



Heritage Society

JUNE 2021

Cloud of Witnesses

Giving Thanks for the Life & Legacy of Martha J. (Teeters) Ford

At Eden Seminary, we are remembering and giving thanks for the life and commitments of Martha Teeters Ford (1938-2019). With her children, Suz-Anna Vardakas and Rev. Paul Robeson Ford, her legacy continues to influence students at Eden and the shape of their ministries through scholarship assistance in her name. 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.

Anti-racism, and its intersecting oppressions, is a leading infused goal for all of Eden Seminary's curriculum and community life in 2021.



Martha J. (Teeters) Ford

Martha Ford's commitments embodied that goal decades earlier. Martha grew up attending St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church (UCC) on Mound Street in Columbus,

Ohio where her grandfather and brother were lay leaders. She completed her undergraduate degree at Ohio University (Athens, Ohio), and earned a total of three master's degrees. She earned a Masters in Religious Education from Eden Seminary in 1963. She served as director of Christian Education at Pilgrim UCC in St. Louis before moving to New York City. She also was graduated from the City College of New York and C.W. Post University, Long Island, New York. Martha was part of the first "Loving Generation" – the first generation of inter-racial marriages following the 1967 U.S. Supreme Court case "Loving v. Virginia." In this case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that laws banning inter-racial marriage violate the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S.

Did you know?

Leaving a meaningful legacy for you and your family while securing the future of Eden's mission does not require great wealth-just great vision!

Encourage others to leave a planned gift for Eden Seminary and join you as a Heritage Society Member. Contact us at advancement@eden.edu for more information.



2021 Commencement

On behalf of the students, faculty, staff, and especially the 2021 graduates of Eden, thank you for encouraging us by your presence, engagement and support over the last academic year. The 171st Commencement ceremony of Eden Seminary, on May 14th, was off the charts! If you missed the event, or just want to re-live your favorite moments, find the link online at www.eden.edu. While those fond memories from still linger, we are busy preparing classrooms for a new blended method of learning. Courses have been structured to offer a variety of blended options for students. As part of the component of hybrid courses, we look forward to welcoming students again, to the physical classrooms on campus this fall.

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Call us in the Advancement Office at
314.918.2691 or email at
advancement@eden.edu



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Giving Thanks for the Life & Legacy of Martha J. (Teeters) Ford, cont.

Constitution. (cont. page 2)
Martha's life and ministry were courageous in boldly transcending traditional boundaries of race and class at great personal cost.

Martha spent thirty-five years as an elementary school teacher in the New York City Public School system, faithfully serving generations of children in grades 2 -6. She taught night school periodically, served as a school librarian, worked in social services at the Casita Maria Settlement House in East Har-

lem. Martha was a devoted member of the Riverside Church in New York City for over forty years. She volunteered with the English Conversation Program, working with immigrant and non-native speakers of English who were seeking to improve their language skills. She was a member of Sigma Kappa sorority, an avid reader, and a long-time advocate for expanding literacy, especially among the predominantly black and Latino students whom she taught in New York. She was a card-carrying member of the United Federation of Teachers, and a strong supporter of organized labor. She

loved traveling, lighthouses, whale watching, and spent summers in Cape Cod with her family, teaching them to love it as well.

At Eden, we give thanks for Martha Ford's life, faith and leadership. We give thanks for her legacy that enables those commitments to live on and influence others. Thanks be to God.