystanders in their area of privilege. Privileged people don't necessarily have the animosity or the intentionality of oppressors. We are, sadly/disappointingly/angrily, just here. We accept the status quo, without experiencing it as unjust, because we are generally fine in relation to the current system. The lack of response

from churches in the St. Louis area to the protests verifies this. This paper is not about those who are already allies who act. It is addressed to the many white churches who still remain silent and passive about the racialization of this country. As ministers and other church leaders who are dedicated to the Gospel, and who care deeply for our communities, we must work together to find ways to address the lack of response from the white moderate to the deep racial injustices in our society.

Perhaps the nearby churches in St. Louis felt sympathetic towards the protests, yet that sympathy wasn't felt enough to respond through action or even reaching out through words. How do privileged people feel the urge of God to act, respond, stand up against oppressive forces and join in? Is there a way that ministers can better prepare their privileged communities to question the way they unwittingly participate in oppression and how to respond and change the way we interact?

Transformation is relational

As teenagers, my older sister and I had a certain "game" we played in worship from time to time. During the really happy songs we would sing happily and we would arch our necks and look around smiling and we searched to see, "Was anyone else having fun? Was anyone else joyful?" We were not subtle but still people rarely noticed. We were mostly just having fun and trying to entertain ourselves, but we were also pained that these joyful songs were being sung without emotion. We were only looking for a smile in return as we rejoiced in the glory of God. But we rarely met eyes with people; we rarely connected. To sing "Joyful, Joyful we adore thee" with a blank stare, and "Joy to the world" with our heads down just seemed paradoxical to us. There was no embodiment of the joy that we sang and proclaimed. I still play this "game" occasionally.



Thankfully, I have been in more and more churches where smiling in worship isn't too rare and the congregations feel the music which they sing. Yet, I do not think that being in a worship service in which the only clear sign of worship is the words the people use is a unique experience. There is a lack of spirit present in this story, a lack of connection not only to the song but also to the people in the space singing together.

Many people say this is how white people are. Stereotypically we don't have rhythm, we don't know how to dance, and we are quite stoic in the ways we show emotion. I had never really taken these stereotypes seriously. I didn't argue; they all seemed true. That is just who we are; that is our culture. But what if this is more than the culture and it is a result of oppressive actions over generations, of us trying to hide from each other and ourselves, what if this expression of ourselves is not really an expression of ourselves but an expression of our history of oppressing? What if it isn't ok? What if it is a symptom of an illness?

A number of thinkers including Paulo Friere, Mary Elizabeth Hobgood, and bell hooks, have observed that the result of white supremacy is to turn people into objects, separate the body and spirit, to separate people from their culture, to make consuming the way of making meaning in the world. Everyone stuck in this system is dehumanized by it, but only people of color are conscious of this while white people think they are winning even as our spirit fades away.

One of the privileges of being white in the United States is that white people do not think about the way we are racialized. We do not consciously experience it until we are directly confronted. In some ways congregations that are predominantly upper/middle class and white occupy the place in society that everyone should occupy. Their comfort is not too much and not too little. And yet since this “comfort” is irrevocably connected to white privilege; it is bothered and harmful. The comfort came and continues to come at a price because privilege invokes unequal social relations. When one person has privilege the privilege is paid by someone else who does not receive that privilege. The privilege of feeling safe in the midst of police officers is inseparable from black people being criminalized. The privilege of seeing white people in power and narrated as historical patriots is inseparable from the untold stories of slaves building this nation under oppression and Native Americans being lied to and murdered. But I assert, as many others have, that the price isn’t only felt by people of color. White communities are made hallow through the continuation of white supremacy.

A Humanizing Vocation

Pedagogy of the Oppressed begins with the proclamation that the vocation of humanity is to humanize. After claiming this as the vocation of humanity, Paulo Friere notes the result of choosing dehumanization. “Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it, is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human. This *distortion* occurs within history.” What is challenging about this powerful and true notion is that the system of white supremacy today has been in place for several generations. This creates challenge because white people have not experienced the transition from a humanizing vocation to a dehumanizing one. White people today have

been directly involved, but through participation in systems that obscure the feeling of dehumanizing. An example of this is why it is easy for us to buy products made in sweat shops again and again. The consumer does not feel the loss of relationship nor see the suffering of the people working in the sweat shop. We do not have the closeness to dehumanizing that releases a visceral reaction. Even when we see police brutality in the news our part in that is not explicit. It is easy to side-step, blame individuals, separate ourselves from the injustice.

How do we address oppression we do not see or feel, yet do perpetuate? This historical distortion Freire has written about surely persists. White people have been dehumanized by the practice and participation of white supremacy but so gradually that I am not even sure we have recognized our loss. White supremacy is so normal in the United States we have ceased to need direct oppression; rather, oppression is written into the narrative and the privileges of being white seem deserved.

White people must free ourselves from the repression we have placed on ourselves from generations of being oppressors and sinning. Through freedom from repression we could move to a place in which we use our power to transform the unjust systems beyond our church community. So how do pastors engage this “unfelt” problem, our “normal” evil? How do we become part of the healing process? The process of transformation, the movement from obliviousness to awareness, is central to Christianity. How do we move together to awareness? Not just about becoming aware but following on the way? First we must know where we stand as a community, and for that the predominantly white churches must engage inwardly within their community.

Many predominantly white churches that I have encountered view the role of the pastor to be one of comfort and taking care of mem-

bers. With this view of the pastoral role, faith becomes a mostly personal endeavor and a personal affair. Not only is the prophetic voice lost, but the pastor’s individual voice can also be lost. My father has always worked in a community that expected politics to be set aside and separated from religion. This expectation is hidden in the need to respect political diversity. The establishment of private faith makes it comfortable for people to come forward and be in a diverse setting, yet if nothing of substance is shared is it really diverse? Not only is the pastoral role restricted to one of personal faith, guidance, and pastoral care, but the community follows this model as well. Topics of racism, poverty, and other social concerns are labeled political, controversial and most importantly outside the realm of religion.

Transformation is possible only through a public faith which displaces certainty and opens up new possibilities for reality. Public faith allows the church to not only be a place where people from diverse ideologies come together, but also a place where this is felt and experienced communally. The church must be an intersection of ideologies and a displacement of certainty in order to be a place of transformation.

Pedagogical thinkers Paolo Freire and bell hooks help us navigate the nebulous space between private and public faith and between openness and clear direction that ministers must enter in order to help congregations become a liberated community. They both speak to the framing of acceptance in education. Although the university and the church can be seen as very different realms, I argue that both, schools and churches, continue to frame reality and have an opportunity of changing frames. If churches are not intentional they will perpetuate the dominant myths.

Although churches perpetuate myths and hegemonies, they have a different role than schools and different modes of engagement. Ministers

The most of these

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who interact with people who are not yet aware of their privilege, the false myths of society, and the injustice are not only working for a power shift and a change in social acceptability, but an inner personal change (which in turn becomes an outer social change) towards critical consciousness and transformation. A movement for wholeness and dismantling white supremacy is about power shifts, but at a deeper, more permanent level, it must be about transformation. Dismantling white supremacy cannot be a concession, but a transformation of the use of power. ☞

I use “we” throughout this thesis as a way to locate myself, a white woman, in proximity to ministry “to the most of these” and the relational possibilities for transformation that I explore. I invite everyone to consider these claims, yet, I recognize that not all readers will be a part of this “we.”

L’chaim

(continued from page 5)

‘Go!’” That is, woe does not speak “run away,” but says “go toward” woe, toward suffering, in order to resist its causes and attend its voices and their pain. I think in this humble and extremely bold book, Kris has been even more radical than Rorty and Adorno. Living before God is also to hear glory and beauty speak: “Go!” Go, resist and reform. With those who are not, go, and enhance new life. The only way to justify the ways of God to suffering is to hear and pass on God’s inviting, enticing, and unrelenting command: go do justice, go love mercy, even so much as to risk becoming lost in delight, in the glory of God’s sharp command of love. Before God and before devastation, be the earthen vessels you are called to be, broken yet full, vessels of new life. L’chaim, Kris, L’chaim. ☞

Nominated for GMP

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years in the area of management consulting, data management, and data warehousing. She previously held senior management positions with IBM, Ernst & Young, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and SBC, consistently earning recognition for excellence and leadership. She was an active lay leader in drama and other ministries under the pastorate of Dr. T. Garrott Benjamin Jr at Light of the World Christian Church in Indianapolis, before accepting a call to ministry. She was ordained at Light of the World Christian Church, wearing the robe of her paternal grandfather, the late Rev. Noel Hord.

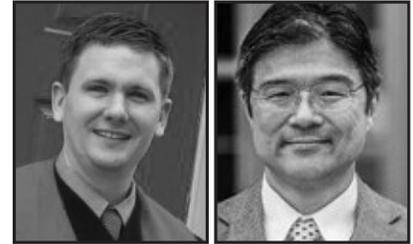
Her ministry and intellectual interests include a theology of reconciliation, cultural intelligence, developing inclusive and multi-cultural congregations, and the mentoring of youth and young adults. She is married to Walter Owens Jr, with whom she will soon celebrate 30 years of marriage. They are the proud parents of an adult son, W. Mitchell Owens III. ☞

Zoloth appointed Divinity dean



Laurie Zoloth, a leader in the field of religious studies with particular scholarly interest in bioethics and Jewish studies, will begin as dean of the Divinity School on July 1. She is currently a professor at Northwestern University in both the Department of Religious Studies and the Feinberg School of Medicine. ☞

Underwood and Lee are moderator team nominees



Beau Underwood, Senior Minister of First Christian Church, Jefferson City, Missouri, is the nominee for First Vice Moderator of the General Assembly. Timothy S. Lee, Associate Professor of the History of Christianity, Brite Divinity School, is the nominee for Second Vice Moderator. ☞

Ordinations



June graduate Judith Guy, pictured above with December 2016 graduate Douglas Collins, was ordained at University Church in Chicago on June 11. Julian DeShazier preached. First Christian Church, Greensboro, North Carolina, participated in the laying on of hands remotely via Facebook.

On May 20, Kristel Clayville was ordained at Bridgeport Christian Church in Frankfort, Kentucky. Cynthia Lindner preached. Mandy Burton, Kris Culp, and Allison Lundblad traveled from Chicago to participate in the service. It was great to see Ryan and Greta Gilbert at the ordination. ☞

News

Find more news and more details at ddh.uchicago.edu and on our Facebook page, Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago

Rebecca Anderson (2007) and fellow Divinity School graduate Vince Amlin are co-founding pastors of Gilead, a new church in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago affiliated with the Disciples and the UCC. The first service was held January 22, and Gilead was featured on The Today Show in April. www.gileadchicago.org.

Kudos to former residents **Caroline Anglim** and **Raúl Zegarra**, and Current Scholar **Joel Brown**, all PhD students, for organizing a major conference, “The Tradition(s) of Swift Hall: Constructive Studies in the Academic Study of Religion.” It was held at the Divinity School on May 24-26. **Dean Kris Culp (1982)**, **Clark Gilpin (1970; trustee)**, and **Cynthia Lindner (1978; trustee)** participated as panelists.



Joan Bell-Haynes (1996) was installed as Executive Regional Minister of the Central Rocky Mountain Region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) on April 23.

Chuck Blaisdell (1975) will retire from First Christian Church, Colorado Springs, on December 1, 2017.

Erica L. Brown (1997) reviewed two novels in *The Christian Century*: Yaa Gyasi’s *Homegoing* on October 26 and *Mischling* by Affinity Konar on September 27.

Current Scholar **Joel Brown** is the managing editor of the Religion and Culture Web Forum. He also wrote

“Dylan Roof, the Radicalization of the Alt-Right, and Ritualized Violence” for *Sightings* in January.

Brandon Cline (1999) was ordained on March 28 during the chapel service of Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas, where he is the Senior Major Gifts Officer.

Danielle Cox (2012) was installed as Senior Minister of First Christian Church, Texas City, Texas, on March 26, where she had been serving as transitional minister.

House Scholar **Devon Crawford** interned at the NAACP in Baltimore, Maryland, this year. He will return to DDH in the fall.

Kris Culp (1982; dean) was in Pretoria and Johannesburg, South Africa, for the meeting of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, June 15-22.

Julian DeShazier (trustee) was quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* on February 21 regarding University Church’s decision to provide sanctuary for an immigrant facing deportation.

Spencer Dew (1998) wrote “We Don’t Have Enough Proof: Pizzagate as Epistemological Panic” for *Sightings* in December.

Congratulations to Barbara and **Marshall Dunn (1965; trustee)**. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 17.

Lee Hull Moses (2001; trustee) wrote an article in January for *The Christian Century*, “A Feel Good Story’s Power and Limits.”

Laura Jennison Reed (2009) is now the permanent minister of Villa Park Christian Church, where she has served as the transitional minister since March 2014.

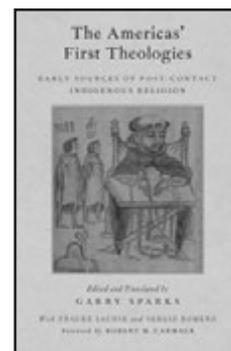
Congratulations to Richard and **Ayana Johnson Watkins (2000)** on the birth of Elle Maia Watkins in March 2017.

Floyd Knight (1985), who is a PhD student in Linguistics at Northern Illinois University, presented “Kairos, Thematic, and Extra-diegetic Time in Mallory” at the Midwestern Conference on Literature, Language, and Media in April.

Current Scholar **Mark Lambert** wrote “The Acquittal of ‘Patient Zero’” for *Sightings* in February.

Congratulations to **John Emory McCaw (1939)**, who celebrated his 100th birthday on March 10!

Sightings published “Rev. Dr. William Barber and the Sound of Transcendence” by former resident, **Braxton Shelley**, in June. He has accepted an appointment as the Stanley A. Marks and William H. Marks Assistant Professor in the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and in the Department of Music at Harvard University.



The Americas’ First Theologies: Early Sources of Post-Contact Indigenous Religion, edited and translated by **Garry Sparks (2001)**, was published by Oxford University Press.

Raymond Williams (1960) was inducted into the Martin Luther King Jr. Collegium of Scholars at Morehouse College on March 30. Additionally, he has co-edited *Swaminarayan Hinduism: Tradition, Adaptation, and Identity*, published by Oxford University Press. On April 26, he presented a chapter from a forthcoming book, *Hinduism in Europe* (Brill, 2018), at the University of Stockholm.

In memoriam

Vaughn G. Alexander died September 5 in Austin, Texas. He was 88.

He and his three brothers grew up on the family farm near Elwood, Indiana. He married Betty L. Wiley in 1954. He received a BA from Texas Christian University in 1956, his BD from Brite Divinity School, and he was ordained in 1959. In 1962, he entered the Divinity School as a Disciples Divinity House Scholar. He would serve several congregations in the Chicago area.

While at the University of Chicago, he learned computer programming. After setting up a hospital information system at the UC Hospitals and Clinics, he became Director of Computer Systems in Medicine at the AMA in Chicago. In 1975, he became the first Director of the Texas Medical Foundation in Austin, Texas. Later he started a company, Health Carecard, to provide computer-based services for doctors' offices.

He sang in the Austin Choral Union for many years, and was a life-long learner and a volunteer. He was an elder emeritus at University Christian Church in Austin.

He is survived by two daughters, Angela Sprott (Rick) and Celeste Alexander (Rick Nauert), by his brother Warren, and by grandchildren and step-grandchildren. A memorial service was held at University Christian Church in Austin on September 17, 2016.



Deirdre Louise Jackson Jones died March 23 in Chicago. She was 46.

Born in Des Moines, Iowa, she battled and triumphed over cancer as

a teenager. She earned a bachelor's degree from Iowa State University in 1994.

She made her home in Chicago, marrying Lewis Jones in 2003. They have three young sons, Lawrence, Lance, and Logan, who was born just last summer. Deirdre and Lewis were founding members of the Family of Hope Christian Church in Blue Island.

She was a benefits administrator for Aon Consulting before beginning MDiv studies at the Divinity School in 2007 as a Disciples Divinity House Scholar. She later transferred to Chicago Theological Seminary, where she was a student at the time of her death.

In addition to her husband and their sons, she is survived by her mother, Beverly Webster (Fred); father, Bernard Jackson (Sheila); and three siblings, Kendal, Aldan, and Tonya (Duncan). Services were held in Des Moines on April 1 and at Park Manor Christian Church in Chicago on April 22.

Ned R. Lavengood, a former trustee, died December 29 in Wilmington, North Carolina. He was 87.

Born in Wabash, Indiana, he attended Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, where he studied trumpet and conducting. He graduated from International Business College in accounting, earned his BS from Indiana University, and earned an MBA at New York University. He was a veteran of the Korean War (101st Airborne).

He served as a trustee of the Disciples Divinity House for 28 years until he stepped down in 2006. He said that he came to each meeting looking to bring or make one significant contribution.

He considered himself to be an entrepreneur, and was involved in many types of business ventures in New York, Chicago, and North Carolina. He was a member of the Million Dollar Roundtable at Metropolitan Life NYC, and served with Keyes Fiber as Midwest Regional Sales Manager.

More recently, he and his wife, Sibyl, were co-owner of Sibyl's Antiques and Collectables. An avid Heisey Glass collector, he served as President of the NC Heisey Glass Collectors and on the board of the National Heisey Collectors of America.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) was always an important part of his life. He served as Elder and sang in the choir at Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City, and later at the First Christian Churches in Downers Grove, Illinois, and in Wilson, North Carolina. He was an elder emeritus at the First Christian Church in Wilmington.

Ned Lavengood was a Mason for over 60 years, playing trumpet in a Shrine band, and was a bugler for the American Legion.

Mr. Lavengood is survived by his wife of 56 years, daughter Traci (Nole Gemmell), son Ned Jr (Melissa), and four grandchildren. A memorial service was held January 6 at First Christian Church in Wilmington.



Amy Ann Northcutt, an alumna and former President of the Board of Trustees, died on May 6. She was diagnosed on April 27 with a brain tumor and died from complications related to the tumor. She was 57.

Born in Chickasha, Oklahoma, she graduated as valedictorian from Putnam City West High School and matriculated at Smith College in 1978. She spent her junior year at Harvard University and graduated from Smith in 1982 with a BA in Government. She entered the University of Chicago Divinity School in 1982 as a Disciples Divinity House Scholar and earned

her AMRS degree in 1983. She served as Youth Minister of Western Oaks Christian Church in Oklahoma City before attending Boston College Law School, from which she graduated magna cum laude with a JD in 1987.

In 1993, Ms. Northcutt became a member of DDH's Board of Trustees, serving until December 2010. She became the first woman president of the Board, serving from 1999-2005. During her presidency, the trustees grappled with accelerating tuition costs and significant capital expenditures; over \$2 million was added to the endowment; a long-range planning process clarified the work of the House and of the trustees; and the trustees developed a new model for working together. DDH counted on her warmth and intelligence, on her ability to plan and lead, and on her love of the House and commitment to its mission.

Ms. Northcutt was serving as Chief Information Officer of the National Science Foundation (NSF) at the time of her death. She was named to the office in January 2012, and had responsibility for NSF's information technology investments, governance, policy, and planning. She was recognized by FedScoop as one of the "Top Women in Tech 2017."

Amy Northcutt was a person of strong and committed faith. In Washington, DC, she and her family attended the Lutheran Church of the Reformation, where she had served as Council President.

She is survived by her husband, Craig Middlebrook, of Falls Church, Virginia, and their children, Henry and Ella Bo Lei Middlebrook. She is also survived by her sisters, Nancy Trench (Winston) of Stillwater, Oklahoma, and DDH alumna Kay Lynn Northcutt, the Disciples minister, writer, and teacher, of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Her life was celebrated at a memorial service at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation on June 17. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations

be made to Disciples Divinity House to create the Amy A. Northcutt Fund, which will provide scholarships to support women pursuing theological studies at the University of Chicago.

Marjorie M. Thomas, widow of alumnus Robert A. Thomas, died May 6 in Seattle, Washington. She was 95.

Born Marjorie Bodine in Humansville, Missouri, she majored in music at Drury College, where she met her husband. They were married in 1941 and moved to Chicago where Mr. Thomas attended the Divinity School as a Disciples Divinity House Scholar. Their children, John and Judy, were born in Chicago. Daughter Karen was born in St. Joseph, Missouri.

They moved to Seattle, Washington, in 1961, where he became the senior minister of University Christian Church. She sang in the choir, fashioned costumes for pageants, opened a craft studio in the church, and hosted visitors to the Seattle World's Fair. She attended the University of Washington, to update her teaching certificate, and taught in local grade schools.

In 1970, Bob Thomas became President of the Division of Overseas Ministries in Indianapolis, where Marjorie met Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu, hosting dinners for visitors all over the world. She continued her career as a math teacher and earned a Master of Science from Butler University at the age of 50.

At retirement in 1983, the Thomases returned to Seattle and, later, to Indianapolis. Her son died in August 1996, and her husband died just a few months later. Marjorie and Bob Thomas had enjoyed 55 years of marriage.

Marjorie Thomas again returned to Seattle, where she volunteered in the public schools, did private math tutoring, and continued her music and stained glass art. Her glass work has been presented to the Pope and to the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. She and Lynn Huff, her part-

ner for the last fifteen years, enjoyed traveling.

She is survived by Mr. Huff, daughters Judy Christianson (Wes) and Karen Foley (Michael), daughter-in-law Kathy Thomas, and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held on June 24 at University Christian Church in Seattle. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Disciples Divinity House where they will be added to the Robert A. and Marjorie M. Thomas Fund.

Grace Elizabeth Lord Williams, widow of alumnus John Norton Williams, died February 5 in Naples, Florida. She was 98.

Born in Malden, Massachusetts, she was raised in New Castle, Indiana. From 1942 until his death in 1965, she was married to Kenneth Moystner. In 1971, she married John Norton Williams, a DDH alumnus then serving First Christian Church in Connersville, Indiana. (He also served congregations in Kentucky and Ohio, and with the Arkansas Council of Churches and the Christian Church in Indiana.) They enjoyed 25 years together until his death in 1996.

She worked at the Chrysler Corporation during WWII and later at the IRC&D Motor Freight Co. in Indiana until her retirement.

Together, Grace Lord Williams and John Norton Williams strongly supported the mission of the Disciples Divinity House. A generous gift through her estate ensures that their support will continue for future generations. She is survived by stepsons Dr. John N. Williams Jr. (Lucy) and Greg (Marla) of Indianapolis. Funeral services were held on February 11 in Naples. 

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Associate Dean Yvonne Gilmore and Sandhya Jha, Founder and Director of the Oakland Peace Center, will be the core lecturers for the Transformative Leadership & Innovation Learning Track and the Justice Learning Track, respectively, on Monday, July 10, at 8:45am.

DDH Luncheon
for Alumni/ae and Friends

Tuesday, July 11
11:15-12:45 PM
J.W. Marriott
Grand Ballroom 8

StoryHour "Stand Your Ground"
Stories told by DDH-Chicago,
DDH@Vandy, and
Week of Compassion

Organized by Rebecca Anderson
Tuesday, July 11, 9pm
Rock Bottom Restaurant
10 W Washington Street