

TELLING OUR STORIES: CO-CREATING OUR FUTURES

2024 Annual Report



OUR PATH



DEEP RIVER, BRIGHT FUTURE



Dear Friends,

As we share highlights from 2024, I am reminded of a hymn of the church, penned by Jennie Bain Wilson, that says, “Time is filled with swift transition, hold to God’s unchanging hand.” It was indeed a year of many changes at McCormick Theological Seminary and in our nation and world. We know that change is a constant and are grateful for every opportunity to embrace it and lean into the continuity also ever-present. I was blessed to join the McCormick community in September of 2024 as the 12th president, and each day has been a joy! Leading this institution so deeply committed to justice and social impact, aligns perfectly with my own vocation and purpose. I’ve relished opportunities to make meaningful connections and engage in collaborative storytelling and strategic planning. We continue to navigate the waves of variation impacting theological education, the church, and the world and we assert the strong capabilities found in God’s giftings and guidance. Reminders about our 195-year history buttress what can feel like an unending sway. Following a year of moving into new and shared space, and a subsequent season to get reoriented and settled, we are now journeying into vital and vibrant future(s) with fortitude.

Throughout this annual report, we celebrate the theme: Telling Our Stories, Co-Creating Our Futures. This call to remember and to tell our stories has resonated powerfully throughout the theological tradition. It’s a call echoed and amplified by womanist theologians like Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon, the first Black woman ordained in the Presbyterian Church USA. The voices of Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Elie Wiesel, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, Frederick Douglass, and countless others, remind us that

storytelling is not just an act of remembrance; it is an act of creation. It is how we co-create our futures, weaving together the threads of our past experiences, our present realities, and our hopes for the future. “Why futures?” you may ask. We are keenly aware of our connections with Lutheran School of Theology Chicago (LSTC) and the Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in shared space and experiences. Our collaborations are impactful, yet we acknowledge the distinct identities and trajectories of each school. We have a future together, and many possible futures unfolding respectively as we think and act innovatively in connection with our denominational constituents, alumni/ae, and wider communities of support. Each point of contact facilitates new possibilities. We also have futures that emerge from a multiplicity of theological discourses, interreligious interactions, and the inclusion of the spiritual yearnings of younger generations. Additionally, we face futures unknown that are shaped and formed by forces affecting centers of teaching and learning in ways that are not lifegiving but provide opportunities for reimagining and transformation.

McCormick’s strong commitment to reformed heritage, ecumenical unity, social justice (three of our seven Core Values), positions us to be a voice of God’s compassion, care, and accountability in what past-president David Crawford called a “beautiful and troubled world.” We have tough questions to answer and firm stances to take that ensure the thriving of our students and entire community. Like the yearning expressed in the spiritual “Deep River,” we too often long for peace, for rest, for a future where justice reigns. The river, in this context, can represent the challenges and obstacles we face, the struggles inherent in “co-creating our futures.” Yet, the song also embodies a deep hope, a belief that

despite these challenges, we can and will reach that promised land. It's a hope that sustains us, that fuels our work, and that reminds us that even amidst hardship, the dream of a better future remains alive.

At McCormick, we believe in more than just passive observation. We are active participants in co-creating a just world. As effective and active endeavors, our strategic work centers the stories of those who comprise McCormick, past and present, as an effective strategy for understanding why McCormick matters. As we face a culture of erasure, it is critically important that we speak, share, and document our ongoing history, and the experiences of our alumni/ae, students, board, faculty, staff. Knowing who we are enables us to build capacity where it matters as we articulate who we want to be. We can be proactive about change and how it happens! McCormick will soon be announcing a new Vice President for Institutional Advancement who will work closely with the Vice President of Community Engagement and Alumni Relations and me to broaden our network and sources of support. We are excited to share the news that we are free of all debt and continue to be an institution supported by excellent fiscal management. I see the collaborative spirit among the board, faculty, staff, and students as we collectively shape the next chapter of McCormick's legacy. Join us as we share our stories, and together, build a future filled with hope, justice, and blessed assurance as we continue to trust the journey.

Maisha Handy

We have sprinkled some testimonials from members of our family about their McCormick experience throughout this book. Read their expanded comments at mccormick.edu/testimonials

ABOUT PRESIDENT HANDY

LEADERSHIP:

- Named 12th President of McCormick Theological Seminary (July 2024)
- First African American president and second female leader of McCormick
- Previously served as Interim President and Professor of Religion and Education at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta, GA

EDUCATION:

- B.S. in Criminal Justice, Lincoln University (1989)
- Master of Divinity, Candler School of Theology, Emory University (1994)
- Ph.D., Emory University (2002) - First African American woman to receive this degree from the department

MINISTRY AND CHURCH AFFILIATION:

- Ordained minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA)
- Former Pastor at Rize Community Church (Atlanta, GA)
- Recognized for her work guiding young adults in the pastorate.

OTHER:

- Chicago native.
- Served as a teaching assistant and associate to Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa (1999).
- Collaborative leader and social justice-oriented community builder.



DR. HANDY SAYS...

What have you appreciated most stepping into this role at McCormick Seminary?

The most immediate and heartening aspect of stepping into this role has been the genuine warmth and sincere embrace I've received from the students, staff, and faculty. I've also appreciated the broad support across the city of Chicago, which is truly remarkable. And of course, the strong and unwavering support of the Board of Trustees has been absolutely invaluable in ensuring a smooth transition and a solid foundation for our work.

What drew you to McCormick and kept you in theological education?

My journey in theological education spans 25 years, and it's a commitment that continues to deepen. What drew me specifically to McCormick was the profound resonance of its mission with my own theological journey. I found myself particularly attracted to the seminary's core values and its commitment to an inclusive environment. The opportunity to engage in collaborative leadership here was also a compelling prospect. These factors combined to make McCormick an ideal place to continue my work.

What opportunities excite you in the changing landscape of theological education?

The evolving landscape of theological education presents a wealth of exciting opportunities. I'm particularly enthusiastic about creating spaces where diverse voices and experiences can be authentically heard and valued. Expanding our understanding of ministry beyond traditional roles is also crucial, as is forging connections with organizations outside the traditional church setting, helping people see the relevance of seminary education in various sectors of life. And of course, I'm eager to explore and develop creative and innovative educational experiences that meet the needs of today's learners.

How does McCormick's diversity allow for personal growth and learning?

McCormick's rich diversity is a powerful catalyst for personal growth and learning. It compels us to learn from others and recognize our own privileges, fostering a deeper understanding of ourselves and the world around us. We are challenged to navigate the inherent tension between expansion and contraction, which is a vital part of growth. And perhaps most importantly, we engage in meaningful healing processes and hold difficult, yet necessary, conversations that lead to transformative change.

What's next for McCormick?

Looking ahead, McCormick is focused on several key areas. First and foremost, we will be centering our STORY, understanding its significance, and sharing it compellingly. We aim to connect with non-traditional learners, redefining the very concept of what it means to be a student. We will actively engage with younger generations and the vibrant artist culture. We also plan to explore the exciting possibilities of social media congregations and digital ministry. And throughout all of this, we will strive to maintain a delicate balance between honoring our rich traditions and embracing innovative approaches to theological education.

REPAIRING THE WOUNDS, EMPOWERING THE SPIRIT: MCCORMICK'S TRAUMA HEALING INITIATIVE

In a world marked by both visible and unseen wounds, we at McCormick Theological Seminary are taking a bold step towards healing. Our Trauma Healing Initiative (THI) isn't just a program; it's a movement towards a more compassionate and trauma-informed future for theological education and the communities we serve. We recognize that trauma – whether institutional, historical, collective, or personal – leaves deep scars. This initiative is born from a deep understanding that many of our learners and leaders often find themselves on the front lines, supporting individuals and communities grappling with the aftermath of traumatic experiences.

THI embraces a “healing-centered” engagement as we work with three primary groups in our growing community: students seeking degrees and community learners at McCormick; educators at McCormick; and the staff and administration at McCormick. We emphasize the crucial importance of being informed and of being well because we understand that leaders can only effectively serve their communities when they themselves are supported and nurtured. Our well-being is intrinsically linked to the well-being of those they serve.

Funded by a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment's Pathways to Tomorrow Initiative, we've made remarkable strides in 2024. Our three core objectives have become a reality, weaving a tapestry of healing and empowerment throughout the McCormick community and beyond.

Building a Foundation for Healing: With the blessing and full support of our new President, we began plans in the last quarter of 2024 to hold an all-employee retreat in January 2025. Grounded in restorative principles, the all-employee retreat was designed to foster a sense of community and lay the ground work for integrating trauma-informed practices into the very fabric of McCormick. This included preliminary discussion about the state of employee morale, norms and values, and key systems and structures at McCormick. Data gathered from that discussion will be used to support development of McCormick's strategic plan. It will also provide critical insight into the development of institutional KPI's that are at least partially informed by the Trauma Informed Continuum for Healing Centered Engagement in an effort to ensure that the initiative's impact can be measured and sustained.



Transforming Training

training from
learning. F
and heal
includi
differ
tru
e

Our Trauma Healing Initiative is more than just a program; it's a testament to the power of compassion and the resilience of the human spirit. It's a reminder that healing is possible through sustained commitment, that communities can be strengthened, and that leaders can be empowered to create a world where everyone can thrive. By embracing restorative justice principles and prioritizing both individual and collective well-being, we are not only transforming theological education but also inspiring a movement towards a more just and compassionate world. Together, we can create a supportive environment for all. Together, we can be well.

9

THE CENTERS: TWO DISTINCT HUBS FOR FAITH AND ACTION

McCormick Theological Seminary's Centers provide a rich blend of academic programming and community engagement, fostering both intellectual and spiritual growth. Two distinct centers offer specialized resources and opportunities:

The Center for African American Ministries and Black Church Studies:

Led by Rev. Dr. Stacey Edwards-Dunn, this Center focuses on the unique dimensions of ministry within the Black church context. It supports seminarians through courses, lectures, events, and community partnerships addressing issues like public health disparities. It also houses specialized study through the Black Church Studies Certificate.

The Center for the Study of Latinx Theology and Ministry:

Led by Rev. Dr. Leslie Diaz-Perez, this Center is dedicated to strengthening Latinx theological education, church leadership, and congregations through academic programs and specialized credentials, including a Certificate in Latinx Theology, and a Spanish-language Master of Arts in Ministry.





MY PURSUIT:

STUDENTS REFLECT ON CHOOSING MCCORMICK

“This global community of leaders is dedicated to upholding and adapting to the future possibilities of theological education, thoughtful service to humankind and commitment to uplifting the messages of reimagined love and justice for God’s people in this city, in this nation and across this world.”

Monica Moss, Master of Arts in Ministry, Class of 2025

“Engaging in discussions with people from different cultural and theological backgrounds has expanded our understanding of ministry and leadership. These interactions have reminded us that God’s work isn’t confined to one place but moves across borders, languages, and experiences.”

Oseas and Evelina Castillo, Latinx Theology Certificate, Class of 2025

“McCormick gave me open and welcoming hands, a space to act, react, and resist, which became the primary reason for me to continue my studies here. It helped me overcome challenges and reinforce my commitment to justice and pastoral ministry.”

Rev. Philip Richard Sundaram, Master of Theological Studies, Class of 2025

“The combination of expert faculty, diverse community, and extensive resources makes McCormick an ideal place for theological education.”

LoRita Purnell-James, Black Church Studies Certificate, Class of 2027

“McCormick is a place that encourages you to explore theology on your own terms and discover meaningful answers for yourself. This approach helps balance faith and academics, allowing you to integrate theology into both ministry and everyday life.”

Jungsoo Choi, Doctor of Ministry, Class of 2026

“McCormick has broadened my perspective, exposing me to diverse theologies, the impact of trauma, and the power of ministry in ways I never imagined.”

Robert Toney, Master of Divinity, Class of 2025

MCCORMICK'S LEGACY: ACTIVISM AND MINISTRY REVISITED

Past and present met on the Lincoln Park campus for McCormick Days 2024, with powerful reminders of both continuity and change in American history, responses to prophetic voices, and in the important ministries of McCormick students. After a warm evening in Hyde Park celebrating fifty years of McCormick's Latino ministries, a good group (including new President Maisha Handy) filled a bus early the next morning to head north to the old campus of McCormick Seminary, since 1975 the easternmost portion of DePaul University. Archivist Derek Potts led a thoughtful walking tour of the campus and the near neighborhood, tracing the paths of development, gentrification, community organizing and protest, and institutional and governmental response. Our walk began at what in 1969 was McCormick's newest building, named the Stone Academic Building for benefactor W. Clement Stone. This building, and the adjacent McGaw Library, were the targets of the May 1969 takeover by the Young Lords, a local group that had begun as a street gang, but which transformed itself into a broad community political movement in the crucible of the late 1960s and early 1970s in Chicago.

Most of the stories about the Young Lords revolve around its charismatic leader José "Cha Cha" Jiménez (1948-2025), or about the New York Young Lords. As the WTTW feature film *The Young Lords of Lincoln Park* notes, the Chicago stories from those days emerged from a remarkable alliance, dubbed the "The Rainbow Coalition," including Fred Hampton and the Chicago branch of the Black Panthers, the Young Lords, a group calling itself "The Young Patriots," a group of poor white Appalachians led by 20-year old William Fesperman, adrift in Chicago's urban settings but seeking community and social justice,

and groups of DePaul University and McCormick Seminary students. Over the years McCormick has continued its close ties with some of the Young Lords, including brothers Omar and Obed (and spouse Carol Lee) Lopez.

The Lopez brothers were raised as Protestants in Catholic Mexico, made their way to Chicago, and had found good community with the Young Lords. During the McCormick takeover Obed Lopez, as head of the Latin American Defense Fund, was escorted under wraps from the occupied building and flown to San Antonio, Texas to present the Young Lords' program to the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church USA. The Young Lords' petition focused on community development, McCormick investment in housing, health clinics, and legal projects, echoing James Forman's *Black Manifesto* in the same weeks of that remarkable year.

By December of 1969, the "Days of Rage" had come and gone, Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were dead after an early morning police raid, confirming the impunity of the Chicago police to crush critics and to infiltrate community organizations to disable, distract, displace, and destroy.

In 2011 McCormick and DePaul and the (now not-so-) Young Lords held a commemorative event on the DePaul campus which brought many Young Lords back to campus. Omar and Obed finally met and spoke directly with Robert Worley, who in 1969 was a young faculty member participating in the McCormick negotiations with President Arthur McKay, and Board Chair Harold Blake Walker. Robert Worley had never met the Lopez brothers, though they had spent many hours negotiating. When schedule difficulties made access to the Academic



ABOVE: 1969



RIGHT: 2024



LEFT: McCormick's Nannette Dixon and K. Sawyer and at the 2019 celebration, retracing pathways of protest

BELOW: Cha Cha Jiménez, Carol Lee Lopez, daughter of Omar Lopez, Omar Lopez, Obed Lopez, at the 2019 celebration



Photo of Obed Lopez (left) with Eliezer Risco, James Forman, and Gayraud Wilmore at the 1969 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. (photo courtesy of the Presbyterian Historical Society)

MY CALL

"My commitment for teaching, passion for students and my lived experience as an international student came together in my call to serve at McCormick."

Chrisida Anandan, Director of International Student Support & Student Services, Adjunct Faculty

Building uncertain for the 2011 event, Obed Lopez joked that he, "still had the keys to the building," and that the Young Lords could let the group into the building when needed!

In September of 2019, McCormick joined in celebrations of fifty years of Young Lord advocacy and community activism, agitation, and service. McCormick's Priscilla Rodriquez was elemental in planning that joyful day:

Now, in 2024, A true highpoint in this McCormick Day was hearing the heartfelt reflections of William Youngblood, looking back on the stunning tumult of his first months at McCormick in 1969 when the takeover swept him along, bringing him face-to-face with inequities and possibilities he had never heard of in his Kansas upbringing, and prompting difficult questions that would inform his long years of innovative ministry. Also present was Frank Baldwin, who came to McCormick just after the Young Lords takeover, and whose training and subsequent ministry carried the reckonings of those tumultuous years.

Many thanks for the great hospitality shown us that day by the DePaul community, especially by Associate Director of the DePaul Center for Latino Research, Dr. Marcella Reales Visbal. In the face of current headlines, we met to honor past struggles, and to hear of and from some of those present in the late 1960s, when community change, cultural transformation, individuals and institutions intersected on the campus of McCormick Theological Seminary. May we remember, document, and tell of the struggles of our own years, as part of the much longer struggle, begun long ago, connecting all McCormick's alums. Thank you for McCormick Days 2024!

OUR IMPACT

FUELING THE FUTURE



“McCormick Theological Seminary is worth the investment as we continue to invest in people who want to explore, who want to impact and who want to be community changemakers. Access to these transformative learning experiences and opportunities should always be available.”

Rev. Nannette Dixon
Vice President for Community Engagement and Alumni Relations, MDiv, Class of 2009

MY IMPACT

At McCormick, we wholeheartedly believe that education extends far beyond traditional classrooms. It’s about creating meaningful connections between academic achievements and real-world change! Under the dedicated leadership of Rev. Nannette Dixon, our Office of Community Engagement and Alumni Relations is at the forefront of this vibrant mission. Here, we celebrate McCormick’s dynamic community that beautifully blend scholarship with service, committed to making a significant impact in the world.

By promoting open communication and collaborative projects, we proudly highlight the amazing contributions our graduates are making as community builders, leaders, pastors, activists, and so much more. Our global community of over 5,400 passionate alumni comes together, united by a shared vision for justice and a deep appreciation for our McCormick experience.



MY CALL

"My role allows me to cultivate and co-create spaces where students—regardless of background, identity, gender, culture, or theological tradition—feel seen, supported, and empowered to answer God's call."

David Watkins
Assistant Dean of Student Services





Dr. Eleazar Gonzalez, Issue of Blood Project

“This seed money represented more than just a grant; it was an investment in the future. It was a tangible demonstration of McCormick’s commitment to empowering its students to become compassionate leaders and agents of change.”



MIGRANTS FUEL STUDENT-LED INITIATIVES

At McCormick Theological Seminary, education extended far beyond the classroom walls. We believed that true learning came from integrating academic knowledge with real-world experience, empowering students to become agents of positive change in their communities. Our Justice Design Thinking course, led by Dr. Leslie Diaz-Perez, Dr. Itihari Toure, and Dean David W. Watkins, III, exemplified this commitment through the Microgrant for Social Change Project. This initiative provided crucial funding for student-led social change projects, allowing them to apply the principles learned in the course and make a tangible difference in the lives of others.

We were thrilled to announce and celebrate the recipient of a \$1,500 grant: Dr. Eleazar Gonzalez II, for his impactful “Issue of Blood Project” at Casa de Misericordia in Phoenix, AZ. This project addressed a critical need within underserved communities: menstrual health disparities faced by women of reproductive age. These disparities included the inability to afford menstrual hygiene supplies and a lack of access to essential menstrual health education.

Dr. Gonzalez’s proposal eloquently articulated the urgent need for this project: “It is a fact of life that women menstruate, but unfortunately, not having the appropriate menstrual hygiene supplies negatively affects a woman’s everyday life. Girls should not miss school, women should not have to miss days of work or miss out on day-to-day activities because they lack basic necessities, such as menstrual pads

or tampons.” His words resonated with a deep understanding of the challenges faced by women in these communities and a passionate desire to create meaningful change.

What made Dr. Gonzalez’s project even more inspiring was the personal connection he forged with his family. An engineer who was deployed to Oregon from Arizona at the start of the course, he sought to bridge the distance and involve his loved ones in his learning journey. Partnering with his wife, a registered nurse, and his teenage daughter, he crafted this project, transforming a class assignment into a powerful act of service. This collaborative effort exemplified the transformative potential of education to not only inform but also to inspire action within families and communities.

This seed money represented more than just a grant; it was an investment in the future. It was a tangible demonstration of McCormick’s commitment to empowering its students to become compassionate leaders and agents of change. It was a way for the McCormick learning community to partner with Dr. Gonzalez and his family in their faithful witness and support their response to God’s call to serve those in need.

And it was through the generous support of our donors and friends that projects like this one became possible. Their contributions to McCormick Theological Seminary directly fueled these initiatives, empowering students like Dr. Gonzalez to turn their passion for justice into real-world impact. They were an essential part of his journey, enabling him to address critical issues, uplift marginalized communities, and build a more just and equitable world. Together, we were making a difference, one project at a time.

A BRIDGE BUILDER FOR THE BELOVED COMMUNITY

"I've always known that I had a pastoral call on my life," shares Rev. Alan Conley (MDiv 2015). But little did he know that his calling would lead him to shepherd children and families in a unique and powerful way, serving within a non-religious institution like the City of Chicago. Rev. Conley's journey is a testament to the diverse and impactful ways McCormick alumni are shaping our world.

As the Director of the Office of Faith-Based Initiatives in Chicago, Rev. Conley acts as a vital bridge between the city and its diverse faith-based partners. "A lot of times, people don't trust the government," he explains. "So, I've started leveraging the faith community as brokers of trust." He recognizes that faith communities often have deep roots and established relationships within neighborhoods, making them essential partners in serving the needs of the city's residents.

Overseeing a wide range of programs for the children and families of the Chicago Public Schools, Rev. Conley's work focuses on closing critical service gaps. Working collaboratively with numerous faith-based organizations, his team manages vital programs like Safe Haven, which provides students with additional learning time outside of regular school hours, and Adopt-a-School, which fosters genuine relationships between faith-based organizations and CPS schools to identify and offer enriching activities for students throughout the academic year. His team also provides crucial support to students and families facing crises. Perhaps most meaningful to Rev. Conley is the opportunity to host the annual Legacy of Love luncheon for the families of CPS students who passed away during the previous year — a poignant reminder of the human element at the heart of his work. "We do not promote faith, we promote faith-based partnerships," he emphasizes. "This is really a 'social justice' role. It makes sense for the city to partner with faith-based organizations that help support the values that students need to be modeled to be successful."

Rev. Conley's leadership shone brightly during the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. While many departments and teams were deemed "non-essential," he rallied his team to find innovative ways to continue serving the community, recognizing that their work was more critical than ever. "We developed a partnership with World Vision, acknowledging that people needed food!" he recalls. "Many young people only got their meals at school or at Safe Haven programs. We were able to feed 1,000 families weekly from April 2020 to May 2021." Through strategic partnerships with churches, they were able to distribute food kits to CPS families in need, ensuring that vulnerable children and families did not go hungry during a time of great uncertainty.

Rev. Conley credits his time at McCormick for preparing him for this important work. "If it had not been for McCormick, I don't think I would be prepared for the work I am doing," he emphasizes. "The time at McCormick helped me understand that everyone deserves and should be humanized. Everyone is a part of God's Kingdom." His theological education provided him with a strong foundation in social justice and a deep understanding of the inherent dignity of all people.

The opportunity to step into this impactful role with the City of Chicago arose while Rev. Conley was serving in a pastoral role at Metropolitan Apostolic Community Church of God. A mentor, recognizing his exceptional work running a Safe Haven program and other community initiatives, opened the door that eventually led him to lead faith-based initiatives for the city. "This work that I am doing is helping me build that beloved community that Dr. King once spoke about," he reflects. "McCormick introduced me to this way of thinking in a more pragmatic way. They helped me cultivate my theology as related to faith." Rev. Conley's journey is a powerful example of how a theological education can empower individuals to make a profound difference in the world, building bridges of understanding and working towards a more just and equitable society. His story is an inspiration to us all, demonstrating the transformative power of faith in action.

“If it had not been for McCormick, I don’t think I would be prepared for the work I am doing...The time at McCormick helped me understand that everyone deserves and should be humanized. Everyone is a part of God’s Kingdom.”



Alan Conley, Chgo Office Faith-Based Initiatives



Rev. Chingboi Guate Phaipi

A BEACON OF HOPE: INSPIRING A GENERATION

Every week at Chicago Zomi Bethel Church (CZBC), Rev. Chingboi Guate Phaipi (McCormick '11) pours her heart into nurturing the faith of children, leading the church's Christian Education team with a thoughtfully crafted curriculum. Her unwavering commitment to these young minds has propelled her to achieve a remarkable feat: earning the prestigious Pastoral Studies Project Grant from the Louisville Institute, a true testament to her passion for igniting the flame of faith in the next generation!

CZBC is a vibrant tapestry of Burmese refugees and their families, a community that Chingboi holds dear. Her inspiring project, "Toward Mending the Alarming Generational Disconnections Among Refugee Christians from Burma Residing in the U.S.," shines a light on the unique experiences and rich cultural heritage of this community. This passion was nurtured during her time at McCormick, where she was encouraged to embrace a Christlike perspective, fostering deep empathy and understanding for those around her. This project embodies her heartfelt dedication to building bridges and ensuring that the powerful stories of these communities are heard and honored.

Chingboi's journey to McCormick began after completing her theological education at Tokyo Christian University in Japan. Driven by a desire to deepen her understanding and expand

upon her call to ministry, which originated at the Evangelical Baptist Convention Youth Conference in her native India, she sought to solidify her beliefs and explore diverse church traditions. Reflecting on her transformative experience as a student from 2009 to 2011, she shares, “McCormick was exactly what I needed to enhance my knowledge of theology, the Bible, and Christianity. More importantly, it helped me grow in my understanding of God, God’s ministry, and my personal life journey.” Immersing herself in the vibrant diversity of Chicago and her time at McCormick, Chingboi actively connected with local faith communities, stepping boldly into vocational ministry. Witnessing God’s work among migrants ignited a fire within her, and her involvement with the CZBC congregation became a powerful testament to her lived experience of God’s presence. Chingboi’s story is a beacon of hope, radiating passion for nurturing faith within community!

Through her years of service at CZBC, Chingboi has gained invaluable insights into the unique challenges faced by the families she serves. She observed a growing disconnect between parents, who endured the hardships of military junta-ruled Burma and came to the U.S. as refugees, and their children, who have grown up in a vastly different world. “There are differences in faith experiences,” she explains, noting how some young people have drifted away from the church. Many in the Burmese community carry the weight of unaddressed trauma, often overshadowed by the urgent need to adapt and thrive in American society. This can create added stress as they navigate the complexities of raising children who may not fully comprehend the sacrifices their parents made. Bridging this generational gap is crucial for building a stronger, more unified community and enriching individual faith journeys. Chingboi’s unwavering commitment to this mission offers a powerful vision for a brighter future.

With the generous support of the Louisville Institute grant, Chingboi is embarking on a journey to connect with Burmese communities across the U.S., engaging with both those involved in church ministry and those living in thriving Burmese neighborhoods like Tulsa, OK. This exciting opportunity will allow her to attend conferences and visit churches, where she will observe and document effective practices and inspiring models of growth and healing. The invaluable insights she gathers will form a rich resource of successful strategies to share with these communities. Chingboi is filled with optimism, believing that by identifying root issues and providing reliable information, her work will lay a strong foundation for future research and empower these communities to shape their own destinies, guiding them toward a future filled with hope and promise.

With the support of the Pastoral Study Project grant and her deep commitment to ministry, Chingboi’s vision for these communities is one of flourishing and growth. She beautifully articulates her hope: “I hope both parents and younger generations can connect with God in genuine ways, growing in understanding and acceptance of one another.” It is clear that God has orchestrated Chingboi’s path, positioning her to positively impact countless lives through her unwavering dedication. And it is through the generosity of donors and supporters, like those who support the work of McCormick, that individuals like Chingboi are empowered to pursue their calling and make such a profound difference. These contributions fuel these vital projects, enabling passionate leaders to transform communities and build a brighter future for all. With the grant from the Louisville Institute, Chingboi is poised to take significant strides toward fulfilling her divine calling and leaving an enduring legacy of love and service.



A LIFE DEDICATED TO SERVICE: REV. MELODY SEATON

For nearly four decades, McCormick's 2024 Distinguished Alumna Rev. Melody Seaton — or Rev. Mel, as she's lovingly known by her congregation at Grace United Church of Christ — has poured her heart into nurturing young minds.

Her remarkable journey, from elementary school teacher to principal, is a testament to her profound impact on children, earning her numerous awards and accolades. Now, she embarks on a new chapter, continuing her life's work of service and inspiration.

As the founding and senior pastor of Grace United, Rev. Mel leads her congregation with a powerful voice and unwavering conviction. Her ministry extends far beyond the church walls, encompassing robust community outreach. From coat and school supply drives to a thriving food pantry, and the inspiring It Takes a Village Community Farm, a ministry she began on the church property, Rev. Mel is a tireless advocate for those in need, skillfully maximizing resources to make a real difference. And now, this remarkable woman has added another accomplishment to her already impressive resume: author. Inspired by the simple yet profound wisdom of children, Rev. Mel penned her debut book, a testament to her belief in the power of young voices.

Rev. Mel has always found solace and strength in writing. From heartfelt letters to her parents as a teenager to the ever-present diary, words have been her constant companion. Throughout her years as an educator and now as a pastor, her written reflections and life experiences have resonated deeply with readers, many of whom have long encouraged her to write a book. For years, Rev. Mel's focus remained on the people of God, her heart drawn to be present during their joys and struggles. "I discovered a desire to be among God's people in their best and worst of times," she reflects.

Meanwhile, God was working through her deep love for her grandchildren, a source of immense joy and inspiration. "I'm not sure if you're old enough to remember a show from the late '50s and '60s called, 'Kids Say the

Darndest Things,'" she shares with a smile, "but my grandchildren could definitely star in that show if it were on today." It was her grandson, Elijah, who sparked the flame for her book. His innocent yet profound question, "What does God look like?", posed to his mother, became the catalyst. His own playful answer — that he knew because he'd seen God on YouTube — brought laughter, but the question lingered in Rev. Mel's mind.

That question became the title of her book, What Does God Look Like?, a featured work at the 2024 McCormick Days Alumni Book & Arts Fair. Within its pages, Rev. Mel invites children on an interactive journey of discovery, exploring the countless ways God's presence is revealed throughout creation. She hopes her book will be a valuable tool, helping even the youngest readers to connect with God in a tangible way, recognizing His presence in the world around them. "I hope it will cause not only children but the adults that guide them in reading this book to look for God throughout their days and lives," she says.

Rev. Mel embodies dedication, passion, and an unwavering commitment to education and service. A distinguished alumna of the University of Illinois, Governor State University, and McCormick Theological Seminary, we proudly celebrate her remarkable achievements and her inspiring journey as our 2024 Alumna of the Year. Her life's work is a testament to the power of faith, love, and the enduring wisdom of children.

"From coat and school supply drives to a thriving food pantry, and the inspiring It Takes a Village Community Farm... Rev. Mel is a tireless advocate for those in need, skillfully maximizing resources to make a real difference."



FUELING THE FUTURE

Lifelong learning is vital for spiritual growth and effective ministry. At McCormick Theological Seminary, our Continuing Education programs are designed to nurture both, drawing from the rich Reformed tradition while embracing ecumenical and cross-cultural perspectives. We offer diverse opportunities that inspire and empower leaders from various backgrounds to meet today's challenges.

THE CERTIFICATE IN BLACK CHURCH STUDIES

brings together religious scholars and prophetic, compassionate leaders from Black churches to guide students in rigorously studying the history, theology and heritage of the Church.

THE CERTIFICATE IN LATINX THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

offers contextual courses that are grounded in student's on-going ministry work and promote theological depth and practical application. Courses are taught in a bi-lingual context.

THE CERTIFICATE IN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

program equips pastors and other key leaders of Christian institutions, both congregations and broader church or non-profit groups, with the skills and abilities vital for effective leadership in today's rapidly changing landscape.

THE CERTIFICATE IN ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AND MINISTRY

is a practical, interactive, cross-disciplinary program for clergy & lay leaders discussing environmental ministry in terms of the state of creation, biblical and theological foundations & Christian ethics.

A VOICE FOR JUSTICE: REV. IMMANUEL KARUNAKARAN

Rev. Immanuel Karunakaran is a force of nature. An ordained minister in the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tamilnadu, India, he embodies the roles of activist, scholar, pastor, and artist, seamlessly weaving together his passions to create a powerful voice for justice. Driven by the interconnectedness of global systems of oppression, particularly the parallels between racism in America and the caste system in India, Rev. Karunakaran dedicates his life to dismantling injustice and building bridges of understanding.

His ministry is a vibrant tapestry woven with threads of scholarship, activism, and artistic expression. He doesn't just preach about justice; he lives it, breathes it, and creates it. During the isolating times of the pandemic, Rev. Karunakaran channeled his energy and prophetic vision into a powerful mural project. Using his artistic talents, he brought to life the complex realities of identity, force, freedom, and the enduring legacy of displacement of Indigenous peoples and the enslavement of Black and Brown bodies in the United States. This project served as a visual sermon, inviting contemplation and sparking dialogue on the urgent need for societal transformation.

Rev. Karunakaran's commitment to dismantling institutional racism extends beyond artistic expression. As a trained anti-racism leader, he actively works to address these deep-seated systems of oppression, both within the church and in the broader community. He understands that the struggle for justice is a global one, and he hopes to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing efforts for liberation in the US and around the world. His work is a testament to the power of cross-cultural solidarity and the importance of recognizing the shared experiences of marginalized communities.

But Rev. Karunakaran's activism isn't confined to the intellectual or political realm. He understands the power of art

to touch hearts and move spirits. In various ministry settings, he regularly incorporates singing, dancing, and the performance of Dalit music, enriching worship experiences and celebrating the cultural heritage of marginalized communities. He uses his artistic gifts not only to express his own faith but also to amplify the voices of the oppressed, giving them a platform to share their stories and experiences. His art becomes a form of prayer, a call for justice, and a celebration of resilience.

Rev. Karunakaran's journey is a testament to the transformative power of education and the importance of embracing one's calling. As a 2020 graduate of McCormick Theological Seminary, he honed his theological understanding and developed the skills necessary to lead and inspire. His time at McCormick provided him with a space to explore the intersections of faith, justice, and the arts, equipping him to become the dynamic leader he is today.

We proudly honored Rev. Immanuel Karunakaran as our 2024 Rising Star. His unwavering dedication to his calling, his faithful leadership, and his commitment to using his gifts to uplift and empower marginalized communities make him a true inspiration. He embodies the very best of what it means to be a faith leader in the 21st century, demonstrating the power of one individual to make a profound difference in the world. His journey is just beginning, and we are excited to witness the incredible impact he will continue to make in the years to come.



OUR ANCHORS

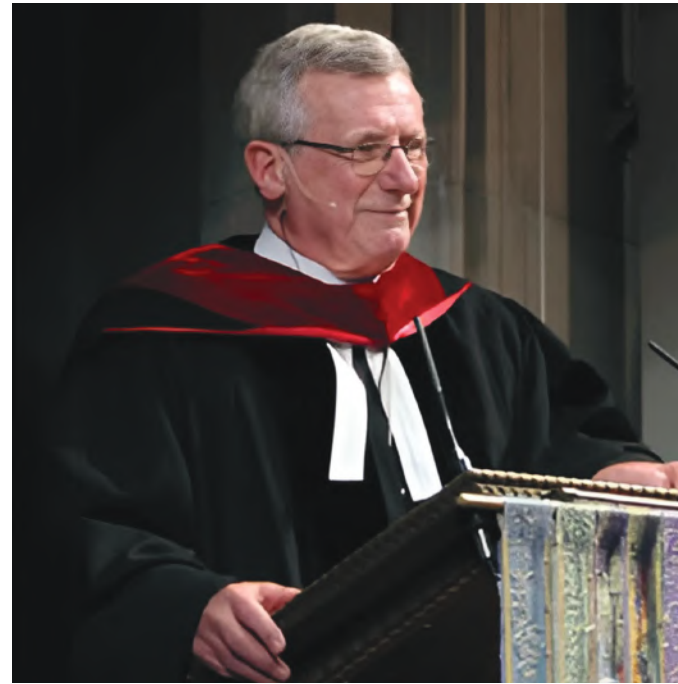
“HOLD TO THE GOOD”: REMEMBERING THE REV. JOHN BUCHANAN

Written By: Dr. Ken Sawyer

As a lifelong Presbyterian, John Buchanan's life and work confessed Christ in distinctly Reformed and Presbyterian ways, rooted in the renewal initiated by sixteenth century reformers, and routed through the international movement associated with Martin Bucer, John Calvin, and John Knox, broadened to recognize the many women and men whose lives were lessons to him. This faith produced in him a robust public witness, a readiness to dare to do all in keeping with deep and costly commitments to equity and fairness and possibility. Throughout his long life, he held an abiding wonder at God's profligate love, and a chastened appraisal of humanity's uneven response.

John was a masterful story-teller in all his many callings: whether in his long career of eloquent preaching, his skillful editing at Christian Century, thoughtful teaching, humane management, and his effective mentoring. His preaching was instructive without being condescending, inviting and personal without lapsing into folksiness. Instead, he welcomed the certain and the doubtful to join him on a journey of faith, guided by the poets, pilgrims, and prophets he studied. His affability put the powerful at ease, and he made room for hospitality and welcome to the powerless and the overlooked. In his quiet and rooted confidence, others found encouragement and empowerment.

John Buchanan was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania in 1938, raised in a Presbyterian family to be Presbyterian, but with many details left to fill in as he explored the wide



world. He graduated from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, studying government and political science. He and his wife Sue came to Chicago for John's ministerial training in the late 1950s, during the exciting and volatile final years of the "Federated Theological Faculty" of the University of Chicago. The Federation united three seminaries with the Divinity School of the University, allowing Buchanan to see compelling examples of what

"John served as the Chair of the McCormick Board and was a Life Trustee, admired for his wisdom and sound judgment. Many will remember his contributions to the PC(USA), the Christian Century, Fourth Presbyterian Church, and the broader faith community in Chicago. Through his ministry and service, he consistently reminded us that in life and in death, we belong to God."

Maisha Handy
(President 2024 – Present)

he would practice throughout his long career: sensitive pastoral care and counseling, thorough scholarship, prophetic preaching, and effective community action. Looking back later, he noted important lessons he learned from the integrated ministry team at First Presbyterian Church in Woodlawn, as that congregation offered a calm alternative to what would devolve into 'white flight' in the 1960s. Buchanan had arrived in Chicago with basic commitments to equity as demanded in the Scriptures, but the lessons he learned were specific and contextual, in the Civil Rights struggle lived out in an integrated congregation in the transitioning community of Woodlawn. In those student years he also learned the deep wisdom of a demanding regime of extensive reading and reflection.

After pastorates in Indiana and Ohio, Buchanan was called in 1985 to be Senior Pastor of Chicago's Fourth Presbyterian Church, where he showed how commitments to church and to community could be enacted and embodied. In an anti-institutional era, Buchanan was an institutional person -- he knew how to build alliances, programs, networks, innovative ministries, and actual buildings. Late in his term he oversaw the complex planning of the Gratz Center and the renovation and redesign of the Fourth Presbyterian campus, making a place for growth and grace for that remarkable congregation and the extended communities it serves. He championed McCormick Seminary as a member of our Board of Trustees, serving crucial years as Chair. He encouraged equity in hiring those most qualified for leadership, like the Rev. Cynthia M. Campbell, called as president of McCormick in 1995, and he recognized the promise and acumen of David Crawford, immediate past president of

McCormick. When absent from Chicago to serve as Moderator of the 208th General Assembly for the denomination in 1996/7, he secured Rev. Jack Stotts as a wise and discerning substitute. As Buchanan began that work as Moderator, I sent him two quotes from a George Marsden book on nineteenth-century Presbyterians, and John received both with grace and humor:

"No doubt there is a jubilee in hell every year, about the time of the meeting of the General Assembly." (quote from Charles Finney's Lectures on Revivals of Religion)

At John's urging, the Fourth Church congregation donated \$1 million to McCormick's last capital campaign. Beyond the financial support, John was an extraordinary preacher, a "pastor's pastor," which is no doubt why so many McCormick faculty worshipped, taught, and preached at Fourth Church. We give thanks to God for John's life and for life everlasting.

David Crawford
(President 2017 – 2024)

And also, something that President Andrew Jackson supposedly said to Nathan S. S. Beeman:

“Political opponents ‘don’t bother me half so much as do the dissensions in the Presbyterian Church.”

Buchanan was a peculiarly decent person, devoted to issues of equity and public life, consistently striving to make strides toward justice. Whether regarding fair housing and Civil Rights, advocacy for gay and lesbian ordination and service in congregational leadership, or his attention to Palestinian suffering while maintaining ties with Israeli and valued Chicago Jewish colleagues, John retained a calm and humble dedication to process and equity through the storm.

Above all he was peculiarly dedicated to the written and proclaimed word. Buchanan served the Living Word, and he clearly loved words that chased after meaning wherever written, whispered, or sung, whether gently rhymed or roughly shouted. John filled the sanctuaries of the churches he served with interesting stories of human predicaments and God’s provision, and the people came. He understood the world to be what his Reformed heritage had taught him: the arena of God’s redemptive, reconstructive work. He asked his hearers to be vulnerable enough to imagine, then he encouraged them to be bold enough to “hold to the good.”

Rest in Peace, faithful servant John Buchanan.

Dr. Buchanan shaped and formed thousands of the faithful every Sunday at Fourth Presbyterian Church. The list of leaders in the church and academy whom he directly influenced is a who’s who list of public and faith leaders from many religious traditions. He leaves a legacy of witness to the Gospel along with a cloud of witnesses whose lives he touched profoundly. May we live into the words that he charged to the faithful on Sundays, “Hold to the good.”

Frank Yamada
(President, 2011 – 2017)

John Buchanan was not a McCormick alum, but he was among its most loyal supporters and enthusiastic champions. In his time as chair of the Board of Trustees, John was a strong advocate for the McCormick vision of education that was reformed and ecumenical, cross-cultural and urban. His leadership at McCormick was exactly like his pastoral ministry: focused on people, committed to justice and compassion, and always hopeful.

Cynthia Campbell
(President, 1995 – 2011)



FACULTY

Dr. Anna Case-Winters, Professor of Theology

Dr. Iva Carruthers, Executive Director of The Center for Reparatory Justice, Transformation, and Remediation

Dr. Stephanie M. Crumpton, Assistant Professor of Practical Theology

Rev. Julian DeShazier, Director of Field Studies and Experiential Education

Rev. Dr. Leslie Diaz-Perez, Director for the Center for the Study of Latina Theology and Ministry; Senior Director of Enrollment and Admissions

Rev. Dr. Stacey Edwards-Dunn, Director of the Center for African American Ministries and Black Church Studies

Dr. Jina Kang, Interim Dean of Faculty; Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs; Assistant Professor of Old Testament

Dr. Kenneth Sawyer, Professor of Church History

Dr. Itihari Y. Toure, Senior Director for Major Grants for Program Development

Dr. Lis Valle-Ruiz, Assistant Professor of Homiletics

STAFF

Chrisida Anandan, Director of Student Services and International Student Support

Erik Almaguer, Network Administrator I

Nannette Dixon, VP of Community Engagement and Alumni/ae Relations

Talia Clay, Accountant Specialist I

Armando Del Valle, Properties and Facilities Assistant

Barbara Fassett, Senior Director of Information Technology

Matthew Frost, JKM Services Coordinator

Maisha Handy, President

Stephanie Holding, Metadata and Technical Services Librarian

Wu Mee, Doctor of Ministry Program Assistant

Teddy Nichols, Receptionist

Chioma Nwogu, VP Administration & Finance

Laurel Koepf, Director of the Doctor of Ministry Programs

Nathaniel Ramsey, Director of Student Financial Planning

Joyce Leachman, Administrative Support Coordinator to the Office of the President and Academic Affairs

Priscilla Rodriguez, Coordinator for Academic Affairs Centers

Jovan Triplett, Network & Systems Administrator

Barbara Vaughan, Database Administrator & Support Specialist

Chandra Wade, Registrar & Director of Student Records

Juah Washington, SBI Academic Program Manager

David Watkins, Assistant Dean of Student Academics and Support

Monica Williams, Administration

Ashley Woodfaulk, Human Resources Coordinator

MY IMPACT

"I am grateful to the faculty, staff and administration for making us feel part of their mission to "provide a transformative educational experience."

Bishop Armando Tamez
Secretary for Christian Education

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Amy Pagliarella, Chairperson
Robert Unglaub, Treasurer,
Chair of Finance Committee
Timothy Hart-Andersen, Secretary
Timothy Hart-Andersen, Vice Chair,
Chair of Nominations & Trusteeship Committee
Scott Anderson, Chair of Student Affairs Committee
David Van Dyke; Co-Chair of Development Committee
Stephen Bowen; Co-Chair of Development Committee
Stewart S. Hudnut, At-Large
Maisha Handy, President, Ex-officio
Jina Kang, Interim Dean of the Faculty, Ex-officio

FACULTY, STUDENT & ALUMNI/AE REPRESENTATIVES

Anna Case-Winters, Professor of Theology
Chicago, IL
Stephanie Crumpton
Associate Professor of Practical Theology
Chicago, IL
Doralice Gardner-Bowens, DMin Student
Houston, TX
Rueben Lillie, Alumni Council
Chicago, IL
Kelli Manning, Master's Student
Chicago, IL
Robert Toney,
Co-Moderator, Master's Student Council
Chicago, IL

CLASS OF 2027

Scott D. Anderson
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison, WI
Patrick Daymond
Covenant United Church of Christ, South Holland, IL
Pamela Floyd
Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Chicago, IL
Jesse Knox, III
Church of the Good Shepherd, Chicago, IL
Michael Piazza
Arlington Congregational Church UCC,
Jacksonville, FL
Werner Ramirez
Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, NY
Randall Tate
Chicago, IL

CLASS OF 2026

Stephen Bowen
William Blair, Chicago, IL
William A. Evertsberg
Kenilworth Union Church, Kenilworth, IL
Dominica McBride
Chicago, IL
David M. Roberson
New York, NY
Joyce S. Shin
Swarthmore Presbyterian Church, Swarthmore, PA
Robert K. Unglaub, II
Integrated Marketing Solutions, Chicago, IL
David A. Van Dyke
Saugatuck, MI

CLASS OF 2025

Timothy Hart-Andersen
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Minneapolis, MN
Stewart S. Hudnut
Santa Barbara, CA
Amy Pagliarella
Chicago, IL
Carol I Ping Tsao
Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI

LIFE TRUSTEES

Connie Lindsey
Chicago, IL
John L. Anderson
Lake Forest, IL
Jon T. Ender
Winnetka, IL
Ozzie E. Smith
South Holland, IL

MY IMPACT

"[McCormick is] the community that exposed me to different voices, revealed how my faith was a lens through which to make sense of the world, and taught me to be a pastor. Someone made my education possible; now it's my turn. I think of myself as not only a donor, but an investor."

Rev. Amy Pagliarella
Chair, McCormick Board of Trustees, MDiv, Class of 2007



CONGRATS ON RETIREMENT

A HOMILETIC HERO: CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF REV. DR. FRANK A. THOMAS

Next year, McCormick's Winter J Term will feel a distinct absence, a void where Rev. Dr. Frank A. Thomas' beloved Preaching and Celebration course has resided since 1985. After 34 years of dedicated teaching at McCormick, Rev. Thomas

is retiring, leaving behind a legacy of innovation, trailblazing, and profound impact. While his formal title, Rev. Dr. Thomas, reflects his academic achievements — a Ph.D. in Communications (Rhetoric) from the University of Memphis and D.Min. degrees from both Chicago Theological Seminary and United Theological Seminary — he is affectionately known as Rev. Thomas, a testament to his deep, selfless pastoral heart that shines as brightly today as it did at the beginning of his remarkable career.

Rev. Thomas' influence has graced numerous institutions, but it was at McCormick where his journey truly took flight. A single guest preaching engagement paved the way for a faculty position, launching him into a teaching role that would redefine homiletics. His "Preaching in the Black Church" course, initially serving a small group of Black preachers in training, became a pioneering exploration of African American preaching traditions. It was among the first of its kind, illuminating unique insights unavailable elsewhere. While groundbreaking in its academic contribution, Rev. Thomas humbly attributes the course's enduring success to the deep relationships forged with his students. "I minister to students," he shares with heartfelt conviction, "helping them understand their call...I'm not trying to make anyone anything other than who they already are."

Within a decade, the course became a coveted experience for students worldwide, a must-attend for aspiring preachers. Rev. Thomas fondly recalls its transformation into a "virtual UN," a testament to its global appeal. As the popularity of his courses at McCormick soared, so too did his influence within the broader preaching community, extending to seminaries across the U.S. and the wider church. He expresses deep gratitude for the expanding recognition of African American preaching, stating, "I've always

tried to bring African American preaching to the table as an equal member alongside European, Hispanic, Asian, and all other preaching traditions. The church is strengthened by that voice."

As Rev. Thomas approaches his well-earned retirement from teaching, he leaves behind a foundation for something even greater. He passionately advocates for a revival within American Christianity, believing that African American preaching will be a vital spark—a powerful testament to his unwavering commitment to ministry. He acknowledges the demanding nature of this work, emphasizing the importance of supportive relationships. For him, that cornerstone has been his wife of over 40 years, Rev. Dr. Joyce S. Thomas. Together, they are certified professional coaches, mutually supporting and uplifting each other in ministry. "For me, it was my spouse and my family," he reflects. "But for others, it's about having other partners and a community."

While Rev. Thomas' retirement marks the end of his formal teaching at McCormick and other institutions, his influence on homiletic thought, particularly through the lens of African American preaching, will continue to resonate. His legacy lives on through the African American Legacy Preaching Series, a digital resource illuminating the preparation and delivery of some of the world's most gifted expositors. He will also continue to guide the Ph.D. program in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric at Christian Theological Seminary (CTS), the first program of its kind in the nation, which he himself established. His impact is further cemented by the newly announced "Frank A. and Joyce S. Thomas Endowed Chair in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric" at CTS.

Looking ahead, Rev. Thomas envisions a bold future. He hopes to see 20 new homiletics professors specializing in African American preaching emerge in the next decade. These ministers, inspired by his example, will carry the torch, advancing this vital tradition and nurturing the hearts and ministries of future preachers. He doesn't seek to create "many other Frank Thomases," but rather to empower individuals to discover their authentic selves, to explore their own unique calling within ministry. Even in retirement, Rev. Thomas' legacy will continue to flourish, ensuring that African American preaching makes an increasingly profound and indelible mark on the global church.

"I minister to students... helping them understand their call...I'm not trying to make anyone anything other than who they already are."

- Rev. Dr. Frank Thomas

IN MEMORIAM

FACULTY & STAFF:

Rev. Dr. John Buchanan, Life Trustee
Dr. Ted Campbell, Professor Old Testament, Class of 1956
Rev. Dr. David Daniels, Professor Church History

James “Fred” Holper, Professor Preaching and Worship, Class of 1977

James “Fred” Holper, of Wood River, Illinois, dedicated his life to exploring and sharing the Christian faith. He began his career in journalism, writing for the Chicago Tribune and Milwaukee Reporter, before pursuing his Master of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary in 1977. After earning his Ph.D. in Theology from the University of Notre Dame, he taught at several seminaries, including Austin Presbyterian and Union Seminary, before finding his home at McCormick in 1998. For over two decades, he shaped McCormick’s preaching and worship curriculum, bringing a unique ecumenical perspective to Christian spiritual expression. His influence on students and the broader church was profound.



Regina Hunter, Administrative Assistant to Doctoral Level Programs
David Reeves, Professor of History, Greek and Religion
Alicia Rhine, ACTS DMin and Preaching Coordinator
Rev. H. Kris Ronnow, VP Finance & Operations, Class of 1963

ALUMNI:

Class of 1958

Charline Watts

Class of 1960

Nancy L. Chouteau-Dhonau

Class of 1963

John P. Peter,

Class of 1974

Marc F. Greene

Class of 1982

Gary Angleberger,
John D. Watson

Class of 2000

Charlene Hill,

Class of 2014

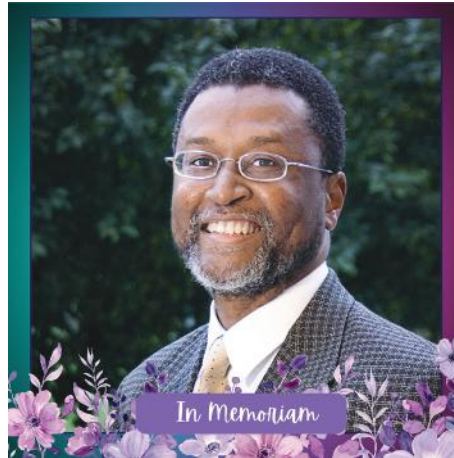
Sergio D. Centeno- Rodriguez
Kathi Worthington

Class of 2026

Rev. In-Kwon Seol

“His perspective and advice were much sought after. He leaves a legacy of generous service and leadership. He was much beloved, appreciated, and admired.”

- Dr. Ken Sawyer,
faculty member
and friend



“A SONG OF PRAISE”: MCCORMICK REMEMBERS DR. DAVID D. DANIELS III

Rev. Dr. David D. Daniels III, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, respected Churchman, ecumenical leader, and scholar of global Christianity, passed away on October 10, 2024. He was a

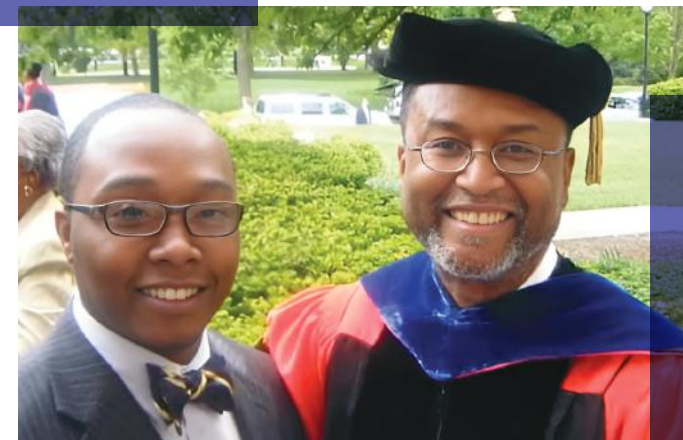
cherished member of the McCormick family, dedicating his life to academia and ministry as the Henry Winters Luce Professor of World Christianity and Professor of Church History. Dr. Daniels challenged historical narratives and decolonized understandings of the Church's origins, earning him widespread admiration. “The McCormick community was deeply enriched by the life and legacy of Dr. Daniels,” shared McCormick President Dr. Maisha Handy. “His contributions to theological education are significant and timeless. He will be missed by our village.”

His students remembered him for his academic rigor, compassion, and insights, encouraging critical thinking and pride in heritage. Dr. Daniels lectured internationally and, as an ordained minister and bishop in the Church of God in Christ, embodied his faith. Dr. Ken Sawyer, a long-time fellow faculty member and friend described his life as a “song of praise,” highlighting his wisdom, trust in divine provision, and generous service. “His perspective and advice were much sought after. He leaves a legacy of generous service and leadership. He was much beloved, appreciated, and admired.”

Dr. Daniels’ scholarship, including articles and book reviews, left a lasting mark. He championed overlooked texts and new textbooks, focusing on the role of Africans in the Early Modern European imagination, from Ethiopians in Germany to Congolese in Rome and Portugal. He challenged historians to recognize dynamic trade and exchange networks from Mansa Musa’s time to the Reformation.

Dr. Daniels’ warmth, wisdom, and commitment will be deeply missed. His legacy will continue to inspire.

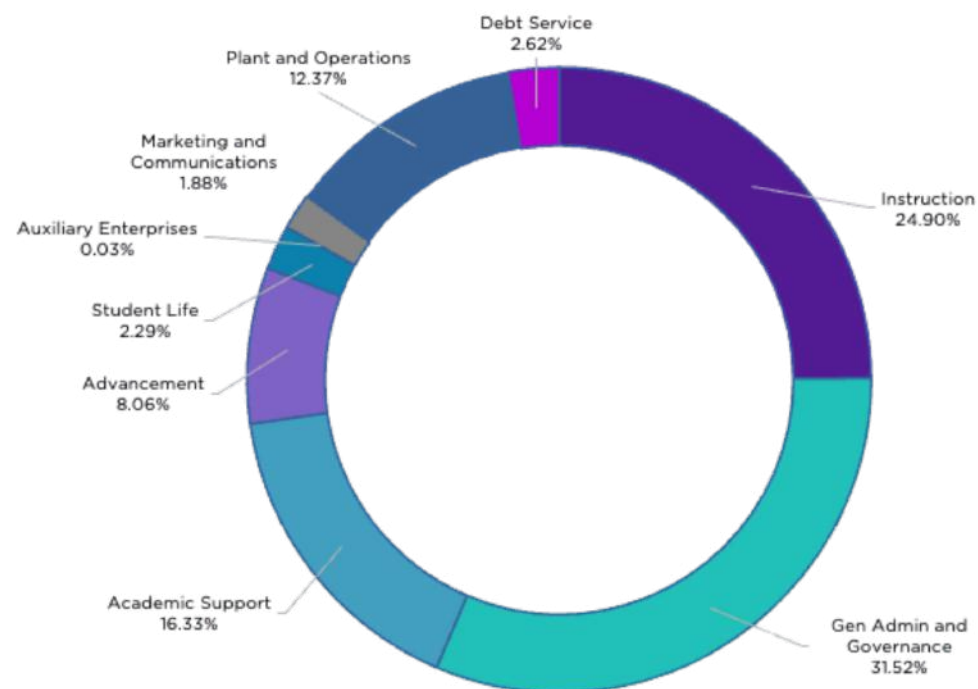
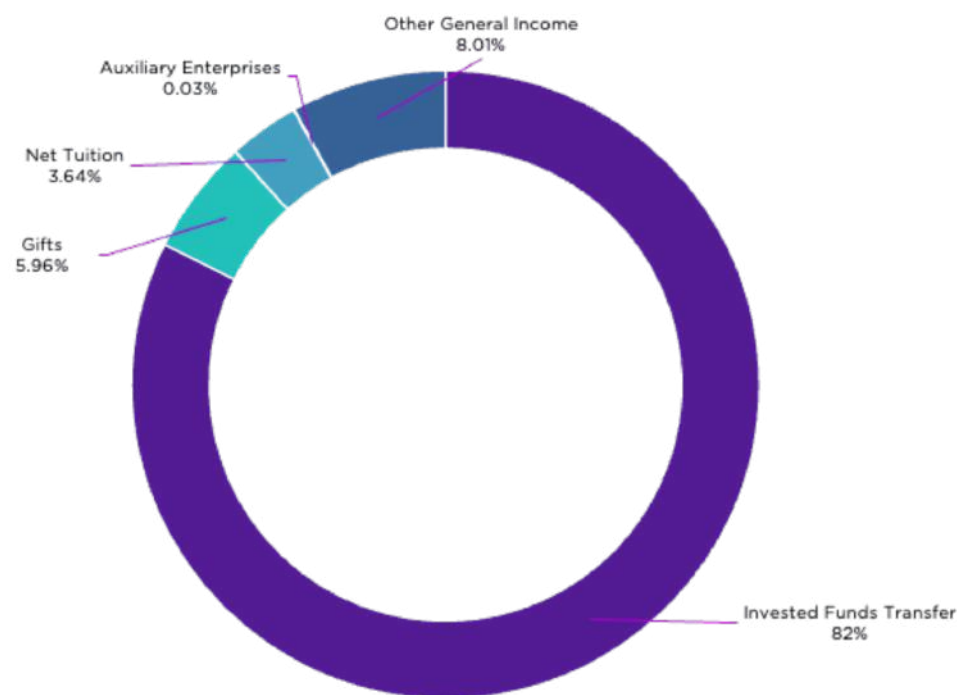
A Dr. David Daniels III Scholarship Fund was established by his family to support religion and theology students. Donations, payable to the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Inc. (memo: “Rev. Dr. David Daniels III Fund”), can be mailed or made online (www.sdpconference.info), via CashApp (\$SDPCINC), or Givelify (<https://giv.li/dey135>). Contact Margot Williams (margot@sdpconference.info; (773) 548-6675) for more information.



OUR OPPORTU

NITIES

SUMMARY OF 2023-2024 OPERATING INCOME AND EXPENSE



YOUR PARTICIPATION MATTERS



Your generosity can significantly shape the future of theological education and expand McCormick's influence! By sponsoring a student, supporting vital programs, or making an unrestricted donation, you play a key role in our mission. Together, we're creating innovative educational resources that serve communities and enrich churches.

Here are some meaningful ways to partner with us:

ONLINE GIFTS: Make a secure and convenient donation online today.

RECURRING GIVING: Set up a recurring gift to provide consistent support.

CASH & CHECKS: Contribute via mail or in person.

GIFTS OF STOCK: Donate appreciated assets for potential tax benefits.

MEMORIAL & TRIBUTE GIFTS: Honor loved ones while supporting McCormick's mission.

DIRECT AID: Provide direct support to specific programs or initiatives.

MATCHING GIFTS: Double your impact through employer matching gift programs.

GIFTS-IN-KIND: Donate goods or services that benefit the seminary.

AMAZON SMILE: Support McCormick while you shop on Amazon.

**Your support helps us educate and equip future leaders.
Thank you for being part of this transformative journey!**



“We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the
next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, God’s power,
and the wonders God has done.”

PSALM 78:4

