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## Retired Chicago Public Schools Educator-Turned-Graduate-Student Awarded InterReligious Leadership Award

**CHICAGO – December 6, 2018** – Chicago Theological Seminary awarded **Susan Steinmiller** the 2019 Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman InterReligious Leadership Award. The award is an initiative of the InterReligious Institute (IRI) at CTS where Steinmiller is a first-year master of divinity student and honors the passionate commitment to interreligious engagement modeled by the late Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman.

Students submitted proposals for interreligious initiatives, both contextually centered and issue-specific. Steinmiller's winning proposal, working with Chicago teachers and students, earned her a \$500 honorarium and an additional \$500 micro-grant to execute the project. Steinmiller's work will be shared with the CTS community and broader public audiences as part of the InterReligious Institute's mission to cultivate, test, and share replicable projects to further interreligious understanding.

"I am excited that we can support this initiative which is so in line with the legacy of Rabbi Schaalman and his deep commitments to young people, to education, and to religious pluralism," **Lisa Zook**, project director for the IRI said. "I look forward to supporting Ms. Steinmiller in this important work."

Steinmiller's project will develop a workshop for educators in Chicago Public Schools to provide instructors with deepened interfaith and interreligious training, tools, and lenses. The two-day workshop will give high school educators information, links, contacts, and manipulatives to employ in their classrooms. Recognizing the limited resources currently available to educators, and the ways curricula are often tainted with a lens of Christian normativity, this approach seeks to enrich students and teachers by providing a more inclusive understanding of religious identities. The workshop will be offered in the spring of 2019 to 40 high school educators.

**Susan Steinmiller** is a master of divinity student starting a new chapter in her life. The recently retired high school history teacher served as a department head and coach in her 37 years of teaching in Chicago. As an educator, she was recognized for her innovative and dedicated teaching style. She was awarded the prestigious *WGN Teacher of the Month Award* and received recognition from the Chicago Teachers' Union with the *Alan Wardell Award for Teaching Tolerance in the Classroom*, the Chicago Public Schools' *Suave Excellence in Teaching Awards*, as well as other accolades. Steinmiller's educational background includes a bachelor's degree in History from Lewis University and a master's in School Administration & Leadership from Concordia-Chicago University. Susan looks forward to continuing her calling to live into the word of God as she transitions from the classroom to the pulpit.

### ABOUT THE INTERRELIGIOUS INSTITUTE

The InterReligious Institute at Chicago Theological Seminary is dedicated to interfaith engagement in our community through academia, theology, and public dialogue for a more just and pluralistic society. The InterReligious Institute is funded in part through a generous lead gift from the Henry Luce Foundation.

### 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.

