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Presidential Installation of Stephen G. Ray Jr. Celebrated With Trio of Public Events

CHICAGO – September 27, 2018 – Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS) will celebrate the installation of **Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray Jr.** as the institution’s 13th president. With only 12 predecessors over CTS’ 163-year history, Ray’s installation marks both a significant institutional transition and a rare one! The Seminary has planned a trio of public celebrations from October 10 to October 12, commemorating the beginning of this new administrative era.

On **Wednesday, October 10**, President Ray will host, *An Evening with Artist MiCo*. Also known as **Michael Benson**, MiCo was born and raised on the West Side of Chicago. These poor neighborhoods provided the rich inspiration and backdrop in many of his pieces. He also draws inspiration from his Christian upbringing. His art often transfuses racial and religious symbolism with Black vernacular themes as a way of celebrating and giving narrative to the African American experience. This is given voice in the simple yet complex, and sometimes cartoon-like depictions in his drawings.

On **Thursday, October 11**, CTS will welcome **Rev. Dr. Jacqueline J. Lewis** as the lecturer for the 12th annual **C. Shelby Rooks Lecture and Awards**, named for CTS president, **C. Shelby Rooks**, the first African American to serve as president of a predominately white theological school. Lewis serves as senior minister of Middle Collegiate Church in New York’s East Village. Middle Church is a dynamic 1000-member multiracial, multicultural, inclusive congregation in which everyone is welcome just as they are. Lewis is also the executive director of The Middle Project, an institute that prepares ethical leaders for a more just society.

On **Friday, October 12**, the Installation ceremony will take place at 3 pm at **Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago**, with Senior Pastor, **Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, III**, participating. The service will begin with a procession of scholars, faith leaders, and dignitaries from across the country. Greetings will be delivered by **Frank M. Yamada**, executive director of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, **Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer**, general minister and president of the United Church of Christ, **Rabbi Yehiel E. Poupko**, rabbinic scholar at the Jewish United Fund of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, and **Dr. Mary T. Stimming**, associate director of the Wabash Center, along with other friends and colleagues. **Walt Whitman and the OneSoul Musicians** will provide musical accompaniment for the celebration.

“I’m both honored and overwrought with emotion for this joyous occasion,” President Stephen G. Ray Jr. said. “I not only look forward to these events but most importantly building upon the foundation for which has been laid for me. This moment in history is a defining one, one that is not for the swift but for those who endure until the end. I am confident in the work of our board of trustees, the faculty, staff, and most importantly, our students to carry us through to the next, whatever that may be.”

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The events are free and open to the public, but an RSVP is required. For full details on each occasion and to reserve your seat, please visit ctschicago.edu/installation.

Members of the media who plan to cover Installation Week events should contact Susan M. Cusick, director of communications at scusick@ctschicago.edu to secure credentials.

ABOUT CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Based on Chicago's Southside, Chicago Theological Seminary is committed to creating leaders for the next generation at religious leadership...whatever that may be. A leader in social justice, CTS is committed to LGBTQ and gender issues, interreligious understanding, and racial justice.

CTS is an affiliated seminary of the United Church of Christ. Since its founding in 1855, CTS has pushed at the growing boundaries of the church in order to make faith more relevant and transform society towards greater justice and mercy. The student body now represents more than 40 different faith traditions, perspectives, and denominations.



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