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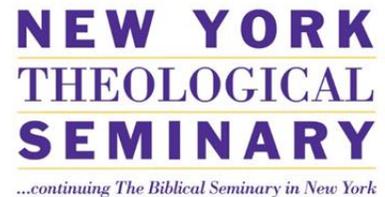
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**REVEREND LAKEESHA WALROND PH.D. APPOINTED AS THE FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT IN THE 119-YEAR HISTORY OF NEW YORK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

*Rev. Dr. LaKeesha Walrond to Lead New York Theological Seminary into a New Era*

New York Theological Seminary's (NYTS) Board of Trustees has announced the appointment of Rev. Dr. LaKeesha Walrond as its new President. Dr. Walrond brings more than two decades of leadership in academia and ministry that will help shape new and distinctive programming to enhance the Seminary's reputation in the nation and around the world. Dr. Walrond will begin her new role as the Seminary's 12th president — and as its first African American female president — on June 3rd marking a historic milestone for the 119-year-old institution.

Established in 1900, NYTS has prepared women and men for faith-based ministries in New York and throughout the world for over a century. Among the distinctive attributes that distinguish the Seminary are its emphasis on ministry and mission, its openness to both women and men and its diversity of denominational and cultural traditions represented in its student body and alumni. Walrond's appointment marks a new era for the Seminary's increasingly diverse and multi-faith community. Walrond is mindful of the institution's tradition and is looking forward to leading it into a new era.

As president of NYTS, Dr. Walrond said she was proud "to have the opportunity to show all women that there are still many opportunities to be 'the first,'" and she hopes that her Presidency can serve "as an example of what intelligence, discipline and determination can bring."

"As I assume the Presidency, I think about becoming the first female and the first African American female, and the great responsibility that accompanies this historic moment. My hope is to work collaboratively with the faculty, staff, students and board members to make NYTS a world renowned theological institution for preparing students for urban ministry. The more I learn about the history of New York Theological Seminary, the more I appreciate its vision — not just for the future of theological education, but for societal matters including education for incarcerated people," she said. "The former administrations set a bar that I will strive each day to surpass, as I challenge myself and the NYTS community to make this historic and revered Seminary greater and grander."

"NYTS is truly blessed to have found such a dynamic and well-prepared leader. Rev. Dr. LaKeesha Walrond combines extraordinary vision and understanding of the importance of seminary education to ministry with solid, successful administrative experience directing major organizations. I have no doubt that she will lead the school to new heights and great success," said Jeffrey C. Slade, M. Div., J.D., Chair of the Presidential Search Committee and Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees of NYTS.

Rev. Dr. Lawrence Hammond, Chair of the Board of Trustees at NYTS added "Dr. Walrond is truly the one that God has sent in this 'Kairos Moment' to lead our institution to its next level of academic excellence based on a solid foundation of vision and faith. We are extremely excited to have her join us in our ongoing pursuit of making NYTS a leader in theological education within the urban context."

Dr. Tamara R. Henry, Assistant Professor of Religious Education and a faculty representative on the Presidential Search Committee stated, "We are delighted to welcome Rev. Dr. LaKeesha Walrond as New York Theological

Seminary's new president and thrilled about the possibilities that await us together as we write this new chapter of our institutional story. As a search committee, we were not only impressed with the breadth and depth of Dr. Walrond's experience, but also her exceptional capacity as a visionary leader, which will bring a fresh, bold and energizing approach to engaging theological education in the twenty-first century."

"I have watched Dr. Walrond evolve in her ministry for decades and she is a tireless faith leader with a devotion to uplifting communities through theology and education, said Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson, Senior Pastor of the historic Grace Baptist Church in Mount Vernon and Chairman of CNBC (Conference of National Black Churches). She was the first female to preach at her hometown church in Texas and now she's the first female to lead the New York Theological Seminary. We in the faith community are inspired by her unparalleled devotion to ministry and advocacy!"

For over a decade, Dr. Walrond served as the Executive Pastor of First Corinthian Baptist Church in Harlem, New York where she focused on administration, ministry development and staff supervision. In that capacity she used educational and organizational strategies to maximize FCBC's capacity and influence in the church, community and abroad. Her reach extends from several Christian denominations, colleges and universities to ministry work in South African, Canada, India and the Caribbean. She has served as a visiting speaker at the Heyman Center for Humanities at Columbia University, Union Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary and Spelman College. Dr. Walrond held senior leadership roles at Zion Temple Church in North Carolina and Lakewood Elementary School in Durham, North Carolina.

In 2005, Dr. Walrond earned her Ph.D. in Special Education and Literacy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also holds a Master of School Administration with a focus in Educational Leadership and a Master of Arts in Teaching with a focus in Learning Disabilities from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her commitment to ministry and education led her back to school post-doctorate to earn a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary here in New York City. She received her undergraduate degree from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dr. Walrond has been recognized by many organizations for her dedication to empowering the community. She was awarded the NAACP Leadership Award for her work in the African-American Community, was honored by the New York Liberty Women's National Basketball Association, National Council of Negro Women and National Action Network and received "A Woman Who Worships Award" at McDonald's GospelFest. Dr. Walrond is also the Author of two books; *My Body Is Special* (2017), a book that empowers children to take ownership of their bodies and provides them with problem solving tools to help them prevent unhealthy touching, and e-book *Stronger Than Your Worst Pain: A Guide to Activating Your Inner Power*, a book that empowers women to recognize their passion, power and potential to overcome life's most difficult challenges. Dr. Walrond is married to Michael A. Walrond Jr. and they are the proud parents of Michael III and Jasmyn.

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### **New York Theological Seminary**

New York Theological Seminary is a diverse and inclusive community of learning grounded in biblical witness and Christian tradition, with a historic urban focus. The Seminary prepares women and men for faith-based ministries in the city and throughout the world.