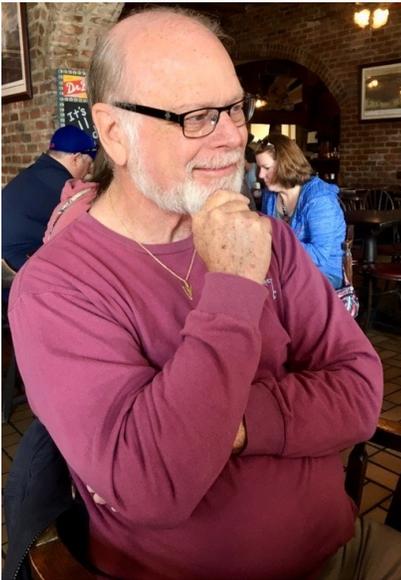


# STETSON UNIVERSITY

## Religious Studies

The Newsletter

Volume XIII, Issue 1  
Winter 2021



**Mid-August, 2020, Dr. Dixon Sutherland, Professor of Religious Studies left his office in Allen Hall, after teaching at Stetson University for twenty-nine years. We wish our esteemed colleague, mentor, and friend well in his retirement.  
Cont. on Page 4**

**The Department of Religious Studies is pleased to announce Dr. Sam Houston joins us as Assistant Professor of Religious Studies**



**As a two-year Brown Visiting Teacher-Scholar and then Visiting Assistant Professor from 2017-2020, Dr. Houston is known to many of our students and colleagues.**

**Welcome, Dr. Houston!**

**Cont. on page 5**

**Dr. Greg Sapp, Hal S. Marchman Chair of Civic and Social Responsibility, died on Sept. 19, 2020, at home in DeLand, Florida.**

**Over a fourteen-year Stetson career, Dr. Sapp modeled the civically engaged teacher-scholar and impacted so many on this campus and beyond. His memory lives on.  
Cont. on page 6.**



## The Department of Religious Studies Commitment to Anti-Racism & Racial Justice

Agreeing with our Stetson colleagues who have committed in a myriad of ways to addressing and remedying systemic racism on our campus and surrounding areas, we in the Department of Religious Studies condemn all forms of racism and white supremacy. We also acknowledge our own shortcomings in this area and commit to exploring and putting into place anti-racist policies and practices both inside and outside of the classroom. As a department of religious studies at a predominantly white Southern university with Baptist roots, we feel we have both a responsibility and unique role to play in shedding light on the ways in which religious discourses and practices have contributed to supporting *and* challenging systemic racism and racialized mythologies of white supremacy. We acknowledge that at their best, religious traditions affirm what Martin Luther King, Jr. taught: “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. What affects one directly affects all indirectly.”

In keeping with the above, we hope to bring greater attention to the Howard Thurman Lecture series which ran from 1996-2011 and brought such speakers as John Lewis, Angela Davis, Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael), and Derrick Bell to the university and wider community. By shedding light on these past endeavors at Stetson to provide a platform for those voices speaking to issues of systemic racism, we hope to pave the way for similar initiatives today.

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**



# From the Chair's Desk

**Dr. QS**

**Kandy Queen-Sutherland, Ph.D.  
Sam R Marks Chair of Religion  
Interim Chair, Religious Studies**

After twelve months, everyone has 2020 stories to tell. You are hearing from me, since Mitchell Reddish is on sabbatical for the fall. Lucky man. Definitely earned – but still lucky!

When I was asked in 2019 to be Interim Chair, I thought “piece of cake.” I would tread water through the fall until Reddish returns at the beginning of spring semester 2021.

Only a pandemic struck.

Courses went online the end of spring 2020 and opened this fall with a mix of Face to Face, Hybrid, and Online classes.

Not only was Reddish out, but Rabbi Altman took the semester off and Sutherland was retired, so Drs. Lucas, Sapp, Bell, Houston (the new guy) and I taught, with Lisa Guenther keeping the department office running.

And then tragically, we lost Greg Sapp. Dr. Sapp's death from a pulmonary embolism caught everyone by surprise. We participated in multiple remembrances of Greg's life, along with family, students, and colleagues, but in the end, we lost a department member and Allen Hall office-mate we loved dearly.

So, we did what we do best, stuck together. Dr. Sutherland returned to the classroom to teach Dr. Sapp's two classes. Other professors visited virtually as expert guests. Everyone pitched in and we managed to come through a difficult semester.

As hard as the year and particularly fall semester was, there were many bright moments ...

- ◆ Dr. Sam Houston joining the department ...
- ◆ Dr. Phillip Lucas' wedding November 2019 in India ...
- ◆ The department's outdoor screening of John Lewis' 1999 “Walking with the Wind” Howard Thurman lecture ...
- ◆ Department discussions on racism and academia – and our commitment to social justice, anti-racism and anti-bigotry ...
- ◆ Our bi-annual dessert social, Zoomed!
- ◆ The diligence of students to see their coursework through ...
- ◆ The beginning of a faculty search for an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies – Biblical Studies/ Hebrew Bible – to replace me beginning fall 2021. (Yes – it's time!)

With 2020 at its end, the Department of Religious Studies sends you our best wishes for good health, good work, good friendships, and most of all -- Peace.

# Theta Alpha Kappa

2019-2020

Theta Alpha Kappa is a national honor society for professors and students in religious studies/theology. Five new members joined Stetson's Alpha Gamma Omicron Chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa in spring 2020: (left to right) Bethany Moore, Jordan McCormick, Madison Goff, Kirk Mattern, and Morgan Hambleton.



## Dr. Dixon Sutherland, Cont. from Page 1

The following are the remembrances of Dr. Donald Musser, Professor of Religious Studies, Emeritus – a title Dr. D. Dixon Sutherland now holds.

(Poetic license has been taken.)

Donald Dixon Sutherland has had two careers at Stetson. Needing two people (a visiting professor and a sabbatical replacement), Dixon and Kandy (Dr. Queen-Sutherland) joined the Religious Studies faculty from 1982-83. I was an untenured faculty member and a "Yankee with attitude." I advised Dixon on our first meeting not to unpack his bags because the position he held was temporary and terminal. However, during that academic year he and Kandy became endeared by the faculty and the President. They were begged to stay and not depart for the Baptist Theological Seminary in the Alps. But, alas, they packed up, and with their cat, Old Lady, spent nearly eight years teaching in Rüschtikon, Switzerland.

Then, while they were on sabbatical leave at Vanderbilt in 1990, the Religious Studies faculty, with the President's consent, conspired to get them again and within a year both Dixon and Kandy were back to where they belonged.

As a faculty member, Dixon exceeded all expectations. Students begged to enroll in his closed classes. His persona did exude a bit of Scottish briskness, but they quickly realized that Dr. S was for them. He became a beloved and premier teacher in the department. Notable is the fact that many of his students were not majors or minors in Religious Studies.

He was a campus leader. He chaired projects, programs, and committees. Included in this array of leadership posts were the Values Council, the Christian Ethics Institute, the Stewart Lectures, the Edmunds Scholars program, and the Howard Thurman program.

Little known by those outside of Allen Hall was Sutherland's prowess as a whiffle ball pitcher and batsman. We teamed up and took on all comers in the building's auditorium. We remain undefeated and seldom scored upon, until this day.

Dixon retires to his home where he grows veggies (and cans them!), paints watercolor landscapes, and listens to a pair of recently adopted kitties.

He will be sorely missed. Alles Gute! Doktor Sutherland.



Dr. Sutherland, Dr. Queen-Sutherland, Dr. Earl Joiner, and Dr. Musser (1982-83)

## "Walking with the Wind": A Screening of Congressman John Lewis' 1999 Stetson University Howard Thurman Lecture

On the evening of Thursday, November 5, 2020, a limited number of students, faculty, and staff attended an outdoor screening of Congressman John Lewis' Howard Thurman Lecture, "Walking with the Wind" given at Stetson in 1999. The Department of Religious Studies, Africana Studies, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion sponsored the event on the Stetson Green. Participants heard Congressman Lewis recount stories from his time as a civil rights activist and leader in the Southern freedom struggle of the 1960s, including his involvement with the Freedom Riders and the Selma to Montgomery march for voting rights. Following the screening, religious studies professor Dr. Sam Houston and director of the Africana Studies program Dr. Sharmaine Jackson facilitated a student discussion of lessons learned from Lewis's talk.

Most of the historic Howard Thurman Lectures are available for viewing in the DuPont Ball Library. Unfortunately, they are not currently available for viewing virtually. The Howard Thurman Program at Stetson was established during the tenure of President H. Douglas Lee by D. Dixon Sutherland, Professor of Religious Studies, and Reverend Jefferson Rogers, founder of New Birth Inc., a national board of African-American leaders. From 1996-2011 the program brought speakers extending the legacy of Dr. Howard Thurman, a seminal mentor to leaders of the American Civil Rights movement. The Howard Thurman lecture series hosted world-class speakers who challenged the University's internal as well as external audiences to seek solutions to social, religious, and ethnic problems both in America and around the world. Thurman speakers included Derrick Bell, Taylor Branch, Angela Davis, Fred Shuttlesworth, C.T. Vivian, Randall Robinson, Andrea Young, and Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael), among others. We encourage our alumni who visit our campus to consider viewing one of these important lectures available in the Du Pont Ball Library.



### Sam Houston Cont. from page 1

**Dr. Sam Houston is a native of Texas and traces his lineage to famed early Texan statesman Sam Houston. After majoring in history at Baylor University, he received an M.Div. degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and an M.A. in philosophy at Boston College. With an interest in Islam and in comparative ethics, he moved to Abu Dhabi, UAE, to study the Arabic language. After enrolling in Florida State University's doctoral program (where he focused on modern Islamic thought and comparative religious ethics), he spent 2013 in Rabat, Morocco, on a U.S. State Dept. sponsored Critical Language Scholarship. He completed his Ph.D. in 2017 with a dissertation analyzing the role played by Islamic mysticism in modern Islamic activist movements.**

**Dr. Houston's focus on Islam and ethics follows his belief that religious and cross-cultural literacy is no longer a luxury but an essential resource for maintaining community among divergent groups. For Houston, the study of Islam fosters inter-faith and cross-cultural understanding and Islam is seen as an intellectually rich religious tradition with many insights into the full range of human cultural expression.**

**At Stetson Dr. Houston teaches courses that focus on Islamic history, scripture, political and religious movements, and how Islam can fruitfully contribute to inter-faith dialogue in areas such as ethics.**



February 28, 2020-March 8, 2020

Article by: Alexis Singh, Religious Studies Major

Going abroad is an experience of never knowing what to expect. So many adventures await, you are not sure which one to choose. Luckily when I went abroad with Dr. Reddish to London and Paris to study “The Bible in Art and Artifact,” most everything was planned. From the minute we landed in London we were touring. We visited the British Museum, Westminster Abbey, the British Library and the National Portrait Gallery to name a few. My favorite had to be the National Portrait Gallery with so much art and history, that you could get lost! On our off day, I was able to explore Oxford with some of my friends. What an amazing experience to see so much of old English history in one spot.



After London, we made our way to Paris on the bullet train. How exciting! Our hotel was near the Red Light District. On the first night Dr. Reddish took the group to see the Eiffel Tower, dazzling in the night sky. We visited the Musée de’Orsay and the Louvre, which both had so much history on the Bible that it astounded me. I did not realize how much art was based on the Bible and how many artifacts actually exist outside the Vatican related to the history of Christianity. When we had time off we visited Cathédrale Notre-Dame, the Catacombs (one of the most exciting things I have ever done), and Sacré-Coeur Basilica, which has a beautiful view overlooking Paris, especially at night.

This trip was an eventful and thrilling experience. I visited many places that I have never been before that now hold memories in my heart. I made new friends that I know will last a lifetime, and I owe it all to taking a risk and going abroad with Dr. Reddish and finding a renewed love for the Bible.

## Dr. Greg Sapp Cont. from page 1

The following comments were written by Dr. Sapp’s daughter, Kylee Sapp.

Greg Sapp was born on March 15, 1963, and adopted by Orpha and Leonard Sapp. He received an AA from the University of Florida and graduated from Stetson University with a BA in Religious Studies in 1988. He went on to earn his Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and PhD from the University of Virginia. Dr. Sapp taught at West Virginia University and Mercer University before returning to Stetson in 2006, teaching in the Department of Religious Studies.

For over a decade, Dr. Sapp helped lead the Freedom Riders summer travel course, which took students from DeLand and the Stetson College of Law through the Deep South. The course retraced the footsteps of those protesting bus segregation in the 1960s. Dr. Sapp also served as the faculty advisor to the Bonner Program and as a member of the alumni board.

He was an avid reader, with a particular passion for the *Harry Potter* series. He was a big sports fan and loved cheering on the Florida Gators and Atlanta Braves. He usually held season ticket packages for the Daytona Tortugas, who played at Jackie Robinson Stadium—in his words, the “best view in baseball.” He valued spending time with family, friends and colleagues—and left us many stories to tell.



# Our Graduating Majors

## Sydney Hill— December 2019



I have loved my time as a religious studies Major at Stetson. The different perspectives of religion that this department has given me will carry me through life, and for that I am grateful. The professors are unmatched and are always willing to help. I will miss Friday afternoon classes with Dr. Bell discussing theory and thinking of all of the reasons people act the way they do and how religion affects that. In the fall I plan to attend graduate school to pursue a Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction. I am thankful for my time at Stetson and excited to see what the future holds.

## Abigail Crater—Spring 2020

Abigail (Abbey) Crater graduated with bachelor's degrees in aquatic/marine biology and religious studies. She completed a senior research project in both religious studies (entitled "Creatures of the Deep: Aquatic Myths and How They Can Contribute to Marine Conservation") and marine biology, which allowed her to combine her interests in religion and marine conservation.

Abbey is the Department of Religious Studies Outstanding Senior for 2019-2020; in 2019, Abbey was named an Outstanding Junior in Religious Studies and was inducted into Theta Alpha Kappa, the religious studies honorary society. She has been a member of Circle K International, Hatters Down Under: Scuba and Snorkel Club, and Women's Chorale. She has volunteered at St. John's River cleanup, oyster bagging at the Marine Discovery Center, and Samaritan Ministries Homeless Shelter Café.



## Rachaell Diaz—Spring 2020

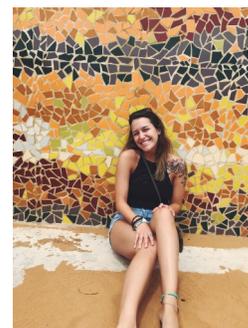


Rachaell Diaz graduated with a bachelors degree in English and religious studies. I added religious studies as my second major after taking Introduction to Biblical Literature; I really loved analyzing religious texts in a literary perspective. My experience in the department has been absolutely incredible. All the professors are very helpful, and my academic advisor has really guided me during my time at Stetson. After graduation, I hope to attend graduate school for a master's in religious studies.

## Maci Movsovitz—Spring 2020

Maci Movsovitz graduated with a bachelor's degree in religious studies and sociology and elementary education minor.

My experience with the religious studies department at Stetson University is one that I will never forget. Because of religious studies, I believe I am exceptionally prepared for any type of career I choose. This major requires you to think critically with an open-mind and really engulf yourself into the material taught. Likewise, every single course I took as a religious studies major challenged me to think, read, write and work harder than I ever have before. My career path is a bit more untraditional compared to other religious studies majors, as I am now an Account Sales Representative with State Farm; yet this leads me to my overall point ... no matter what career choice you make (post graduation), religious studies will prepare you for whatever you choose. It allows you to connect with all sorts of people as you are better able to understand their cultures and beliefs, as well as communicate more effectively because of these abilities. I never would have otherwise.



# Our Graduating Majors Continued

## Jane Peterson—Spring 2020

The religious studies department was so welcoming! I would not have graduated on time if it had not been for the amazing department who helped me during my senior year! A religious studies degree teaches you so much more than you'd expect, you're able to expand your horizons and learn how to understand and relate to those around you from different backgrounds. After graduation I went home to North Dakota, but was recently hired as the Minister to Families and Communications at Trinity United Methodist Church here in DeLand! I'm excited for my new job and am thankful to everyone that has helped me to get where I am today!



## Alexis Singh—Spring 2020



I have really enjoyed my time at Stetson from studying abroad to being in a sorority to hanging out with my friends. Being able to grow in religious studies and political science has helped me understand that I am on the right path towards helping to become more involved in raising awareness of human trafficking. After I graduate I want to work for the government and go to law school within the next year!

## Cameron Clark – Fall 2020

During my first semester at Stetson, I had the course Sacred Traditions of the World with Dr. Lucas. Originally, I took it as a general education requirement, but as the semester went on, I began to find myself more and more interested in the subject matter. The next semester I signed up for the course Religions of India and a similar experience happened, I wanted to learn more and more, so I decided to try and receive a minor in Religious Studies. Eventually, I completed the minor, but like the last time, I couldn't pull myself away from learning about the different cultures, scriptures, and histories that were taught. I then decided to declare a dual major in religious studies and psychology. The faculty all had their own unique experiences and ways of teaching that made each class engaging in unique ways. I felt as if all of the professors in the department had their doors always open for questions, even if I wasn't in one of their classes that semester. During my time as a major, I also worked with the department as an office assistant specialist in Allen Hall. For my future, I plan on moving forward with my collegiate career to complete a graduate degree.



## Morgan Hambleton— Fall 2020



Meet Morgan Hambleton, senior religious studies and psychology double major with a minor in creative writing. She works in the department on marketing and social media as one of the work study students. She joined the department her freshman year at the advice of Dr. Reddish after taking his Introduction to Biblical Literature class. "I love this department because the faculty and students are so great! I love working in the department and helping with the bi-annual dessert social!"

## Bethany Moore—Fall 2020

Please meet Bethany Moore, a religious studies major and history minor. I became a religious studies major because religion is fascinating to me. Religion has been influential in almost every aspect of human life and has been a major influencer in history. I took one class and couldn't go back. I think everyone should take a religious studies class so that people can better understand others.

After I graduate I hope to work abroad providing humanitarian aid. My major helps me to understand people from different backgrounds who may have different values than me.

