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PITTSBURGH SEMINARY WELCOMES NEW CHAIR AND MEMBERS TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Effective June 1, 2025, the Seminary welcomed five new members to its Board of Directors—the Rev. Austin Crenshaw Shelley, the Rev. Jerrel T. Gilliam, Destini Hodges '25, Ken E. Spruill Jr., Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball—and elected the Rev. Dr. Patrice Fowler-Searcy '13/'24 as the new Board chair, succeeding Eliza Smith Brown.



The Rev. Dr. Patrice Fowler-Searcy '13/'24, is the former acting pastor and head of staff at East Liberty Presbyterian Church. Prior to her ordination in the PC(USA) in 2016, she served ELPC for 20 years as the director of mission ministries and liaison to the East Liberty community. Patrice currently serves as president of the board of East Liberty Development Inc., where she has served since 1998. In 1999, in recognition of her service and dedication to the East Liberty community, Patrice was selected as one of 50 individuals nationwide to participate in the Harvard Divinity School Summer Leadership Institute for Church-based Community Development. Patrice is also a 2023 Princeton Theological Seminary Black Theology Leadership Institute Fellow. She previously served on the Pittsburgh Clergy Consortium, Pittsburgh Unites, the East End Growth Fund, the Western Pennsylvania Support Association of Oikocredit and Oikocredit USA, and as a charter board member of the Community Theater Project Corporation Inc. (Kelly-Strayhorn Theater). She has served the PTS Board as chair of the Governance Committee and on the Executive and SLEM committees.



The Rev. Austin Crenshaw Shelley is senior pastor of Shadyside Presbyterian Church. An ordained minister and former educator, Austin holds M.Div. and Th.M. degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary and is pursuing a Ph.D. in homiletics. She brings gifts in preaching, teaching, and sacred music, along with deep commitments to children's ministry and public theology. A soprano and flautist, Austin adds creativity, scholarship, and pastoral heart to her role on the Board.



The Rev. Jerrel T. Gilliam is executive director of Light of Life Rescue Mission, a Christian nonprofit serving Pittsburgh's unhoused community. With over 30 years in ministry, he has served as lead pastor of Shiloh Church in South Park and provided consulting to churches and faith-based organizations. A lifelong Pittsburgher with a heart for service, Jerrel brings compassion, leadership, and deep local roots to the Board.



Destini Hodges '25 is the Board's graduating student representative: a 2025 M.Div. alum with a background in political science and community and economic development. She served on Harrisburg City Council and School Board, is a Ruling Elder at Capital Presbyterian Church, and a Commissioner to the Synod of the Trinity. Destini brings an interest in theological education's evolving opportunities for growth in the 21st century to the Board.



Kenneth Spruill Jr. is director of Center for Family Philanthropy & Wealth Education at Glenmede, where he advises families on legacy planning, philanthropy, and stewardship. He has also served at PNC and Wachovia Corp. in a variety of roles, including senior philanthropy adviser, senior talent consultant, manager of diversity strategies, and workforce diversity officer and relationship manager. Ken brings a strong background in wealth education and organizational culture to the Board.



The Rev. Dr. Sandra L. Steiner Ball is bishop of The United Methodist Church in Western Pennsylvania. She has served as associate pastor, lead pastor, interim pastor of a new congregation, district superintendent, and director of connectional ministries. She is president of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and chairs the team for the annual U.S. DS/DCM. She brings skill in strengthening connections and experience in church leadership at multiple levels to the Board.

In recognition of their service on the Board, the Seminary also named the Rev. Dr. Nancy Lowmaster '11/'21, the Rev. Dr. Susan Vande Keppelle '95, the Rev. Dr. Donald (Don) McKim '74, James (Jim) Evans, and James (Jim) Gockley (former Board chair) as directors emeritus.

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