

NEWS FROM THE QUAD

SERENE JONES TAKES OVER AT UTS

After 26 cumulative years at Yale as a faculty child, YDS student, graduate student, and, finally, Titus Street Professor of Theology, Serene Jones '85 M.Div. has left New Haven to head one of the nation's pre-eminent divinity schools, Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

Jones became the first woman to serve as president of UTS, a 284-student institution that boasts the largest theological library in the western hemisphere. UTS has a long, liberal tradition of dedication to social justice issues and lengthy history of ties to YDS. Jones succeeds Joseph Hough, '59 B.D. UTS is also where the illustrious Reinhold Niebuhr '14 B.D. once taught.

"It is quite humbling, and more than a little overwhelming to stand here and chart the outline of this vision. I am tempted to ask 'how did a girl from the plains of Oklahoma end up at a place like this doing what I am being asked to do?' But then I think about the land, the stories, the people who nurtured me, and I take comfort in thinking that my mongrel heritage might match better than I first realize with the history of this place," said Jones at her November 17, 2008, inaugural address delivered in nearby Riverside Church in front of nearly 800 guests, including her father, Joe R. Jones '61 B.D.

Serene Jones taught at YDS for 17 years and also spent time earning an M.Div. at YDS and a Ph.D. in theology at the Graduate School. Jones was born while her father was pursuing his own degree at YDS, and she grew up around the Yale campus as he completed work on his B.D. and, then, his Ph.D. Jones, who is ordained in the United Church of Christ and in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is the author of *Feminist Theory & Christian Theology: Cartographies of Grace* and *Calvin & The Rhetoric of Piety*. She is the Roosevelt Professor of Systematic Theology at UTS, which collaborates closely with nearby Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University.

Among her goals as UTS's 16th president Jones told *Columbia* magazine, is the strengthening of ties between the institutions. "UTS is poised to weigh in with a moral seriousness on issues related to justice and peace and beauty," she said. "And intellectuals are eager to talk about religion because they know that if they don't understand it, they don't understand the world."



Serene Jones

REFLECTIONS GARNERS PRIZES

The Divinity School's national magazine of theological and ethical inquiry, *Reflections*, won several 2007 Best in the Christian Press awards from the Associated Church Press. Under the leadership of Editor Ray Waddle and Designer Peter Johnson, *Reflections* garnered the top prize in one category, "Theme Issue, Section, or Series: Magazine," and second and third prizes in two others at the ACP's spring 2008 meeting.

"This issue will linger on the coffee table forever. Just when you think you're done, there's yet another, thought-provoking piece," wrote ACP judge Nancy L. Roberts in choosing the Spring 2007 issue of *Reflections* for the highest honor, the award of excellence. The issue, Waddle's first as editor, was entitled "God's Green Earth" and was devoted to an exploration of the intersection of religion and environmentalism.

The magazine took home lesser prizes in the categories of "Best in Class: Journal" and "Theological Reflection, Long Format," the latter recognizing an essay from Serene Jones on "What Do We Desire? The Future of Faith and Citizenship."

The ACP is the oldest interdenominational religious press association in North America. In its current incarnation, *Reflections* currently has a press run for each issue of about 18,000. It appears twice a year. Editor Ray Waddle is a seasoned religion writer who also writes a column for *The Tennessean* newspaper in Nashville. Designer Peter Johnson is on staff at Yale Printing & Publishing Services.

TONY BLAIR TEACHES WITH YDS PROFESSOR

Six YDS students had front row seats in a fall 2008 semester seminar that was team-taught by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Miroslav Volf, the Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology and director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture. Competition for a place in the seminar, "Faith and Globalization," was stiff as scores of students university-wide applied for 25 spots in a one-time process designed to cull a select group from YDS, the School of Management, the College, and elsewhere in the student body.

Blair, who actually came to New Haven for about half of the weekly class sessions, has made faith and globalization issues one of his passions since leaving office. His Tony Blair Faith Foundation aims to promote understanding of the world's



Tony Blair speaking with students including Ally Brundige '11 M.Div.

major religions. In a major April 2008 address at London's Westminster Cathedral, Blair spoke about faith and globalization, citing Wolf's popular book, *Exclusion and Embrace*. In an effort to engage a broader audience on the topic, Yale maintains a website (<http://faithandglobalization.yale.edu>), open to the public, that tracks issues relating to the seminar.

In addition to teaching the course, Blair also took part in a public conversation with Yale President Richard C. Levin before a packed audience at Woolsey Hall in September. Members of the YDS Board of Advisors and other friends of the Divinity School were treated to a luncheon with Blair during a meal at Levin's official residence in October.

Blair is no stranger to New Haven and Yale, having delivered a graduation address on Yale College's Senior Class Day in May 2008. His son, Euan Blair, finished a two-year master's program in international relations that month.

EDWARDS DIGITIZED, AGAIN

Jonathan Edwards, the 18th-century preacher and theologian, has taken another step firmly into the 21st century with the October 2008 release of an updated database of his works. The Works of Jonathan Edwards Online 2.0 consists of 73 volumes of almost all of Edwards' writings that are now not only fully searchable but also feature a multimedia library of manuscript images and video recordings.

Housed at the Divinity School, the Jonathan Edwards Center reports thousands of unique users accessing the database about 250,000 times a year from more than 120 countries. "Such a vast collection of digital text, as a result of more than fifty years of scholarly work, will extraordinarily support the continuing and global interest in Edwards' writings," said Kenneth Minkema, executive director of the center. The re-

source is accessible at no charge through the Center's web site at www.edwards.yale.edu.

TOWNES ENDS AAR TERM WITH CALL FOR ACTIVISM

Wrapping up a year as the American Academy of Religion's first African-American female president, Emilie Townes called on members to help foster a more vibrant relationship between scholarship and activism.

Speaking at a November 1 session of the Academy's annual meeting in Chicago, Townes delivered her address "Walking on the Rimbones of Nothingness: Scholarship and Activism." She said, "What I want to add here is that our scholarship should also help map out strategies for creating a more just and free society and world."

Townes, the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of African American Religion and Theology, is also the associate dean of academic affairs at YDS, a post she assumed in July, succeeding Robert Wilson. The full text of her address may be found at www.yale.edu/divinity/townes.

HAWKINS RETURNS



Peter Hawkins, one of the most popular teachers at YDS in the last quarter of the 20th century, returned to Sterling Divinity Quadrangle in the fall of 2008 after a stint at Boston University. While at BU, Hawkins was a professor of religion and director of the Luce Program in Scripture and the Literary Arts. In 2006, Hawkins' energy and enthusiasm resulted in his winning the Metcalf Cup and Prize for Teaching Excellence, BU's highest teaching award.

"I am a writer and a scholar, and I will do those wherever I am, but the core of my vocation is a teacher," said Hawkins, who described how his stint at BU helped to shape his teaching style. "I learned in six years how to do something really well that I didn't know how to do when I got there—teaching undergraduates. My teaching style has become looser, freer because of this," he said.

Hawkins holds a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, an M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in English from Yale. His 2007 Lyman Beecher Lectures have been made into a book, *Undiscovered Country: Imagining the World to Come* (Seabury, 2009).

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