



United Presents “*Battle for the Minds, Revisited*”— Our 2025 Susan Draper White Lecture with Rev. Molly T. Marshall, PhD

SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA, UNITED STATES, December 18, 2024. United is pleased to announce that our 34th annual Susan Draper White Lecture will take place Monday, February 24, 2025, and feature Rev. Molly T. Marshall, PhD, United’s esteemed and beloved president. President Marshall’s lecture is titled “*Battle for the Minds, Revisited.*”

Thirty years ago, writer and producer Steve Lipscomb created his first documentary, *Battle for the Minds*, about the Southern Baptist Convention’s conservative shift and how that was affecting women pastors. Prominently featured in the film was a progressive, feminist professor of Christian theology and experienced pastor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Southern) in Louisville, Kentucky: Dr. Molly T. Marshall.

Released in 1997, *Battle for the Minds* aired on PBS stations. Through a collection of interviews and vignettes, the film outlines the steady effort to coalesce conservative power in the SBC and install Baptist seminary presidents who professed a fundamentalist interpretation of scripture prescribing that men should lead in both church and home settings. Though Dr. Marshall had taught at Southern for a decade, had tenure, and had received the faculty teaching award the previous year, she was forced out. She left the SBC as well.

The opening sound bite, from an unidentified man, accused Southern of being “somewhat deceptive and misleading” by inviting “women to...receive theological training under the delusion that they’re going to be able to serve as pastors in Southern Baptist churches. It ain’t goin’ to happen!” In the decades since, the SBC has doubled down on theological complementarianism to the exclusion of women in executive pastoral leadership, voting overwhelmingly in 2023 to bar women from serving as lead or senior pastors and expelling Southern Baptist churches led by women.

This year’s Susan Draper White lecture will feature Dr. Marshall’s reflections on that pivotal episode in her professional and theological life and how the experience shaped the theologian and leader she has become as United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities’ president. The evening will include a viewing of the documentary along with Dr. Marshall’s remarks and reflections.

This special event will begin at 7:00 PM and conclude by 9:15 PM. It will take place in United’s Chapel and will be available via live streaming. To learn more, please contact Jen Buck (jbuck@unitedseminary.edu).

About the Susan Draper White Lecture

The Susan Draper White Lectureship is named for the grandmother of Cil Braun¹ ('83), a former member of United's board of trustees. Cil described Draper White, who died when Cil was nine, as a beloved grandmother and her "first theology teacher."

Since 1992, this celebrated lecture series has brought remarkable leaders in feminist theology to United's campus to lecture on a vast variety of topics including Homiletics, Buddhism, Pastoral Theology, Ethics, Islam, the Beyoncé Mass, and the Bible. Because of gifts from Cil and other generous donors, these endowed lectures are free and open to the public.

About United

Founded by the nascent United Church of Christ (UCC) as a welcoming, ecumenical school that embraces all denominations and faith traditions, [United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities](#) has been on the cutting edge of progressive theological thought leadership since it was established in 1962. Today, United continues to train leaders who dismantle systems of oppression, explore multi-faith spirituality, and push the boundaries of knowledge.

Contact

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