

PRESBYTERIAN HERITAGE

Spring 2023/ Vol. 35, No. 1



*Katie G. Cannon, 1970s,
against illustration by Cannon
titled CoraCorine, 2001.*

THE **KATIE GENEVA CANNON** DIGITAL COLLECTION

In 1987, the first Black woman ordained in the Presbyterian Church, Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon, used the term Womanist to explore an interpretation of the Bible that was concerned with Black women's liberation. Her book that followed one year later, *Black Womanist Ethics*, helped launch the field of womanist ethics.

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PRESBYTERIAN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

2022
Annual
Report

inside

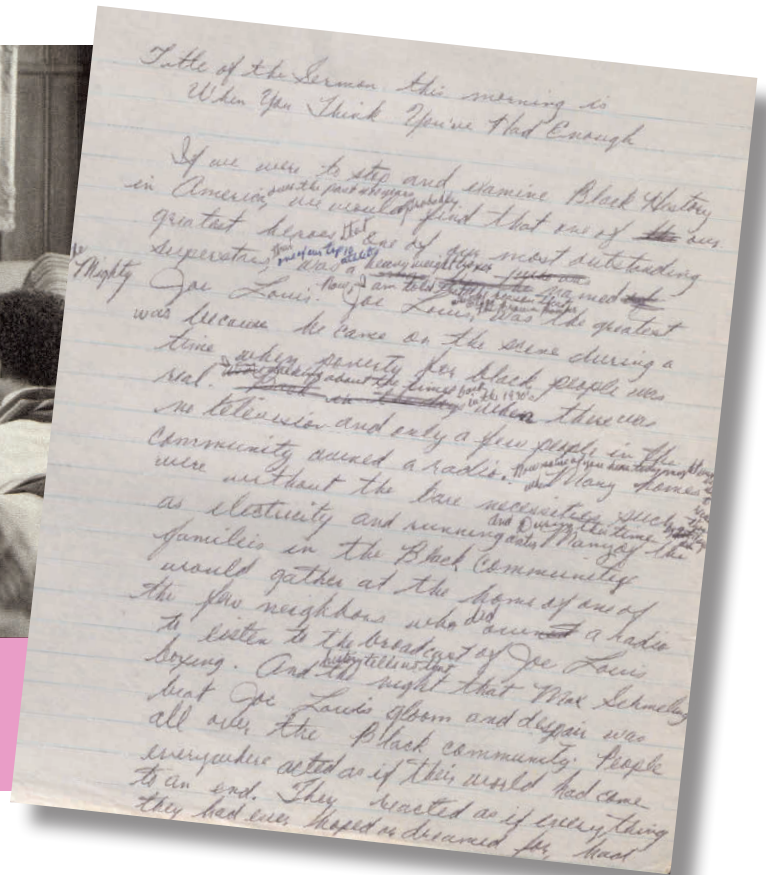
(page 5)

KATIE CANNON DIGITAL COLLECTION

(continued from page 1)



Above: Katie G. Cannon, image from *The Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership*, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA, 1983. Right: Handwritten sermon by Dr. Cannon, "When You Think You've Had Enough," 1974.



The Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS) is thrilled to announce that this year, 35 years after the publication of her groundbreaking work, the entirety of Rev. Dr. Cannon's personal papers has been digitized and made freely accessible through Pearl Digital Collections.

Katie Geneva Cannon was born in 1953 in Kannapolis, North Carolina to Esau and Corine Cannon, elders at Covenant United Presbyterian Church in Kannapolis. Her call to education and ministry was shaped by her experience growing up in the segregated South and nourished by her time at Barber-Scotia College and Johnson C. Smith Seminary. After graduating from the latter with a Master of Divinity, Cannon was ordained by the Catawba Presbytery—the first all-Black governing body in the Presbyterian Church—in 1974.

Cannon preached at Ascension Presbyterian Church in Harlem while she attended Union Theological Seminary (UTS). At UTS, she shattered another glass ceiling when she became the first Black woman to receive a Ph.D. from the institution in 1983. Shortly after, Cannon's

career as an educator, ethicist, and theologian flourished.

Cannon held teaching positions at Temple University, Episcopal Divinity School, Harvard Divinity School, and Union Theological Seminary. Her colleagues admired her passion and rigorous scholarship. "Katie Cannon is on fire with love," one colleague shared. "Few people so embody the Christ-like qualities of pastoral concern, love of justice, and respect for the dignity of individuals."

Perhaps her greatest impact as an educator was made at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Virginia where she held the position of Annie Scales Rogers Professor of Christian Social Ethics until her death in 2018.

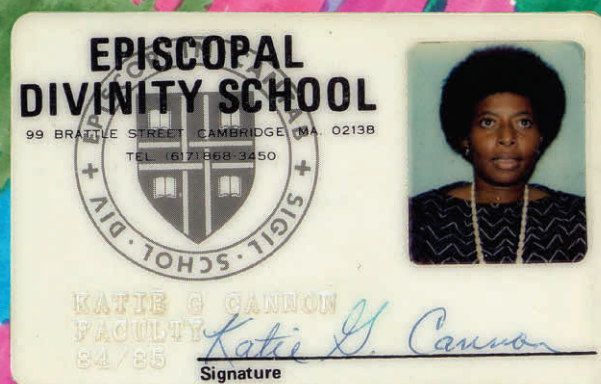
In 2021 the Presbyterian Historical Society partnered with The Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond and The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary (Columbia University Libraries) to unite the records Cannon

"Black life is the rich, colorful creativity that emerged and reemerges in the Black quest for human dignity. Jesus provides the necessary soul for liberation."

distributed across the three institutions. Over a two-year period, PHS staff scanned the collections and made them available through Pearl Digital Collections, the Society's online archive.

The result—the Katie Geneva Cannon Digital Collection—contains over 450 of Cannon's sermons, lectures, and writings, and can be accessed from anywhere in the world for free.

On the evening of October 12, 2023, from 5pm-7pm ET, the Presbyterian Historical Society will host an event to honor the legacy of Rev. Dr. Cannon and celebrate the completion of the Katie Geneva Cannon Digital Collection. The evening will be an opportunity for those in the PC(USA) and beyond to gather and pay homage to a woman who, in her own words, taught "to empower, to equip, to set people free."



Cannon's Episcopal Divinity School faculty ID card. Background illustration by Cannon titled Ordination Torch, 1998.

Explore the Katie Geneva Cannon Digital Collection: history.pcusa.org/kgc

RSVP to the Katie Geneva Cannon Digital Collection celebration by contacting cmoore@history.pcusa.org.



George Docherty leading prayers on Turnaround Tuesday. Image courtesy Ala. Dept. of Archives & History.

JOURNAL PREVIEW

In the Spring/Summer 2023 issue of *The Journal of Presbyterian History*, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC is the thread that unites two articles on leading white Presbyterian pastors and issues of race. Andrew Michael Jones considers how a decade living in the Deep South shaped the racial views of Scottish immigrant Rev. Peter Marshall, who left Atlanta, Georgia for the pulpit at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in 1937. Paul Dornan looks at the church during the time of Rev. George Docherty (another Scot and Marshall's successor), focusing on the congregation's involvement in civil rights marches from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965.

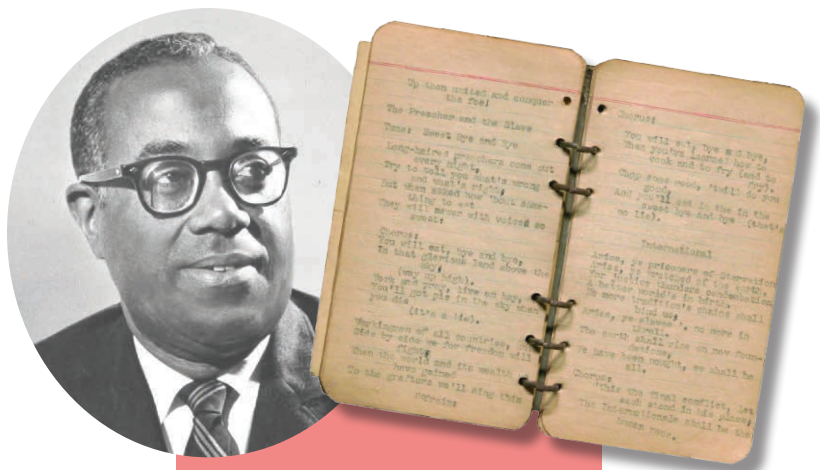
Call 215.928.3865 to receive *The Journal* or visit www.history.pcusa.org/journal

DIGITAL COLLECTION EDLER HAWKINS

Thanks to PHS Board member Michael Livingston, we've recently digitized a collection of the records of Edler Hawkins, the first Black moderator of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A (UPCUSA).

Included in the digitized collection are two pocket-size commonplace books Hawkins read from when called upon to speak. One is chiefly his typescripts of Langston Hughes poems, the other a book of songs, including the "Internationale."

Born in 1908 in the Bronx, Hawkins graduated from Bloomfield College and from Union Theological Seminary, and was installed at St. Augustine Presbyterian Church in the Bronx in 1938. Social activism was a fundamental part of his ministry. Hawkins organized on behalf of domestic workers in 1941 and ran for New York State Assembly in 1948. He was moderator of the Presbytery of New York City from 1958 to 1960, vice-moderator of the UPCUSA in 1960, and finally moderator of the 176th General Assembly in Oklahoma City in 1964.



*Left: Rev. Edler Hawkins, undated.
Right: Commonplace book, 1940s-1960s.*

Hawkins mentored a generation of prominent Black Presbyterian ministers including Metz Rollins, Clarence Cave, and Cornelius Berry Sr.

Hawkins was a track star in college, convened a poetry group among his friends, and has a lasting legacy in New York through a foundation supporting Black artists and cultural institutions. We're honored to share an intimate glimpse into his life.

View the collection: digital.history.pcusa.org/EH

MORE LIGHT VIDEOTAPES

In August 2022, PHS staff visited Alexander Library's Special Collections and University Archives at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey to survey the records of More Light Presbyterians. Staff viewed around 10 cubic ft. of the 54 cubic ft. collection and established a relationship with Rutgers

librarians and archivists. Through the visit and subsequent conversations with Rutgers staff and More Light leadership, PHS identified and digitized eight U-matic videotapes from the collection.

Digitization revealed footage of the 1978 UPCUSA General Assembly, where Sandra (Sandy) Brawders, a Princeton Theological Seminary student at the time, came out on the General Assembly floor and spoke during plenary for an open policy on ordination. Other videos include footage of a consultation on homophobia at the Stony Point Center in September 1984. Speakers and presenters at the consultation included Robert Hawkins, Jr., Rev. Karen Ziegler, Dr. George Edwards, Dr. Byron Shafer, Chris Glaser, and Rev. Jane Spahr.

Watch the newly digitized More Light videotapes: digital.history.pcusa.org/MLT



Left: Virginia Davidson, 1978. Right: Sandra Brawders speaking during plenary, 1978.

PHS ANNUAL REPORT 2022

DEAR FRIENDS,

Last year was transformational for the Presbyterian Historical Society. While the coronavirus lingered, we continued to steward and share our archives with a focus on narratives that had received little attention in the past. Using our traditional print publications, our electronic communications, and our online programs, we sustained connections with the denomination and the community. And we took a major step in reconnecting in-person with our stakeholders and constituents—from the Board of Directors to scholars and the public.

Our first gathering in person was a reception hosted by PHS Advisory Council member John R. Buchanan in New York City where donors, researchers, Board members, and friends of PHS reunited to hear updates on collections and special initiatives at the society. A few weeks later, most of the PHS Board gathered in Philadelphia for a hybrid Board meeting. For some members, it was the first opportunity to talk face to face. During the meeting, a crowd of almost 200 gathered on a perfect fall evening for the much-delayed opening of the Building Knowledge and Breaking Barriers exhibit, a collaboration between PHS and Community College of Philadelphia. In November, PHS co-hosted a book talk at Columbia Theological Seminary with Rev. Dr. William Yoo, author of *What Kind of Christianity: A History of Slavery and Anti-Black Racism in the Presbyterian Church*. The event was well attended by PHS Board members, staff and students of the seminary, and the local community.

Our archives continued to expand as congregations, mid councils, and PC(USA) national agencies deposited records at PHS or took advantage of digitization. And, through the African American Leaders and Congregations Collecting Initiative, we saw growth in records and personal papers that highlight the witness of Black Presbyterians in the PC(USA).

Thank you so much for supporting our ministry with your engagement, donations of historical materials, and gifts of financial support. None of this is possible without you.

Nancy J. Taylor
Executive Director

Susan Aggarwal
Chair of the PHS Board of Directors

ADDING TO THE COLLECTIONS

NATIONAL AGENCY RECORDS

27 GROUPS ADDED TO THE COLLECTION FOR A TOTAL OF **83.82** CUBIC FEET

PERSONAL PAPERS

73 GROUPS ADDED TO THE COLLECTION FOR A TOTAL OF **112.38** CUBIC FEET

CHURCH RECORDS

209 CONGREGATIONS SENT RECORDS TO PHS FOR A TOTAL OF **314.82** CUBIC FEET

MID COUNCIL RECORDS

26 MID COUNCILS SENT RECORDS TO PHS FOR A TOTAL OF **68.34** CUBIC FEET



HELPING RESEARCHERS

PHS STAFF PROVIDED **2,025** DETAILED REFERENCE RESPONSES TO PATRONS IN OUR BUILDING, OVER THE PHONE, AND BY EMAIL



SERVING THE PC(USA)

607 INQUIRIES FROM PC(USA) CHURCHES, MID COUNCILS, AND NATIONAL AGENCIES



PROVIDING DIGITIZED HISTORY

IMAGES AND PAGES DIGITIZED: **68,344**

NEW RECORDS ADDED TO PEARL DIGITAL ARCHIVES: **1,405**

TOTAL RECORDS IN PEARL: **17,985**



COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF PHILADELPHIA

TOTAL NUMBER OF CCP STUDENTS WHO VISITED PHS: **70**

54 UNIQUE ITEMS FROM THE COLLECTIONS USED IN CLASSES



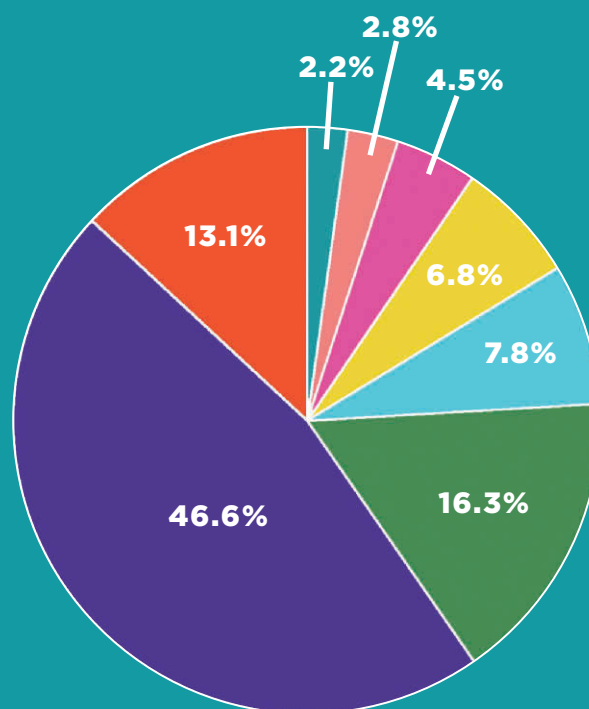
Your Support Adds Up

We are grateful for the support and commitment of our donors this past year. We are thrilled to be fully open and able to work in-person with students, researchers, and the general public.

The generosity of donors continues to help us collect, preserve, and share our archives, as well as expand our virtual capacity to sustain the engagement of many, across the country and around the world.

Thank you!

GIFT AMOUNTS BY STATE



WHY I GIVE: ERNEST R. HIGGINBOTHAM

I support PHS because of what I didn't know when I joined the Board eight years ago.

Among other things, I didn't know that PHS is driven by an institutional commitment to make our Presbyterian history—good and bad—available not only to researchers but also to our congregations and the general public.

PHS reaches beyond our denomination, for example, to work with Community College of Philadelphia to give its students the opportunity to learn

research skills and how to tell historical stories by using primary source documents.

I have learned that the more I know about the PHS and its work, the more I want to support PHS.



An Expression of Gratitude

Each year we acknowledge and honor the many individuals and organizations that have supported us throughout the previous year. It is impossible to express our gratitude for the countless ways so many have given to PHS in 2022. Please accept our profound thanks for your many gifts that have helped us collect, preserve, and share the story of the American Presbyterian experience.

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With the opening of business travel, PHS staff and Board members gathered for events in New York City in August and the Atlanta area in November. We celebrated the BKBB exhibit with an in-person event in October, and we welcomed a number of visitors through our doors, including author Reza Aslan.

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From left to right: Representatives from PHS and Columbia Theological Seminary gathered before William Yoo's book talk. Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson, II offers a benediction and prayer at the BKBB celebration. Records Archivist David Staniunas shows author Reza Aslan some archival documents.

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In 2022, PHS welcomed 6 new staff members.



From left to right: Kyna Herzinger, Records Manager; McKenna Britton, Communications Associate; Nick Skaggs, Processing Archivist; Ky Evans, Archives Technician; Amalia Cottrell, Archives Technician; and Elaine Shilstut, Cataloging and Metadata Librarian.

We also wish to thank the following organizations and individuals for depositing or donating church records and other archival materials to PHS in 2022.

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 New Windsor Presbyterian Church (New Windsor, Ill.)
 Oak Grove Presbyterian Church (Amelia, Va.)
 Octavia Coleman
 Oscar McCloud
 Patricia Buck



The August PHS LIVE session featured guests Mary Ann Lundy, Rev. John Fife, Amanda Craft, and Patty Barcelo for a discussion on the Sanctuary Movement.

Paul Rack
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Contributors

Allison Davis
Clorinda Moore
Charlene Peacock
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