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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Seminary of the Southwest and the Texas Pauli Murray Scholarship Committee announce first recipients of the Texas Pauli Murray Scholarship

Scholarship named for the trailblazing Episcopal Priest was established in 2018 to support seminarians of color at Seminary of the Southwest.

Austin, TX — July 1, 2020 — Seminary of the Southwest (Southwest) and the **Texas Pauli Murray Scholarship Committee** have announced that the inaugural recipients of the **Texas Pauli Murray Scholarship** are **Ryan Hawthorne** and **Maria Victoria Umana**. Both are students entering Seminary of the Southwest in the Fall of 2020, with Hawthorne pursuing a Diploma in Anglican Studies and Umana entering the Master of Divinity program.



Ryan Hawthorn

"It is exciting to welcome the first Texas Pauli Murray Scholars to Seminary of the Southwest. This scholarship fund and the story of its creation are rich examples of how partnerships between parishes, dioceses and seminaries can have transformative results. I look forward to seeing Ryan and Victoria continue on their paths to ministry here at Southwest," said the Very Rev. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge.



Victoria Umana

Named for the famed poet, civil rights era icon, lawyer, and first black woman priest in The Episcopal Church, the Texas Pauli Murray Scholarship fund was begun in 2018 through an effort led by parishioners and clergy at St. James Episcopal Church in Austin, TX. The initiative quickly gathered support from other parishes in Austin and throughout the Diocese of Texas. In February 2020, the Diocese of Texas announced the fund would be the recipient of \$1.5 million as part of its \$13 million racial reconciliation plan in the diocese.

“Our vision of the Pauli Murray Scholarship is to help form clergy in the Episcopal tradition and to reflect our society’s and our church’s diversity by significantly increasing the number of African American priests and priests of color. We are thrilled to have two recipients this year, an African American woman and a Latina woman, both from the Diocese of Texas. We hope to be able to award a scholarship to a seminarian each and every year during their course of study at the seminary. We will offer our support in other ways as well as we welcome these outstanding students into the seminary community,” said the Hon. Lora Livingston, Co-Chair, Texas Pauli Murray Scholarship Committee.

“St. James’ in Austin, partnering with the Seminary of the Southwest, initiated an effort in 2018 to provide “living expense” scholarships to help make seminary education more accessible to low-income African American students and students of color. We named the scholarship after Pauli Murray, a civil rights attorney and activist and the first African American woman priest in the Episcopal Church, as an icon whose voice for justice we hope the recipients will model as future clergy. The scholarship will be in addition to academic awards so that the students will be able to cover their living expenses in Austin while studying. We are grateful to Bishop Andy Doyle for having arranged this year to fund an endowment for the scholarship,” said the Rev. Jim Harrington, Co-Chair, Texas Pauli Murray Scholarship Committee.

Ryan Hawthorne is a postulant in the Diocese of Texas and a parishioner at St. Luke the Evangelist in Houston. She recently served as youth missionary and school chaplain at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church and School in Houston, challenging students to reconsider who God is, what equality and justice call us to do and be to one another, and what the kingdom of God could look like in the future. Ryan and her daughter, Noelle, have lived in Houston for six years and spend most of their free time searching the city for good tacos and good music. Although she already holds a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, Ryan looks forward to spending the year in Anglican Studies at Seminary of the Southwest in Austin.

Maria Victoria Umana is also a postulant from the Diocese of Texas living in Houston. She was born and raised in El Salvador, and after raising her two children with her husband Ramon, felt a calling to the ministry of the priesthood. “People around me start encourage me to dedicate my life to serve others and God throughout the ministry of priesthood,” said Umana. “At first, I was unaware of God’s call to this ministry but my spirit would rejoice and be filled with peace every time I thought about this possibility and the more I meditated, the more clear it became that this is what God is calling me to do.”

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About Seminary of the Southwest

Established in Austin, TX, in 1952 by Bishop John Hines, Seminary of the Southwest is one of 10 accredited seminaries in the Episcopal Church. Southwest's vision is to be a community for formation and leadership within the church supported by a strength of program, endowment, and environment that assures excellence in theological, counseling and pastoral education.

Seminary of the Southwest forms creative leaders for the mission fields of the changing world. Southwest offers a rich intellectual environment and stimulating and challenging community for learning and formation. Southwest provides excellent residential formation for ordained ministry; has a sought-after masters degree in clinical mental health counseling; offers professional master's degrees to lay professionals and church leaders in a range of denominations and faith traditions; and serves the church through innovative models for local formation and ongoing training.