

# Heritage Society

December 2020

*Eden*  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY

[www.eden.edu](http://www.eden.edu)

## Cloud of Witnesses

Eden Theological Seminary shares this story to remember and give thanks for the life and commitments of Vada (Volkening) Drayer (December 1926 – September 2019). We are grateful that she is not alone in these commitments and the sharing of her legacy. We give thanks for the “Cloud of Witnesses” who continue to enable the formation of leaders in the community of learning and faith that is Eden Theological Seminary.



Vada Drayer, 90th Birthday

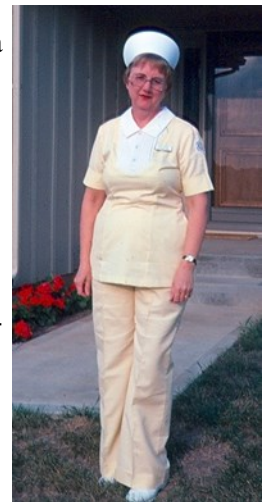
Colonial Church United Church of Christ, Prairie Village, KS is home church for David M. Greenhaw and where he met the Drayer family- Vada and Don and their sons, Kirby, Timothy and Darryl. David Greenhaw recalls growing up with the Drayer sons, including annual trips with the Colonial

Church UCC youth group across the state of MO to visit Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis. Those trips influenced David to dream of one day becoming part of Eden Seminary, which he did, including 23 years as the Seminary’s 13<sup>th</sup> president. They influenced the Drayer family as Vada kept the family close to church through her commitments and leadership in many parts of church life. David Greenhaw stayed especially close to Timothy and kept in touch throughout Timothy’s life.

In September of 2019, upon Vada’s death, Eden Seminary learned of the depth of her connection through receiving a portion of her estate as a legacy gift. This generous gift enables her commitments of faith, leadership, women’s empowerment, and well-being for all to continue and to multiply. This gift influences the ability of Eden Seminary to continue in the formation of leaders with capacities to lead in these areas now and in generations to come. Vada lived her faith commitments throughout her life. She studied as a nurse and home economics

major at Kansas State University, teaching a course at KU in Home Design after her graduation. She was active in PTA and Cub Scouts. Her leadership included time chairing the Overland Park, Kansas’ Parks and Recreation Department. She was active in church leadership, with a commitment to women’s empowerment, serving for a time as President of the Kansas Oklahoma Conference UCC Women’s group and as president of the Colonial Ladies group at Colonial Church. Vada’s attention to the well-being of all included service on the Board of Directors of the Evangelical Children’s Home (now Every Child’s Hope) in St. Louis, teaching a sewing class at the local YWCA and owning and directing the Overland Park Montessori School between 1968-1978. In her 50s, Vada returned to school to become a registered nurse and worked as a neo-natal nurse for as long as she was physically able. Vada’s love and care for her family, church and community extended throughout all her years.

Vada’s legacy gift enables her to contribute to the continuation of those faith commitments well into the future. Her commitments in life align with what her gift continues to enable through Eden. Evidence of women’s empowerment and leadership is embodied in the selection of Deborah Krause as Eden Seminary’s 14<sup>th</sup> president and first woman in that position. Having been nurtured and shaped herself at Eden, as student and long-time professor of New Testament, Deborah Krause became Eden’s president in July 2020.



Continued on page 2



The halls of Eden are bright and awaiting the buzz of post-pandemic activity. Until then, the Zoom rooms of classes, chapel, contextual education and community events are humming.

Remember that the 2020 CARES Act passed by the U.S. Congress has provisions that enable a tax deduction for donations up to \$300, gifted to a charitable organization. Taxpayers who take the standard deduction when filing, can do an above-the-line deduction of donations up to \$300 for an individual and \$600 for those married-filing-jointly. If you do itemize your deductions, the current (2020) cap is 60% of adjusted gross income. Corporations also may deduct charitable donations up to 10% of taxable income.

To participate in these CARES Act provisions, donations need to be made before the end of December.

Please also note that the CARES Act enables taxpayers age 70 ½ or older to make a qualified charitable distribution from their IRA – up to \$100,000 – directly to an eligible charity. It's generally a non-taxable distribution made by the IRA trustee to a charitable organization. A QCD counts toward their minimum distribution requirement for the year.

### Cloud of Witnesses, cont.



Four generations of the family. (Kirby, Vada, Vada's grandfather, Vada's father, Herman Volkening)

Vada's commitments to well-being and her spirit of adaptability align with new courses Eden faculty are developing. One such course by Dr. Kristen Leslie is related to food sustainability and nurturing relationships of mutual respect between farmers in southern Indiana and urban and suburban folks in St. Louis. The course is growing out of a project that links gleaning and food availability in urban "food deserts."

At Eden Seminary, we give thanks for Vada's life and faith. – for the way she lived that faith and for the ways that her legacy continues to help shape leaders, churches and movements in the church and beyond. Thanks be to God.

  
www.eden.edu

YOU are Invited to Eden's Alumni and Friends Virtual Gathering monthly. January 15th at 11:30 am CT will focus on financial well-being and planned giving. Register for this on-line event on the website at Events.

<https://www.eden.edu/events/alumni-virtual-gathering-financial-wellbeing/>

A zoom link will be sent to your email.