



SEMINARY OF THE  
**SOUTHWEST**

AN EPISCOPAL SEMINARY

*2023 Durstan R McDonald Teaching Award*

**The Very Reverend Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas**

Episcopal Priest. Christian Theologian. Socially Engaged Scholar. Seminary Dean. Teacher. Your vocation as a thought leader, preacher, and advocate for justice is rooted in faith in the justice of God and expressed in the ministry of teaching.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Dennison University, you earned the Master of Divinity, and Doctor of Philosophy at Union Theological Seminary where you were a student and soon after a beloved colleague of James Cone. You were ordained priest in 1983, the first black woman to be ordained in the diocese of Southern Ohio and one of only five nationwide at the time. You served as an Associate Priest at Holy Comforter Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. for over 20 years. You have held teaching positions at Goucher College, Howard University Divinity School, and Edward Waters College. In 2012, you were the first to receive the Anna Julia Cooper Award by the Union of Black Episcopalians for your “literary boldness and leadership in the development of a womanist theology and discussing the complexities of Christian faith in African-American contexts.” You currently serve as Canon Theologian at the Washington National Cathedral and Theologian in Residence at Trinity Church Wall Street.

In 2017 you were named Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary and now hold the Bill and Judith Moyers Chair in Theology. As the inaugural dean of the newly affiliated EDS, you have led a community of Anglicans joined in patterns of prayer and committed to social justice. In that post you have put your commitment of faith and theological vision into practice. Your work at EDS at Union is a kindred spirit with Seminary of the Southwest’s commitment to embody Beloved Community.

Your scholarship and public theology engage womanist theology and Black theology with issues of sexuality, race, and social justice. Your many books have had wide influence, including *Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective*, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* and *The Black Christ*. Your most recent book, *Resurrection Hope: A Future Where Black Lives Matter*, is the winner of the 2023 Grawemeyer Award in Religion, and we were fortunate enough to be given a preview when you delivered the Payne Lecture at Seminary of the Southwest in January, 2021.

Your friend and colleague, the Rev. Dr. Gary Dorrien says of you, “Kelly is keenly and deeply aware of the role that her seminary education at Union Theological Seminary - studying under James Cone - played in transforming her life and yielding an unexpected teaching career. Every student she has ever taught has been the beneficiary of this self-knowledge. Kelly is all-in as a teacher, mentor, and scholar, always giving the best she has, confronting the ravages and evil of White supremacy, holding onto her own Christian hope, and being a magnificent witness of it to others.”

Because of your exceptional commitment to the roles of scholar, dean, and public intellectual, as well as your fierce advocacy for racial and social justice, the Faculty of Seminary of the Southwest present you with the 2023 Durstan R McDonald Teaching Award.