

MEET PTS



TWO GRADS WIN DISTINGUISHED ALUM AWARDS FOR SERVICE TO THE CHURCH

Each spring the Seminary honors a number grads with the Distinguished Alumnae/i Awards. Meet two of this year's honorees: the Rev. Perry Diane Fonderlin '89 (mission) and the Rev. John W. Foester '60 (pastoral ministry).



After graduating from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1989, Perry Diane Fonderlin was ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and for a decade served Disciples churches in Bazetta and Girard, Ohio. But back in 1985 Diane and her husband, Tim, had already been instrumental in starting a Habitat for Humanity affiliate in their home community of Warren, Ohio.

Having continued their involvement with the organization both locally and regionally since that time, in 1999 they were assigned to work with Habitat in Asia and the Pacific with the Disciples' Division of Overseas Ministries program. Two years later they became fully supported missionaries with the denomination's mission program, Global Ministries.

While in Asia and the Pacific, Diane served as Habitat's International Church Relations coordinator for the 26 countries where Habitat International had National Programs. During their last two years there, Diane and Tim worked with the Indian Ocean Tsunami Recovery. Diane's continued work in church relations led to the creation of partnerships between Global Ministries mission, Habitat for Humanity, and communities that were devastated by a tsunami.

In 2007 Diane was asked to continue her church relations role in New Orleans by working with the Disciples' domestic mission program, the Division of Homeland Ministries. From there she coordinated short-term church mission teams from throughout the United States and Canada. Five years later, Global Ministries asked Diane and Tim to work with a long-time partner in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, called the National Spiritual Council of Haitian Churches, which focuses on education—from pre-K to vocational to theological schools. In that role, Diane and Tim taught seminarians at Haiti's St. Andrews School of Theological Studies.

In late 2016 Diane and Tim returned to the United States permanently after nearly 18 years in mission service. And now Diane has come full circle—she serves as the part-time pastor of the Disciples church in Girard, Ohio, where she started her church ministry nearly three decades ago.

[Watch Diane's presentation.](#)



A native of Pennsylvania, the Rev. John W. Foester '60 earned his bachelor's in chemistry from Geneva College in Beaver Falls. But in the mid-1950s, while serving in Washington D.C. as a translator of Vietnamese for the United States Army, two experiences moved him in new directions: he took courses at Washington Bible School, and he met Cora, who later became his wife. Cora worked for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and John's Army service was attached to the National Security Agency. A mutual friend introduced the two, they were married in 1958, and John began pursuing theological studies in earnest. Two years later he received his M.Div. from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

Ordained right away in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), John assumed his first pastoral call at National Mission Churches in Cameron, Rock Lick, and Wolf Run, W.Va., where he remained for four years. He then served for five years as pastor of First PC in Brownsville, Pa., before becoming pastor of the UPC of Freeport, Pa. He served there from 1969 until his retirement in 1994. During his 25-year pastoral career he also served a six-year term on the Synod of the Trinity's Judicial Committee, which called him back for further service, and as stated clerk of Kiskiminetas Presbytery—a role that extended from 1977 to 2002.

Though John "retired" almost 25 years ago, he now serves as moderator of Clinton PC in Kiskiminetas Presbytery and over the years has filled a variety of other positions as well. He worked as interim pastor of Crooked Creek, Faith, and Grace PCs; taught Presbyterian polity as an adjunct professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary; did supply preaching for churches in the Kiskiminetas Presbytery; and also served as moderator of that Presbytery's Srader Grove PC. John has been a class steward and faithful alumnae/i phonathon caller for PTS and is a member of the Seminary's John S. MacMillan Planned Giving Society. John and Cora, who died in 2015, have four children, eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

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