

PTS NEWS



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ELIZA SMITH BROWN ELECTED CHAIR OF PTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At its fall meeting, the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Board of Directors elected current Board member and vice chair Eliza Smith Brown to serve as its next chair beginning Jan. 1, 2024. She succeeds James Gockley, who has been the chair since June 1, 2018, and served on the Board from 2005 to 2014 and 2015 to present. Gockley will remain on the Board as vice chair until the conclusion of his final term May 31, 2024, to ensure a smooth transition.

“I am thrilled that the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Board of Directors has chosen Eliza Smith Brown as its next chair,” says the Rev. Dr. Asa J. Lee, president and professor of theological formation for ministry. “Her leadership on the Board has already been a blessing to me and to the Seminary, and I am looking forward to continuing in the working relationship we have shared for more than three years. In addition, I am thankful for the leadership of outgoing chair Jim Gockley, whose dedicated service has meaningfully impacted the Seminary’s position as a formative community engaging students in contextually-based scholarship which prepares them to serve with faithfulness and integrity.”



“Eliza has long served in various leadership roles on our Board,” noted James Gockley, the Seminary’s outgoing Board chair. “She brings with her both the experience and the perspective to help the Board guide the Seminary in the fulfillment of its mission to prepare students who are grounded in faith and formed in community.” In addition to serving as Board chair, Gockley was also vice chair of the Finance Committee from 2013 to 2014 and again from 2015 to 2018, and was on the Advancement Committee (2015-2016). He was chair of the Property Committee from 2016 to 2018 during the Clifford E. Barbour Library renovation project, which was completed in 2019.

Eliza Smith Brown joined the Board in 2013, and has been vice chair of the Board since 2018 and the Advancement Committee chair since 2015. She also served on the Governance Committee (2020-present), the Committee on Institutional Effectiveness (2013-2018), and the Property Committee (2013-2014). She chaired the search committee that brought President Asa Lee to PTS in 2021.

“Under Jim Gockley’s strong leadership, we have seen a transformation of this Seminary as it seeks to prepare students for a variety of ministries in an ever-changing world. I am honored by the trust the Board has put in me and excited at the prospect of working with Dr. Lee and his leadership team as they continue to build on the successes of the past few years,” said Brown. “The future looks promising!”

ABOUT ELIZA SMITH BROWN

Brown is an author, storyteller, and historian deeply rooted and actively engaged in the Pittsburgh community. She has authored or co-authored several books about local history including *Pittsburgh Legends and Visions: An Illustrated History*, *A Legacy in Bricks and Mortar: African American Landmarks in Allegheny County*, *A Century of Heroes*, and *The Duquesne Club Cookbook: Four Seasons of Fine Dining*. Additionally, she has given lectures and tours for organizations such as the Smithsonian, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Frick Pittsburgh, and Carnegie Mellon University. From 2019 to 2021, she chaired a city-wide initiative on behalf of the Pittsburgh mayor’s office to celebrate the Suffrage Centennial.

It has been a busy year for Brown. Her newest book, *She Devils at the Door*, was released Oct. 25, 2023, by Carnegie Mellon University Press, and tells the true story of Lucy and Eliza Kennedy, the Gilded Age’s “political twins” who brought women’s suffrage and political reform to Pittsburgh.

After working for three decades in historic preservation and architecture, Brown worked for 11 years as director of communications and external relations for The Association of Theological Schools. While there she became a trusted writer, editor, and strategist for ATS because of her ability to capture the essence of a narrative and articulate it in a concise and compelling way. ATS is an accrediting body and resource for Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and Brown’s ATS experience continues to inform her current leadership on the PTS Board.

Eliza is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College and studied historic preservation at Cornell University. She has served on numerous boards, among them the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, Carnegie Museum of Art, The Neighborhood Academy, and St. Edmund’s Academy.

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