

# School of Divinity

**BLACK WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION:  
THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE**



**HYELADZIRRA BANU**

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**HOWARD  
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CENTER FOR  
**WOMEN,  
GENDER  
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LEADERSHIP**



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*Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience is a special edition of the Working Paper Series (WPS) of the Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership. The reports in this series form part of the Women in Leadership: A Storytelling Project, which uses oral narratives to document the experiences and journeys of women leaders at Howard University. The storytelling project is available on the Center's YouTube page.*



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# Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience

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## **A Special Edition of the Working Paper Series by the Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership**

The historic launch of the Howard University Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership on October 4, 2020, was the culmination of many years of women and feminist organizing and activism at Howard University. The Center stands as an homage to the women and men who have advocated for, advanced, and established programs, initiatives, courses and other forms of activism for women and gender issues in the long history of Howard University.

Howard is known as a place of many firsts, yet the history of women remains largely in the archives. For example, women have established or led seven centers in areas ranging from the Center for Sickle Cell Disease to the Center for Women and Global Leadership. The contributors have also identified notable women faculty, students and staff from the Howard University archives that have not received much attention in existing literature on Howard's history.

Howard's administration has made recent strides in cultivating Black women leaders as deans and leaders in critical administrative positions. Still, there has been little analysis of how gender equity is practiced among faculty, the board of trustees, and executive leadership. The election of Kamala Harris, a Howard alumna, as the first woman vice president of the United States in 2020 reinvigorated Howard University's position as a leading Historically Black College and University (HBCU) in the United States and abroad. Howard University has produced several pioneer Black figures and leaders in the United States, including a Supreme Court judge, members of Congress, leaders of big companies and movie stars. Yet, we know little about the women and men faculty who teach, train and develop these leaders.

Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience is the culmination of a two-year research project designed by J. Jarpa Dawuni, Ph.D., and Anita Plummer, Ph.D., and carried out by graduate students and faculty that documents the past and present status of women faculty, students, and administrators at Howard University. Each working paper provides historical and contemporary data and case studies of women at the institution in areas ranging from their role in leadership positions, faculty rank, salary, retention, post-graduate work, exposure to violence and discrimination, and more. The data reveal a complex story of individuals and groups of women addressing gender inequity spanning the University's over 150-year history.

As a center focused on global leadership, this project draws on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (goal number five) which calls on nations and institutions to work towards achieving gender equality. Equally, goal number four (#4) calls for quality education. Recent efforts to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and access (DEIA) require data and informed research to provide a baseline for assessing where progress has been made and where more work needs to be done. This Working Paper Series (WPS) provides the needed baseline for further research on the topic of women's representation at institutions of higher education—specifically within HBCUs.

Collectively, the working papers document critical areas of women's experiences in different academic departments, colleges, and schools. In 2022, women students comprised 74% of the student body at Howard. It is well documented that women today have more access to education than at any other point in history. (*Continued*)

## PREFACE

Persistent gender inequality and inequity point to institutional failures at Howard and in higher education broadly. In 2019-2020, women comprised 55% of the faculty at Howard; however, when divided by rank, 66.81% of full professors and 53.27% of associate professors are men (College Factual, 2020). Lectureships, assistant professors, instructors, and adjuncts are predominantly held by women. Education is viewed as an equalizer, and this working paper series examines how women at the institution that graduates the highest number of Black professionals in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, engineering, nursing, law, social work, and education fare in ensuring women are equally represented in those fields at Howard and beyond.

Representation in administrative leadership and faculty is essential in understanding the story of women's evolving roles at Howard University. Each paper focuses on three aspects of women's roles at the institution. It begins with a microhistory of each college or school, followed by an analysis of women's intellectual contributions in their disciplines over the institution's history. The second area focuses on contemporary data (up to the year 2020) on gender in administrative, faculty, and non-faculty teaching positions. The final part of each paper examines the societal and institutional practices and culture contributing to gender inequality and provides policy recommendations that may help address disparities in Black women's representation in higher education leadership.

### **Significance and Contribution**

The role and experiences of Black women in higher education have been documented in the literature, especially in Predominately White Institutions (PWIs).

This WPS extends the literature by highlighting the following areas:

- The historical evolution of Black women faculty, administrators and students at Howard University.
- The formal institutional barriers Black women administrators and faculty encounter and the strategies used to address them.
- The informal cultural challenges faculty and administrators experience.
- Feminist theoretical perspectives that specifically focus on gender and race as critical dimensions to framing Black women in higher education.
- Highlights the broader implications of inequality and inequity on women in underrepresented sectors, especially in science and medicine.

This working paper series is the first project that shines a light on the role of women academics and administrators at Howard University. Each paper provides policy recommendations that can help Howard University and similar institutions advance gender equality and inclusion on campus. This project will contribute to existing scholarship on Black women in higher education by using Howard University as a case study.

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# Black Women in Higher Education: The Howard University Experience The School of Divinity<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The Howard University School of Divinity (HUSD) has existed for over 150 years—since 1870. Historically, following the aftermath of the civil rights movement, the school has seemed to value and adopt a progressive gendered lens, enabling faculty perspectives via platforms such as the Feminine in Religious Traditions lecture series, initiated in 1985. This study examines the historical legacies of theology and divinity as a male-dominated field that has gradually shifted at Howard because of the efforts of its first women administrators, students and faculty and theoretical trends in womanist and feminist theology that support scholar-theologians in academia, the church, and society.

## INTRODUCTION

The Howard University School of Divinity (HUSD) has existed for over 150 years—since 1870. As a Historically Black Theological Institution—and in fact, only one of six officially accredited institutions—it is affiliated with and accredited by the Association of Theological Schools.<sup>2</sup> Fully accredited since 1938, the School of Divinity remains one of a select few of theological schools in the world, operating within a doctoral university. In line with its initiation, the school’s mission is to “educate and forms academic and religious leaders to serve the Church and society, and to celebrate the religious and cultural heritage of African Americans, the African Diaspora, and Africa.” (HUSD, 2022). Concurrently, the school aims to “be a global leader in theological education in a community driven by intellectual rigor, a passion for justice and freedom, and a relentless search for truth,” as ensconced in its vision. (HUSD, 2022). The school’s motto is to: *lead with head and heart*,<sup>3</sup> and students of the department are active in local and global churches of various denominations.

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<sup>1</sup>This work was financially supported by the Center for Women, Gender and Global Leadership.

<sup>2</sup> *History, mission, and Vision*. History, Mission, and Vision | Howard University Department Site. (2022). Retrieved July 2, 2022, from <https://divinity.howard.edu/about/history-mission-and-vision>

<sup>3</sup> Howard University School of Divinity. (2022). *Homepage*. Homepage | Howard University Department Site. Retrieved July 29, 2022, from <https://divinity.howard.edu/>

The school offers various master’s degree programs and joint masters programs, as well as an online non-research doctorate program for theological practitioners— Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.). Full and part-time faculty teach at the School of Divinity, some of whom are women, including the current dean of the school, Dr. Yolanda Pierce.

Table 1: HU School of Divinity Graduate Degree Programs, 2018 - 2022

Program	Degree Classification	Graduating students
Master of Arts in Religious Studies	M.A.	17
Master of Divinity	M. Div.	59
Master of Divinity/Master of Social Work	M.Div./M.S.W	
Master of Divinity/Master of Business Administration	M.Div./M.B.A	
Doctor of Ministry (Religion)	D.Min.	16
		96

Data Source: *Howard University School of Divinity, 2022.*

Recent data from 2018 to 2022 reflects that many graduates work in ministry after graduation (28%) and other diverse sectors (25%), including in government, public service, music, and business. Below is a breakdown of the graduation rates per top four fields entered after graduation.

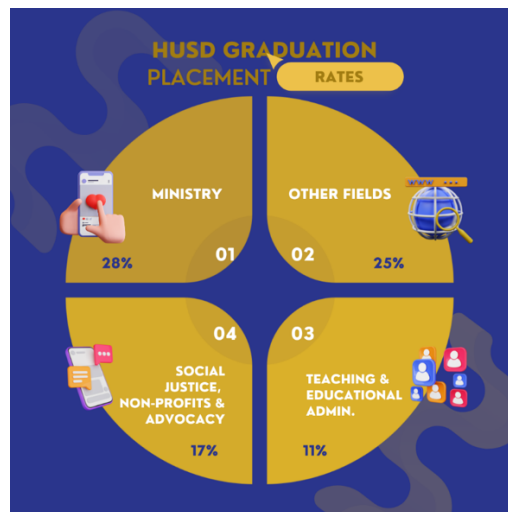


Figure 1 HUSD Graduate Placement 2018-2022

## A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Prior to being known as the School of Divinity, the school was first referred to as the educational unit or Department of Theology in 1870. It then became known as the School of Religion in 1932, until the 1940s, when it became the School of Divinity. The school credits its initiation to a group of Congregationalists who sought to improve the training of religious and church leaders for the recently emancipated. As their plan broadened to include liberal arts education, the Howard University Department of Theology opened its doors in 1870, just three years after the establishment of the university itself. (Dyson, 1941, pp. 201)



Figure 2 Howard University School of Religion. Photo Source: Howard University School of Religion Library Collection, 1930s

Early sources on the Department of Religion describe the institution as a ‘high-class high school,’ until 1880, when it became a college, granting free tuition until it became a full-fledged graduate institution. Throughout, the Department of Theology remained a social center of learning alongside the Lincoln Mission, which grew to become the Lincoln Memorial Congregational Church along with the institution. The department, while serving as a center for social justice and learning, also struggled to fund its operations. Despite this, students graduated with varying degrees, including certificates, diplomas, and master’s degrees. While the department conferred certificates and diplomas, it was not until the 1930s that graduate degrees were issued.

## The First Women

Some of the first women to attend the Department of Religion earned certificates and degrees. While a total of 31 women attended between 1870 and 1940, only 12 graduated—about 39%. Amongst these was Ruth Haven, the first woman to gain a certificate from the school, in 1910. Some of the 19 women students who attended, but did not receive degrees include Marion Jones, who attended from 1889 to 1980, and Susie West, who attended in 1895. Others include Bertha Lomack, who attended in 1922 and Martha Eells, who attended from 1939 to 1940. The first female graduates of the institution are highlighted in the table below.

Table 2: Female Graduates of the HU Department of Theology/School of Religion, 1870 - 1940

Name	Graduation Year	Qualification
<i>1870 - 1929: Certificates &amp; Diplomas</i>		
Ruth Haven	1910	Cert.
Elnora Carter	1915	Diplo.
Bell J. Conrad	1921	B.D.
Mabel L. Berry	1926	Th.B.
Ida M. Taylor	1929	Cert.
<i>1930 - 1940: Degrees</i>		
Albertha E. Ewell	1933	Th.B.
Mildred E. Greenleaf	1933	Th.B.
Inez W. Holmes	1933	Th.B.
Mary E. Richards	1933	Th.B.
Octavia L. Jones	1936	Th.B.
Anita Anderson	1937	M.A.
Rena A. Brannon	1940	M.A.

Source: *Howard University: The Capstone of Negro Education, 1941*

As the school of School of Religion evolved to include graduate studies, students from Howard and other institutions sought to earn graduate degrees from the department. Hence, Anita T. Anderson became the first woman to graduate from the department in 1937.



From 1933 to 1936, when the School of Religion was established, 28 students were enrolled, all of whom had bachelor's degrees. Eleven of these graduates were from Howard University, five were graduates of State A&M College, Orangeburg, South Carolina, and two from Morehouse College. Others graduated from A&T College of Greensboro, North Carolina, Friends University of Wichita, Kansas, Knoxville College, Tennessee, Morgan College, Baltimore, MD; Paine College, Augusta Georgia; West Virginia State College, Florida A&M College, Tallahassee—a student each from these institutions. Within this period, only one student was a woman—Anita T. Anderson.

From 1936 to 1940, all 33 students enrolled at the School of Religion were college graduates. Of these, only two were women—Anita T. Anderson, and Rena Brannon.

In more recent years, notable alumni of the School of Divinity are present in academia, the arts, the church, and across society. According to the School of Divinity, some notable female alumni include:

- Vashti M. McKenzie, who earned a master's in divinity in 1985 and became the first elected female in the office of bishop in the history of the A.M.E. Church
- Christine Y. Wiley, Ph.D., who gained master's in divinity in 1986, and served as a theological educator, civic and social justice activist, and pastor of Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ in Washington, DC
- Angela Sims, who graduated with a master's in divinity on 1998 and became the president of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in Rochester, NY
- Barbara W. Skinner, J.D., who earned her doctorate degree in ministry in 2001, started the Skinner Leadership Institute, and became the founding executive director of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
- Carla Brailey, Ph.D., who earned a master's in divinity in 2007 and became the executive director of community affairs and served as senior advisor for religious affairs for the District of Columbia from 2006 to 2010, and is a professor of Sociology at Texas Southern University and Springfield College

### LEADERSHIP COMPOSITION

Overall, the leadership of the School of Divinity has mainly been male-centered, although women have held positions as deans, faculty, and top administrative posts. Based on early records, most of the faculty and deans of the school have been men. Some of the first faculty at the School of Divinity include: Eliphalet Whittlesey (1869 - 1884), A.W. Pitzer (1876 - 1897), John Butler (1890 - 1898), J.G. Craighead (1879 - 1891), George Moore (1887 - 1892), J.W.E Bowen (1890 - 1891), Sterling Brown (1892 - 1930), Adam Reoch (1894 - 1895), W.R.A.

Palmer (1891 - 1893), George Jones (1891 - 1894), Isaac Clark (1891 - 1919), George Little (1894 - 1925), Pezavia O'Connell (1910 - 1913), McLeod Harvey (1914 - 1923), Ezra Cook (1916 - 1920), and Gordon Williams, (1922 - 1934). Seven deans emerged from this group of people—Isaac Clark, J.G. Crieghead, John Ewell, David Pratt, John Reeve, Lorenzo Westcott, and Frank Woodbury. (Dyson, 1941, pp. 66 - 69)

Most of the deans of the Theological Department, School of Religion, and School of Divinity were also men. Below is the list of deans in chronological order:

Table 3: Deans of the Theological Department and School of Religion, 1871 - 1940

Dean	Time Period
<i>Theological Department Deans</i>	
John B. Reeve	1871 - 1875
Lorenzo P. Westcott	1875 - 1879
James C. Craighead	1879 - 1891
John L. Ewell	1891 - 1901
Isaac Clark	1901 - 1916
Frank P. Woodbury	1916 - 1917
<i>School of Religion Deans</i>	
Butler D. Pratt	1917 - 1934
Benjamin E. Mays	1934 - 1940
<i>School of Religion Deans</i>	
William S. Nelson	1940 - 1949
Frank T. Wilson	1950 - 1957
Daniel G. Hill	1957 - 1964
Samuel L. Gandy	1965 - 1974
Talbert O. Shaw	1975 (acting)

Lawrence N. Jones	1975 - 1991
Clarence Newsome	1992 - 2003
Evans Crawford	2003 - 2004 (interim)
Bertram Melbourne	2004 - 2007 (interim)
Alton B. Pollard	2007 - 2017
Yolanda Pierce	2017 - present

Source: *HU, The Capstone of Negro Education, 1941*

### WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

In the history of the Howard University School of Divinity, Yolanda Pierce remains the first and only woman to serve in the top leadership position at the school. Appointed in 2017, she previously served as the Founding Director of the Center for African-American Religious Life at the Smithsonian National Museum of African-American History and Culture in 2016. Before this, she served as the Founding Director of the Center for Black Church Studies and Associate Professor of Religion and Literature at Princeton Theological Seminary. A self-described “womanist theologian and scholar of the Black Church tradition,”<sup>4</sup> Pierce has led the school through contemporary challenges, including the onset and endurance of the COVID-19 pandemic and comparatively declining enrollment and graduation rates (Howard University Annual Assessment Results (2017 & 2019)).

Although Dean Pierce might be the first and only woman in the top academic position currently, the School of Divinity has had a long and enduring history with women in leadership. In addition to being one of the first accredited theological departments in the world to award academic qualifications to women, it was also a hub for female leadership across the United States. Another first woman, although certainly not the only one, to earn a certificate from the Department of Theology was Ruth Haven, who earned a certificate in 1910. In 1915, Elnora Carter earned a diploma from the department, and six years later, the first woman to be awarded a degree from the Department of Theology was Bell J. Conrad, who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Divinity in 1921. Since then, many women

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<sup>4</sup> Howard University. (2021, March 19). *The legacy of women: Dean Yolanda Pierce talks faith, church stories and women*. The Dig at Howard University. Retrieved July 3, 2022, from <https://thedig.howard.edu/all-stories/legacy-women-dean-yolanda-pierce-talks-faith-church-stories-and-women>

worldwide have graduated with numerous degrees, diplomas, and certificates from the School of Divinity.

Recently, the school celebrated Dr. Rosemary Radford Reuther, former faculty of the School of Religion and pioneer in feminist theology. Current faculty of Howard University highlighted the impact of her work on them as students at Howard.

As Professor of Hebrew Bible, Dr. Alice Bellis, highlighted:

“Dr. Rosemary Radford Reuther was one of my first professors at what was then Howard University School of Religion. She was very gracious and radical at the same time. Although I did not know it then, it must have been during her time at Howard (she left in 1975) that she was writing *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, a finalist in the National Book Awards in 1975 for Philosophy and Religion, her groundbreaking study on the church’s contributions to Christian persecution of persons of Jewish religious background. This book was especially courageous due to her Roman Catholic faith. I had heard of her because of her feminist theology before I came to Howard, but her stance on antisemitism was unknown to me and even more revolutionary. We have lost a giant. I am proud to have been her student and that we at HUSD can claim her as part of the Howard legacy.”

Dr. Reuther’s impact also seeped into other classes, changing minds and having a larger impact on perspectives and paradigms. As Professor of Applied Religion, Harold Trulear recalls:

“I enrolled in Dr. George Kelsey’s class Christianity and Race as a Drew University graduate student eager to investigate ethical approaches to white racism. The syllabus included a book entitled “Faith and Fratricide” authored by Rosemary Reuther. Annoyed, I wondered why we would be exploring Antisemitism in a course I thought should be devoted solely to matters of Black/white relations in America. Such was my introduction to intersectionality. Though best noted as a pioneer in feminist theology, Dr. Reuther’s work changed theology itself and we are all in her debt. Upon arrival at HUSD, I saw her picture on the walls as a faculty member and was further affirmed in my belief that we who join this faculty step into shoes of great tradition. Thank you, Rosemary Redford Reuther.”

The School of Divinity has also promoted and supported female leadership and feminist theology in society. News and informational materials across the years reveal the department’s efforts to uplift the work of female scholar-theologians in academia, the church, and society. This includes organizing various seminars, conferences, and talks across various sectors and public spaces. Examples of these include the “Feminine in

Religious Traditions” lecture series, launched in the fall of 1985 and ongoing in recent years, up to 2017. The first lecture featured Delores Williams of the Union Theological Seminary’s lecture on “The Colour of Feminism,” Cheryl Sanders, then faculty member at Howard, spoke on “The Woman as a Preacher,” Cheryl Gilkes, then faculty member of Boston University on “Women in the Sanctified Church,” and Delores Carpenter, faculty member at Howard on “The Professionalization of the Ministry by Women.”<sup>5</sup>



*Photos of Early Female Faculty of the School of Divinity, Dr. Cheryl Sanders (R) & Dr. Delores Carpenter (L)*

More recently, to support its ongoing work, the School of Divinity was awarded a \$1 million grant to continue the Ethical Leadership and Racial Justice Initiative— to initiate a certificate program for clerical and non-religious leaders and fund a cohort program for students whose work align with ethical leadership and racial justice.

## HISTORICAL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data on the department, although comparatively limited, overall reflects the historical male domination in terms of school attendance and faculty membership. This is not surprising as it mirrors what has been evident in society, based on access to education, opportunities, and

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<sup>5</sup> Scarupa, H. J. (1986). *Women in ministry: Challenging old assumptions. New Directions*. Retrieved July 3, 2022, from <https://dh.howard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1416&context=newdirections>



public life. Based on the Howard University Alumni Directory, 1870 to 1919, the first-ever graduate from Howard University was from the School of Medicine, graduating with a degree in pharmacy in 1870. Expectantly, this graduate was male. As the number of graduates grew to 25 in the next year, the first women to graduate with degrees emerged as well—a total of four women gained degrees in 1871—8% of the lot. By 1873, 39 graduates emerged, but with no women amongst them. (Wilkinson, 1965)

The School of Theology saw its first cohort of steady graduates around 1880, with a total of 8 graduates from the Department of Theology, and 38 graduates from the entire institution. The department produced 21% of Howard University's graduates. In 1890, the number remained steady at 7 male graduates with diplomas and no female graduates. Compared to the rest of the institution, which produced a total of 76 graduates, the Theological Department produced just under 10% of the lot of total graduates. In total, the number of female graduates was 7 as well, at 9.2%. These women were: Mary Somerville, Anna Perry, Bernice Pierce, Clara Gladmon, Ellen Morgan, and Irene Baker, amongst others. Comparatively, we see a gap in the trajectory of female graduates across the entire institution, and more so within a department that produces a total number of graduates equal to the number of female graduates at the time (Dyson, 1941 & The Howard University Alumni Directory).

By 1918, although the Theology Department produced no female graduates, it produced 12 male graduates out of the 227 total graduates at Howard University, including 45 women. By comparison, the graduates of the department totaled just over 5% of the entire graduating class. Across the institution, female graduates totaled about 20%, indicating a considerable gap in the male-to-female ratio of graduates from Theology. Over time, the number of graduates of the school ranged variably with averages of about 5 in the 1910s, to 7 in the 1930s, to about 21 in the 1950s, to 15 in the 1960s. The demographics in more recent years will be discussed in the next sections (Howard University Alumni Directory, 1920).

## WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

The Howard University School of Divinity is the only historically black college or university (HBCU) theological school categorized as a comprehensive category one research institution.<sup>6</sup> The Theological School remains one of the foremost educational institutions on the subject of church and religion in North America, particularly given its focus on African American and marginalized communities.

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<sup>6</sup> *About.* About | Howard University Department Site. (n.d.). Retrieved July 5, 2022, from <https://divinity.howard.edu/about>

## Famous Alumni and Remarkable Achievements

Alum	Industry	Achievements
Alfred Owens, Jr., Bishop	Church Leadership	Presiding Prelate and senior bishop of Mt. Calvary Holy Church of America, Inc., Dean of the Joint College of African American Pentecostal Bishops, Sr. Pastor of Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church of Washington, DC.
Angela Sims, P.h.D.	Academia	President of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, Rochester, NY
Barbara W. Skinner	Advocacy	Founding Executive Director of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation & J.D., Skinner Leadership Institute
Carla Brailey, Ph.D.	Academia & Advocacy	Executive Director of Community Affairs and Senior Advisor for Religious Affairs for the District of Columbia (2006-2010); Professor of Sociology at Texas Southern University and Springfield College
Christine Y. Wiley, Ph.D.	Academia & Activism	Theological educator, civic and social justice activist, and pastor of Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ in Washington, DC
Dennis W. Wiley, Ph.D.	Academia & Activism	Civic and social justice activist, theological educator, and pastor of Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ in Washington, DC
Earnest Pugh	Arts	Stellar Award Nominee, American gospel singer
Gary S. Fink, Rabbi	Advocacy & Church Leadership	Community advocate, hospice chaplain, and rabbi emeritus of Oseh Shalom in Laurel, MD.

Gerald L. Durley, Ed.D.	Academia, Advocacy & Church Leadership	One of the first Peace Corp volunteers to enter Nigeria, psychologist, ecumenist, educator, pastor emeritus of the historic Providence Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA
Max Finberg	Advocacy	President and CEO, Growing Hope Globally, global food security advocacy organization, Western Springs, IL
Michael Fisher Jr., Ph.D.	Academia	Assistant Professor of African American Studies, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA
Richard Smallwood	Arts	Award winning Gospel Music singer/composer/producer
Tim Lake, Ph.D.	Academia	Associate Professor of English and Black Studies, Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN
Wil Gafney	Academia	Professor of Hebrew Bible, Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX
Vashti M. McKenzie	Church Leadership	First elected female to the office of bishop in the history of the A.M.E. Church

*Table 4 Source: Howard University School of Divinity, 2022*

In recent years, the Howard University School of Divinity has closed the gap in terms of female faculty and students across the department. In 2022, the total number of faculty is 13. Faculty members include professors and assistant professors in Biblical studies (4), Theological studies (2), ethics (1), historical studies (2), ministry studies (3), and society, culture and religion (1). Of the 13, seven of them are men and six of them are women. With women accounting for 46% and men accounting for 54% of the faculty, the department has achieved near gender balance in terms of leadership, particularly when taking into account the leadership of a female dean. With the addition of the dean to the leadership structure, the Howard University School of Divinity will have achieved gender balance in 2022.

This is a promising projection for the gender balance of the future faculty, particularly when compared to the school's historical demographics. The faculty of the School of Divinity is listed below.

Table 5: Faculty of the School of Divinity, 2018 - 2022

Faculty	Gender	Specialization
Alice O. Bellis	F. ♀	Professor of Hebrew Bible, Biblical Studies
Barbara A. Fears	F. ♀	Assistant Professor of Religious Education, Biblical Studies
Bertram Melbourne	M. ♂	Professor of New Testament Biblical Language & Literature, Biblical Studies
Cheryl Sanders	F. ♀	Professor of Christian Ethics, Biblical Studies
Donald K. Davis	M. ♂	Professor of Theology, Theological Studies
Frederick L. Ware	M. ♂	Professor of Theology, Theological Studies
Gay L. Byron	F. ♀	Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, Biblical Studies
Harold D. Trulear	M. ♂	Professor of Applied Theology, Ministry Studies
John Ahn	M. ♂	Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible, Biblical Studies
Kenyatta R. Gilbert	M. ♂	Professor of Homiletics, Ministry Studies
Kwasi Kwakye-Nuako	M. ♂	Associate Professor of World Religions, Society, Culture & Religion
Renee K. Harrison	F. ♀	Associate Professor, African American & U.S. Religious History, Historical Studies
Zainab Alwani	F. ♀	Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, Historical Studies

## CONCLUSION

The Howard University School of Divinity has evolved since its establishment in 1870. The school's legacy of local and international advocacy, leadership, and impact is evident, despite its comparatively limited total numbers relative to other larger schools at Howard University.

Historically, following the aftermath of the civil rights movement, the school has valued and adopted a progressive gendered lens, enabling perspectives of faculty via platforms such as the Feminine in Religious Traditions lecture series, initiated in 1985.

While in past times, the school had notable gaps and challenges regarding female representation in students and faculty, in recent years, it has put in effort to achieve gender parity within its faculty, especially, with 46% of professors and assistant professors being female. Additionally, with the appointment of the first and only female dean of the school in 2017, future projections reflect promise in terms of female representation and gender parity, not only in terms of physical representation but also in terms of perspectives, ideology, spiritual, and educational representation.

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