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Chicago Theological Seminary Trustees Elect Brian Clarke, Chair and Welcome New Trustees

CHICAGO, IL – October 19, 2018 – Chicago Theological Seminary announced the election of Brian Clarke as chair of the CTS Board of Trustees. Clarke was elected by the unanimous vote of Seminary Trustees on Thursday, Oct. 11, 2018.

Clarke, who served as a member of the CTS Board since October 2008 succeeds **Norman J. Williams** as chair. Williams served as board chair since October 2013 and has been a trustee since October 2008. Williams will continue to serve on the board as a life trustee.

“We are thrilled with the election of Mr. Clarke as chair of our board of trustees,” said CTS President, **Stephen G. Ray Jr.** “He brings a unique perspective to the Seminary: a keen interest in our mission and commitments and significant experience in strategic planning. With the launch of our InterReligious Institute and other initiatives, Brian takes over this role at a very exciting time. As we see the gavel pass hands, we must take the opportunity to thank immediate past-chair, Norman Williams for all that he has contributed to the seminary and for his leadership during a time of great institutional change. Our entire community is grateful to Norman for his steady leadership.”

Clarke is a company founder and managing partner of Kensington International, an executive search firm and human resource consulting business in Oak Brook. He has been recognized on BusinessWeek.com’s list of The World’s Most Influential Headhunters. Brian has conducted numerous senior leadership search assignments across the manufacturing, consumer, financial services, infrastructure and gas, oil, and chemical sectors.

Prior to founding Kensington International, Brian served as the vice president of First National Bank of Chicago’s Global Industries Division. Before this, he worked for The Quaker Oats Company in several human resources roles.

“It’s a great honor to return to the Seminary as Board Chair,” said Clarke. “CTS is a preeminent force in theological education and social justice and is overseen by a highly talented Board of Trustees, making this all the more inspiring for me. It is also humbling to succeed Norman Williams who led the Seminary so ably.”

The board welcomed the return of three members; **Dr. Forrest Harris, Rev. Tim Rhodes,** and **Carole Segal.** The board also voted to elect three new members to serve on the board of trustees. Richard Franklin, Rev. Walter Johnson, and Timothy Wright were elected to serve two terms as voting members of the board. Additionally, the board also voted on the selection of chairs for each committee.

“We are excited to welcome these dynamic community members to our board,” said newly elected chairman, Brian Clarke. “They each represent the values we hold dear and bring with them the expertise, knowledge, and boldness to help us carry out our mission to the world.”

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Richard Franklin practiced law for more than four decades as an associate, partner, principal, and senior counsel with Baker & McKenzie. He also served Baker & McKenzie in many management capacities, including as a member of the Firm's Policy Committee, the Chair of the Firm's North American Litigation Practice Group, the Firm's Chicago Office's Litigation Practice Group, and as the Chicago Office Hiring Partner. Mr. Franklin has had more than forty years experience in international business dispute resolution and related counseling. Much of his work has focused on advising German, Scandinavian, and other European clients on corporate governance and other steps to reduce their liability risks, especially corporate veil pricing risks, arising from transacting business in the US. Additionally, he has represented clients in many other areas of the law including shareholder class actions and derivative claims, contract, product liability, and toxic tort (including mass tort class actions), securities, antitrust, and creditor's rights.

Walter B. Johnson (DMin, '91) began public speaking when he was eleven years of age at Greater St. John A.M.E. Church and his local school, George Gershwin. He was one of the youngest persons (16) ever to be licensed to preach and was later ordained in the conference. Dr. Johnson serves as the Senior Pastor of the historic Greater Institutional Church. He has previously pastored six churches in and around the Chicagoland area: Mount Zion, Robinson Chapel, Turner Memorial, Greater St. Paul, Allen Chapel Rockford, and Wayman on the near north side (or the Cabrini-Green community). This year marks thirty-six years in Christian ministry and servitude to humanity.

He is past president of the A.M.E. Ministerial Alliance of Chicago & Vicinity and served in leadership roles for the following groups: the Near North Ministry Alliance, the Ministerial Alliance Against The Digital Divide (MAADD), Faith Outreach for Safe Humane Chicago, and the Alliance for Community Peace. He currently serves as the executive director of the Greater Institutional Daycare and Learning Center.

Timothy W. Wright, III (MDiv, '18) is a partner in the Chicago office of Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, P.A. and also practices from the firm's Los Angeles office. Mr. Wright is experienced in the areas of transactional law, governmental affairs, public finance, and litigation. His transactional practice includes the representation of issuers, underwriters, and other credit parties in municipal finance transactions. Mr. Wright has also represented clients in major real estate development and other commercial transactions.

Mr. Wright has been active in a broad range of governmental affairs, including such matters as legislative oversight and analysis, international relations and policy, and community development. He has represented clients before various regulatory agencies involving environmental and energy matters. Among these are the Illinois Commerce Commission, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Mr. Wright has litigated cases in the state and federal courts involving a range of commercial matters.

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.

