



For Immediate Release

CONTACT

Walter Collins

WCollins@sfts.edu

415-451-2822

Liz Huntington

LHuntington@sfts.edu

415-451-2841

San Francisco Theological Seminary Receives \$2 Million Gift from Shaw Family

Shaw Institute Expands Interreligious Chaplaincy to Meet the Growing Need of Ministry in a Globalized World

San Anselmo, November 1, 2017—Spiritual care, interreligious partnerships, an interdisciplinary curriculum, and a global reach are all part of the exciting vision for an expanded Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program at San Francisco Theological Seminary. SFTS alumnus Rev. Dr. John Shaw’s \$2 million gift will achieve this vision with the creation of the Shaw Institute for Spiritual Care and Interreligious Chaplaincy.

SFTS President, Rev. Dr. James L. McDonald spoke about the generous donation: “We are so grateful for this transformative gift! Through his own personal experience, John Shaw saw the power of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) to be life-changing for those engaged in ministry. He also saw in Professor Laurie Garrett-Cobbina a faithful person with extraordinary abilities and deep spiritual, social, and emotional wisdom, who could put his vision for cutting-edge theological education into practice. His gift will catalyze profound, powerful changes in the practice of ministry for clergy and others in service-oriented professions.”

While CPE remains at the core of the new Institute’s mission, the gift’s impact will stretch well beyond the bounds of the traditional CPE program, says Rev. Dr. Laurie Garrett-Cobbina, Shaw Family Chair for Clinical Pastoral Education, and Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Education at SFTS.

“The Shaw Institute is a vision of the future of theological education as well as a vision for church, society, and all caring professionals,” Garrett-Cobbina says. “The Institute is incarnational education at its best!”

Garrett-Cobbina, whose endowed chair was first created by a previous Shaw gift, is the visionary behind the newly expanded program. She describes the Shaw Institute as a

“school within a school.” She says the Institute embodies the seminary’s commitment to transformative theological education by engaging students in practical spiritual care and service in their communities.

“The people of God need skilled, caring professionals who know how to facilitate groups, engage suffering, understand trauma and grief and their complex socio-cultural roots, care for the dying, and bring *real* transformation and healing to such situations,” she says.

The Shaw Institute will develop partnerships with healthcare organizations, medical schools, nursing schools, law schools, and social science/social care departments. Garrett-Cobbina envisions continuing education offerings to help nurses, physicians, lawyers, social workers, and chaplains enhance their caregiving skills.

An important goal for Shaw Institute students is to learn to build relationships with, and offer spiritual care to people of varied cultural and religious backgrounds. In what she describes as “a ground-breaking learning experience,” Garrett-Cobbina led a CPE unit in Ghana, West Africa in 2015 for students from SFTS and a university in Ghana. An important goal of the Shaw Institute, she says, is “to offer CPE in international contexts to meet the growing interest in ministry competence in a globalized world.”

The Institute’s curriculum spans a wide range of disciplines, with courses that explore the history of health care, professional and biomedical ethics, research literacy, preaching and pastoral care, trauma and grief, social justice, and other topics.

“What will set the Institute and its offerings apart,” says Garrett-Cobbina, “is the recognition that among all service-oriented professions, spiritual care practitioners uniquely symbolize the presence of the ‘Holy’ in human interactions.”

###

San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS), a leading Protestant graduate theological school, has prepared students from around the world for various forms of ministry for nearly 150 years. Located in Marin County, California, SFTS offers doctoral, masters, and certificate programs for people from all walks of life, on campus and online. SFTS is a founding member of, and partners with, the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley—the most comprehensive center for the graduate study of religion in North America. For more information, visit sfts.edu.