



We Are Called

The Campaign for Yale Divinity School

Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference Travel Fund

Yale Divinity School students are eager to meet humanity's challenges head-on. Embracing the future, our next generation of leaders seek learning opportunities that sometimes take them far from New Haven.

The Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference is one of the country's leading conferences for primarily Black clergy, lay leaders, seminarians, and thought leaders committed to social justice. Over the years, there has been increasing YDS student interest in traveling to the gathering, which takes place in cities of historic significance to the civil rights movement and Black culture.

This year YDS was able to cover the costs of all 14 students who applied to attend the conference in Chicago. They will be joined by the Rev. Joanne Jennings, who leads Black Church Studies at YDS, and Lynn Sullivan-Harmon, our Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

In addition to its learning value to current students, the Proctor Conference has become a key site for recruiting future students to Yale Divinity School. Admissions staff and student ambassadors do this vital work in the exhibitor space and as they interact with attendees during the conference meetings, luncheons, and keynote speaker events.



“As a YDS student, attending and later presenting at the Proctor Conference provided me the opportunity to share my research and engage black clergy persons who understood the importance of intergenerational dialogue. For young black scholars, the importance of the conference lies in its ability to merge theoretical discourse and social praxis with the feeling of belonging.”

— Amina Shumake '21
M.Div., '22 S.T.M, current
Theological Studies Ph.D.
candidate at Vanderbilt
University

Until very recently, students who wanted to attend the Proctor Conference needed to make a special request to the Dean for registration and travel expenses. Lobbying for these funds was usually done through the active leadership of the Yale Black Seminarians, now celebrating its 55th anniversary. This year the new Center for Public Theology and Public Policy has also provided supplemental funding. Looking forward, we believe a recurring educational and networking opportunity of this importance deserves a larger and more stable funding stream.

We are seeking gifts to endow a fund in the amount of \$150,000 to provide grants for students to travel to the annual conference. These funds are primarily intended for students interested in serving African American churches and other Christian communities throughout the African Diaspora.

Because we wish for our students to pursue their educational opportunities without financial worry or distractions, we ask for your support for the Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference Travel Fund. By ensuring that our students have the resources they need to commit fully to study and service, they can set their paths based on calling, not financial constraints.

This initiative has great potential for collaboration and synergy with other Inclusive Excellence Program Funds as part of our We Are Called campaign. These include Black Church Studies, Prison Ministry, Social Justice Internships, and the Inclusion and Belonging Community Impact Fund. More detail on these can be found on standalone fact sheets available from the Office of Development.

At YDS, endowments for key programs and initiatives provide sustainable and enduring support, supplying the necessary funds for leadership, teaching, and research activities year after year. We have long been committed to the work of social justice as something intrinsic to faith, the Bible, and the Christian tradition. And, more recently, we have been focused on a long-term strategy for achieving equity and belonging for all excluded groups. With your help, we know we can realize our ambitions and callings for humanity.



*Myles Riley, '25 M.Div. and
2024 Proctor Conference*

To Learn More

For Humanity is Yale's most ambitious fundraising campaign yet, guided by a mission to improve the world for future generations.

For more information about how you can support the Black Church Studies Program at Yale Divinity School, please contact:

Rod A. Lowe

*Senior Associate Director of
Major Gifts*
(203) 432-8127
rodwin.lowe@yale.edu



Yale