



NEWSLETTER

A MESSAGE FROM DEAN HARDEN

As we move deeper into the spring season, I want to express my sincere appreciation to our students, faculty, alumni, and partners for your continued commitment to the mission of Shaw University Divinity School. Even as we navigate transitions in programming and institutional rhythms, I am encouraged by the creativity, resilience, and steady leadership demonstrated throughout our SUDS community.

At Shaw Divinity School, we remain focused on forming faith-driven leaders who are prepared for meaningful service in church and community contexts. I encourage you to remain engaged and connected as we continue building momentum together. There is much to look forward to in the coming months, and I am grateful for each of you who helps carry this work forward.

In This Issue:

- A Message from Dean Harden
- Message from Shaw University Divinity Faculty & Staff
- Rooted in Legacy: Honoring the Shaw Divinity Journey
- Student Spotlight: Quinn Surgeon-Witcher (SGA President)
- SUDS in the Community
- SUDS Access: Scholarships, Resources & Opportunities
- Support the Next Generation of Faith Leaders

Dean Mark Harden

With gratitude,
Dean Harden



Message from Shaw University Divinity Faculty & Staff

Dear SUDS Community,

We want to take a moment to acknowledge the cancellation of our recent conference. While we share in your disappointment, we are deeply grateful for the understanding, grace, and continued support you have shown Shaw University Divinity School throughout this season. Your commitment to our mission reminds us that this work is bigger than any single gathering.

Even in moments where plans shift, our calling remains steady. We ask that you continue to keep our faculty, staff, students, and the broader SUDS community in your prayers as we move forward together. We remain committed to the work of faith formation, leadership development, and service, and we are encouraged by the strength of the community that surrounds us.

Thank you for standing with us and for continuing to believe in the work we are doing together. We look forward to the opportunities ahead and to deeper connection in the days to come.



Rooted in Legacy:

Honoring the Shaw Divinity Journey



This past Friday, Shaw University Divinity School hosted an extraordinary and spirit-filled gathering, **“Rooted in Legacy: Honoring the Shaw Divinity Journey.”** The evening served as a powerful testament to the enduring impact of SUDS, bringing together students, alumni, faculty, and community partners in a sacred space of reflection, celebration, and renewed purpose.

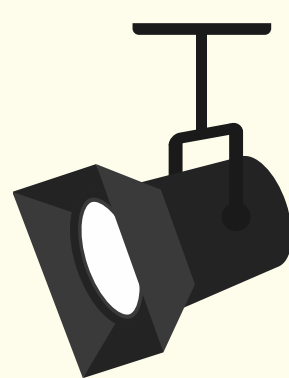
Throughout the evening, voices and stories from across generations came together in a moving expression of gratitude and shared calling.

Conversations sparked inspiration, memories stirred deep appreciation, and the collective presence in the room reaffirmed a steadfast commitment to theological education, ministry, and community transformation. It was more than an event—it was a living witness to the legacy we carry and the future we are actively shaping together.

We invite you to experience the moments captured throughout the evening in the photo highlights featured in this issue, which reflect the joy, unity, and powerful spirit that made the gathering truly unforgettable.

Rooted In Legacy





QUINN SURGEON-WITCHER

SGA PRESIDENT | SHAW UNIVERSITY DIVINITY SCHOOL

AT SHAW UNIVERSITY DIVINITY SCHOOL, THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION EXTENDS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM—IT IS A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION, PURPOSE, AND LEADERSHIP. FOR **QUINN SURGEON-WITCHER**, STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, HER EXPERIENCE AT SUDS HAS DEEPEENED HER FAITH WHILE SHARPENING HER SENSE OF CALLING TO MINISTRY AND SERVICE.

THROUGH RIGOROUS STUDY OF SCRIPTURE, THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION, AND ENGAGED CLASSROOM DIALOGUE, SURGEON-WITCHER HAS BEEN CHALLENGED TO GROW BOTH INTELLECTUALLY AND SPIRITUALLY. THESE EXPERIENCES HAVE NOT ONLY EXPANDED HER UNDERSTANDING OF THE FAITH BUT HAVE ALSO ANCHORED HER MORE DEEPLY IN PRAYER, DISCIPLINE, AND A LIVED COMMITMENT TO EMBODYING WHAT SHE LEARNS.

“MY THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION HAS NOT ONLY EXPANDED MY UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE BUT ALSO CHALLENGED ME TO LIVE OUT MY FAITH THROUGH SERVICE, REFLECTION, AND SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE.”

LEADERSHIP ROOTED IN SERVICE

IN HER ROLE AS **SGA PRESIDENT**, SURGEON-WITCHER ACTIVELY EMBODIES THE PRINCIPLES OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP THAT ARE CENTRAL TO HER FORMATION AT SUDS. SHE APPROACHES LEADERSHIP AS A SACRED RESPONSIBILITY—ONE THAT CALLS HER TO ADVOCATE FOR STUDENTS WHILE LEADING WITH COMPASSION, INTEGRITY, HUMILITY, AND A STEADFAST COMMITMENT TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL COMMUNITY.



WORDS FOR FUTURE DIVINITY STUDENTS

AS SHE PREPARES TO GRADUATE IN MAY 2026, SURGEON-WITCHER ENCOURAGES PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS TO REMAIN OPEN TO THE JOURNEY OF DISCERNMENT AND TO SEEK MENTORSHIP ALONG THE WAY.

“FIND YOUR ‘DR. TINSLEY’—SOMEONE WHO BELIEVES IN YOU, CHALLENGES YOU, AND REMINDS YOU THAT YOU WILL FINISH.”

SUDS in the Community Engaged. Empowered. Present.

Chaplain Travis Barrino visited Shaw University Divinity School to explore opportunities for collaboration with **the U.S. Air Force Chaplain Corps**, focusing on pathways for chaplains to pursue theological education and professional development through SUDS. The conversation centered on strengthening partnerships that support the academic preparation and spiritual formation of military chaplains serving across the nation.

Pictured from left to right: Raven Abbott (Communications & Marketing Strategist), Tonya Barnes (Administrative Assistant), Chaplain Travis Barrino, and Kevin Bradley (Director of Donor Relationships).



Mrs. Beverly Sanders of Johnston Piney Grove Missionary Baptist Church is pictured during the church's HBCU Day celebration, representing strong support and engagement from the broader SUDS community. Her presence reflects the ongoing connection between Shaw University Divinity School and our partner churches, as we continue to uplift the importance of historically Black colleges and universities and their impact on faith, education, and community leadership.

SUDS Access: Scholarships, Resources & Opportunities

1. JOHN MENDEZ SHAW DIVINITY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP [APPLY NOW](#)

The **John Mendez Divinity School Scholarship** is established by Emmanuel Baptist Church to provide financial assistance to a student enrolled in the Divinity School Master's Program and to honor Dr. John Mendez, former pastor and Shaw University alumni. Dr. Elva J. Jones, Scholarship Ministry Chairperson
336-655-1053 / jones.elvajohnson@gmail.com

2. Ministry Opportunity: Part-Time Youth Minister

New Bethel Christian Church is currently seeking a Part-Time Youth Minister to support and lead its youth ministry programs. This role will focus on mentoring young people, fostering spiritual growth, and helping develop engaging faith-based activities for youth within the church community. This opportunity may be of interest to current students and alumni of Shaw University Divinity School who are passionate about youth ministry and Christian leadership. Those interested in learning more about the position or applying are encouraged to contact:

Bob Drake

Associate Minister, New Bethel Christian Church
bobdrake2010@gmail.com



SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION OF FAITH LEADERS



Your generosity helps equip the next generation of faith leaders. By supporting Shaw University Divinity School, you invest in the academic and spiritual formation of our students, preparing them to lead with faith, integrity, and purpose.

Every gift strengthens the SUDS mission by funding scholarships, enhancing educational opportunities, and supporting transformative learning experiences.

Donate Today: <https://www.shawu.edu/giving/>

Important: Please be sure to designate your gift to Shaw University Divinity School so that your contribution directly supports our students and programs.

Thank you for standing with us and for investing in the future of ministry through Shaw University Divinity School.



SCAN THE QR CODE TODAY TO GIVE AND IMPACT THE LIVES OF MANY!

(SELECT 'DIVINITY' AS YOUR GIFT DESIGNATION)