

# DONYELLE C. MCCRAY

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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

I study homiletics and the history of Christian spirituality. Within these fields, I focus on African American preaching and spirituality, medieval women's spirituality, and sermon genre.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Yale Divinity School

Associate Professor on Term	2021 to present
Assistant Professor of Homiletics	2016–2021

### Virginia Theological Seminary

July 2012–June 2016

Assistant Professor of Homiletics and Director of Multicultural Ministries  
Martha J. Horne Visiting Professor of Homiletics (2012–2013)

### Duke Divinity School

January 2009–May 2012

Doctoral Research Assistant & Preceptor

## EDUCATION

**Duke Divinity School**, Doctor of Theology, December 2014

*Dissertation*: The Censored Pulpit: Julian of Norwich as Preacher  
Advisor, Charles L. Campbell

**Virginia Theological Seminary**, Master of Divinity, May 2006

**Harvard Law School**, Juris Doctor, June 1999

**Spelman College**, Bachelor of Arts in English, *magna cum laude*, May 1996

## SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

*The Censored Pulpit: Julian of Norwich as Preacher* (Lexington Books/Fortress Academic Press, 2019)

*A Surprising God: Advent Meditations for a New World* (co-authored with Thomas G. Long, Westminster John Knox Press, 2021)

### **Journal Articles**

“Playing in Church: Insights from the Boundaries of Sermon Genre,” *Liturgy*, Vol. 36 (2021)

“On Shrieking the Truth: Mary and Proclamatory Wailing,” *Interpretation*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (April 2021) (10 pages)

“Black Feminist Triptych,” *Homiletic*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Winter 2020) (11 pages)

“Pauli Murray In & Out of the Pulpit,” 2018 *Societas Homiletica* Keynote Address, *International Journal of Homiletics*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2019) (19 pages)

“Quilting the Sermon: Homiletical Insights from Harriet Powers,” *Religions*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2018): 1–7

“Holy Moments in the Risky Life of Pauli Murray,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Spring 2018): 393–403

“Preaching to Fans: Barbara Brown Taylor Fandom and the Possibilities for Mainline Aesthetics,” *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. 99, No. 2 (Spring 2017): 299–304

“Mothering Souls: A Vocation of Intercession,” *Anglican Theological Review: Women and Prayer*, Vol. 98, No. 2 (Spring 2016): 285–301

“As Faithful as the Whirling Sea,” *Journal for Preachers*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (2016): 43–48

“Sweating, Spitting, and Cursing: Intimations of the Sacred,” *Practical Matters* 8 (2015): 52–62

“What’s at Stake in a Preacher’s Spirituality of Time?,” *International Journal of Homiletics*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2015): 71–81

### **Contributions to Books and Commentaries:**

“The Deeper Craving,” *Conversations with Divine Mystery*, edited by HyeRan Kim-Cragg and Stephen Burns (Fortress Press, September 2023)

“Feast Day for Saint Harriet,” *Do Black Lives Matter? How Christian Scriptures Speak to Black Empowerment*, edited by Lisa Bowens and Dennis R. Edwards (Cascade Books, June 2023)

“Pauli Murray In & Out of the Pulpit,” *Preaching the Fear of God in a Fear-Filled World* (LIT Verlag, 2020) (19 pages)

“Solomon’s Son: The Wise Tenderness of Howard Thurman” in *Can I Get a Witness?: Thirteen Peacemakers, Community-Builders, and Agitators for Faith and Justice*, 39–57 (Eerdmans, 2019)

“Exegetical Reflection on Select Psalms,” *Connections: A Lectionary Commentary Series, Year C* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2019) (9 pages)

### **Other Publications**

“In Memoriam: A Meditation,” *The Gospel According to Women, Womanpreach!* (April 2023)

Review of Anna Carter Florence’s *Rehearsing Scripture: Discovering God’s Word in Community*, in *Interpretation*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (2020): 320

Review of Joyce Ann Zimmerman’s *Worship with Gladness: Understanding Worship from the Heart*, in *Interpretation*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (2017): 244–245

“Credibility in the Kingdom of God: Insights on Preaching from Julian of Norwich,” in *Divinity Magazine*, Spring (2016): 21–23

Review of Paul S. Chung’s *Church and Ethical Responsibility in the Midst of World Economy*, in *Homiletic*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (2014): 42–43

Guest Cultural Resource Commentator, *The African American Lectionary*, March 2012

### **CURRENT WORKS-IN-PROGRESS**

*The Apostle Pauli* (book manuscript; an exploration of Pauli Murray’s spirituality and contributions to homiletics)

*Is it a Sermon? Genre & Ancestral Memory in African American Preaching* (Westminster John Knox Press; an examination of understudied African American approaches to the sermon genre)

*In the Basement: Race, Church, & Theological Practices* (A documentary film and experimental multimedia project on race and materiality in ecclesial space, funded by Louisville Institute and the Henry Luce Foundation)

### **ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS**

- Pauli Murray: New Haven Mystic, Albertus Magnus College, March 2022
- Spirituality & Mental Health in the Life of Pauli Murray, Yale Medical School Grand Rounds, February 2022
- Quilter as Truth-teller? Harriet Powers, Rosie Lee Tomkins and their Stitched Sermons, University of Calgary Bentall Lecture on Education and Theology, January 2022

- What Counts as a Charism? Discerning Signs of Grace in the Life of Pauli Murray, University of Calgary Address on Classics and Religion, January 2022
- The Many Dimensions of Pauli Murray, Women's Forum of Litchfield, November 2021
- The Apostle Pauli, D. Francis Sprigg Lecture, Virginia Theological Seminary, October 2021
- The Spirituality of Risk-taking, Faculty Address for Yale Divinity School Visiting Students, November 2020
- The Apostle Pauli and Preacher as Truth-teller, Homegrown: NC Women's Preaching Festival, October 2020
- Insights from the Apostle Pauli, Gebotene Wirklichkeiten? Religiöse Normierungen von Menschlich-Zwischenmenschlichem Ringvorlesung, University of Münster, Germany, July 2020
- The Apostle Pauli: Preaching as an Invitation to Freedom and Saint Langston: Friend of Prophets and Truthbearers, E. Glenn Hinson Lectures, Baptist Seminary of Kentucky, March 2020
- Pauli Murray: Preaching & Transformation, Two Advent Addresses for the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey, December 2019
- The Apostle Pauli: Preaching as the Invitation to Freedom, Academy of Homiletics, Identity, Imagination, and Narrative Working Group, December 2019
- Encumbered Spaces: Finding Antiracist Ways Forward, Academy of Homiletics Plenary Panel on Homiletical Whiteness, December 2019
- The Spirituality of Risk-taking, Faculty Address for Yale Divinity School Visiting Students, November 2019
- Pauli Murray: Preaching in Many Voices, Yale Divinity School Dean's Advisory Council, October 2019
- Pauli Murray: Life & Ministry in Division, Theologian-in-Residence for Gathering of Leaders, October 2019

- Emerging Issues in Homiletical Research: Keynote Panel of Junior Scholars, Academy of Homiletics, December 2018
- Race and Worship: Reflections on *Christian Preaching and Worship in Multicultural Contexts* by Eunjoo Kim, Preaching and Culture Workgroup, Academy of Homiletics, December 2018
- Risking in Dangerous Times, Inaugural Tea Talk, Pauli Murray College, September 2017
- The Preacher and the Whirling Sea, Yale ISM Conference, Worshipping God in the Face of Violence, June 2017
- Pauli Murray's Spirituality of Risk-taking, Association of Yale Alumni, June 2017
- Pauli Murray: A Pictorial Biography, Berkeley Divinity School, April 2017
- Pauli Murray's Spirituality of Risk-taking and Howard Thurman's Spiritual Dilemma, Westervelt Lectures, Austin Presbyterian Seminary, January 2017
- Preaching and Spirituality in the Work of Barbara Brown Taylor, American Academy of Religion, Christian Spirituality Group, November 2015
- Sparkling in the Darkness: The Spirituality of Pauli Murray, Virginia Theological Seminary, May 2015
- The Dimensions of Reconciliation, Respondent to Professor Miroslav Volf, American Academy of Religion, November 2014
- Preaching and Domestic Violence, Virginia Theological Seminary, October 2014
- John Jasper: Insights from a Folk Preacher, Virginia Theological Seminary Convocation, October 2014
- Julian of Norwich and Anchoritic Spirituality, Duke Divinity School, Annually 2013–2016
- Spirituality of the Black Prophetic Tradition: Examining Sermonic Space, Duke Divinity School, March 2012

- When Illness Calls: Insights from Julian of Norwich's Call to Frailty, American Academy of Religion/Academy of Homiletics, November 2010.

## **COURSES**

- ◆ Sacred Moments in African American Preaching
- ◆ Preaching for Introverts
- ◆ Principles and Practices of Preaching
- ◆ Radical Lives of Proclamation
- ◆ Introduction to Homiletics
- ◆ Introduction to the African American Preaching Traditions
- ◆ Preaching and/as/in Performance
- ◆ Pauli Murray In & Out of the Pulpit
- ◆ Is it a Sermon?
- ◆ Introduction to the Christian Spiritual Tradition

## **ADDITIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Instructor, Duke Divinity School United Methodist Course of Study: Women of Fire, Women of Light: Legacies of Women Mystics, 2012, and The Multiethnic Church, 2011

Preceptor, Duke Divinity School: Introduction to Christian Preaching, 2009–2012; African American Spiritualities, 2012; The Life & Thought of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 2011; The Church's Ministry of Preaching, 2011; Preaching the Parables, 2011; and The Holy Spirit & Ministry, 2010

## **HONORS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree, Virginia Theological Seminary, 2021

Henry Luce Foundation Grant, Exploring Gentrification, Race, and Theological Education, 2020

Wabash Center Pre-Tenure Religion Faculty of African Descent, 2015–2016

Bell-Woolfall Fellowship, 2009–2012

James H. Costen North American Doctoral Fellowship, FTE 2012–2013

## ACADEMIC SERVICE

- Race, Church, & Theological Practices: Clergy-Scholar Research Team, Louisville Institute
- Board Member, USA/North America Representative, *Societas Homiletica*, 2022 to present
- Editorial Board Member, *International Journal of Homiletics*
- Co-convener, Academy of Homiletics Work Group on Identity, Imagination, & Narrative, 2017–2021
- Nominating Committee Member, Academy of Homiletics, 2018; 2021
- Peer Reviewer, *Religious Education*
- Member, *Societas Homiletica*, Academy of Homiletics, and American Academy of Religion

## UNIVERSITY SERVICE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Fellow, Pauli Murray College

Member, Berkeley Divinity School Board of Trustees, 2021–

Dean's Reappointment Committee, Pauli Murray College (2022)

2022 Graduation Address for Yale Divinity School Black Church Studies Certificate Program

Interviewed novelist Yaa Gyasi, Annual One Book, One Town Event (2022)

Yale Divinity School African American Religious History Search (2021–2022)

Yale Divinity School Antiracism Task Force (2020–2021)

Yale Divinity School/ISM Committee on Religion & Literature (2020–2021)

Associate Dean of Marquand Chapel Search Committee (2019–2020)

M.A.R. Concentration Coordinator for Black Religion in the African Diaspora (2019–2020)

2018 Lavender Graduation Speaker (for Graduate Students), Office of LGBTQ Resources

Yale Divinity School Committee on Spiritual Formation & Faith Practices (2016–2018).

**ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**The Washington Home & Community Hospices**, Washington, DC. 2006 – 2008

Interfaith Chaplain

Served as interfaith spiritual counselor to both adult and pediatric patients and their families; advised patients and caregivers on ethical and existential issues related to treatment options; monitored patients and caregivers for suicide risks and other psychosocial challenges; and provided spiritual support to nurses, social workers, and other members of the hospice care team.

**Trinity Volunteer Corps**, Washington, DC. 2006–2008

Chaplain

Served as primary supervisor for young adult poverty relief volunteers; facilitated group spiritual direction and discernment; led worship and retreats; and designed program, recruited volunteers, and engaged in strategic planning with the Board of Directors.

**Saint Elizabeth’s Mental Hospital**, Washington, DC. Summer 2004

Interfaith Chaplain & Clinical Pastoral Education Student

Planned worship services, preached, and served as a liturgical leader; facilitated interfaith groups and rehabilitation classes for patients in civil and forensic units; taught a variety of classes in spirituality that also integrated the creative arts; and provided individual counseling to patients.

**Sutherland Asbill & Brennan LLP**, Washington, DC. 1999–2003

Attorney

Represented and managed the interests of clients by drafting wills, trusts, powers of attorney and other estate-planning instruments; counseled not-for-profit organizations on tax and related legal matters; and served as the firm’s liaison for pro bono services, including representation in court proceedings.

**LITURGICAL LEADERSHIP** 2004–present

Serves regularly as a preacher, lecturer, and retreat leader for faith communities and theological schools.