October 2019
New Series 11.2

Theta Alpha Kappa

The National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology

The President's Newsletter

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In this issue …

As the leaves turn colors and thoughts turn to midterms, the Board of Directors is happy to share with you an update of Theta Alpha Kappa news. On page 2, look for information about our Annual Meeting at the AAR/SBL in San Diego; we hope to see you there! We also call your attention to the annual Clark Awards (page 1) and the Undergraduate Achievement Award (page 3)—two excellent opportunities for your students. On the topic of student successes, the winners of the Graduate Fellowship Awards are announced on page 3. And you will get to meet the newest member of the Board of Directors, Dr. Dexter Callender (page 2) and be introduced to newly chartered chapters of Theta Alpha Kappa (page 2). Enjoy!

Kelley Coblentz Bautch, President

The 2020 Albert Clark Awards and *The Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa*

Institutions of higher learning increasingly extol the benefits of student research that include the opportunity to develop critical thinking and writing skills and fostering of mentor relationships with faculty. When your undergraduate and graduate students examine topics closely, hone and revise their research, and disseminate their findings publicly, they are engaging in a high-impact educational practice. Please encourage your undergraduate and graduate students to submit their best papers in religion or theology for consideration for the annual Albert Clark Award. The Award recognizes a winner and a runner-up for the best student essays in religious studies or theology at the undergraduate level and at the graduate level. All submissions are considered as well for publication in *The Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa*. The deadline for submission is January 24, 2020; additional details about and application instructions for the Clark Award are available on the Theta Alpha Kappa website under "Awards." Note: this year all applicants are required to complete a submission form that should accompany their entry. Please direct questions to Dr. Bernadette McNary-Zak, *JTAK* editor.

Annual Meeting of Theta Alpha Kappa
AAR/SBL, San Diego, CA
6:00-7:30 PM, November 24, 2019
Hilton Bayfront-206 (Second Level)

Chapter Representatives, our Annual Meeting will take place during the upcoming AAR/SBL meeting in San Antonio and we would like to encourage you all to attend. At this meeting, required by our Constitution, we'll elect officers, conduct the business of the society, and recognize the recipient of the **annual Connolly-Weinert Leader of the Year Award**: **C. David Grant** (Texas Christian University). A reception will begin at 6:00 and the business meeting at 6:30 pm. If you will be at the AAR/SBL, please attend TAK's Annual Meeting. Your Board of Directors looks forward to this opportunity to meet with you and to thank you in person for your service.

NEW CHAPTERS OF THETA ALPHA KAPPA

The following two new chapters have been chartered since the last listing in the *President's* Newsletter of March 2019. We welcome them into our society, which has chartered 349 chapters.

Institution	Chapter
St. Francis College	ANN
Cedarville University	ANΞ

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee will bring to the Annual Meeting in November the following names for election to the Board of Directors:

Vice President: David Nikkel, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Secretary: Eric F. Mason, Judson University

Member at Large: Michael Berger, Emory University

Member at Large: Elena Procario-Foley, Iona College

If you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting in November, you are also welcome to vote for these nominees by proxy.

The Nominating Committee also solicits timely nominations for Board positions. Please send your ideas and consider self-nominating for Board positions.

For questions and nominations, contact Member at Large, Andrea Stanton.

Theta Alpha Kappa Welcomes New Board Member

On July 1, Theta Alpha Kappa welcomed a new Member at Large, Dr. Dexter E. Callender, Jr. Dr. Callender is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Miami. A specialist in Hebrew Bible and the history and literature of the ancient Near East, Dr. Callender has a Ph.D. from Harvard University and is the author of *Adam in Myth and History* (Eisenbrauns, 2001) and editor of *Myth and Scripture: Contemporary Perspectives on Religion, Language, and Imagination* (SBL, 2014). Dr. Callender has been recognized for his work as an educator, having received the Provost's Excellence in Teaching Award and being named "Professor of the Year" by the Pan-Hellenic Association. He teaches courses that include Torah and Ancient Law, Prophecy and Prophetic Literature, and Method and Theory in the Study of Religion. On joining the Board of Directors, Dr. Callender shared: "Having served as my institution's chapter representative for several years, I am excited to participate in this new meaningful role. I look forward to assisting TAK in accomplishing its mission and to helping create even greater opportunities for students pursing the academic study of religion."

2019 Graduate Fellowship Award Recipients

In the Springtime, graduating seniors and alumni members of Theta Alpha Kappa think about the next step on their respective journeys, and for many that includes advanced study. Theta Alpha Kappa is pleased to support outstanding members in their pursuit of graduate studies in religion and theology through Graduate Fellowship Awards. First, second, and third prizes were awarded in the amounts of $3,000, $2000, and $1,000, respectively. The first place winner is Anya Fredsell (Alpha Tau Chapter, Elon University), who will matriculate in the Master of Theological Studies program at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University. The second place winner is Anderson Clayton Moss (Alpha Lambda Sigma Chapter, Young Harris College). Anderson will matriculate in the doctoral program at the University of Virginia. The third place award recipient is Victor Knight IV (Alpha Theta Mu Chapter, Campbell University), who is matriculating currently in the Master of Arts in Religion program at Yale Divinity School. Congratulations to these fine members of Theta Alpha Kappa as well as to all our members who pursue graduate studies in religious studies and theology. Chapter representatives, please encourage your seniors who plan to attend graduate school to submit applications for the Graduate Fellowship Award (application information will be available in the Spring on our website).

Ordering Induction Certificates: Did You Know ...

Inducting new members is one of the most important tasks of chapter representatives. Registering inductions occurs online; we have partnered with Kenneth E. Jernigan and Associates to handle the collection of induction information and the printing and distribution of induction certificates. Simply go to the Chapter Representatives page on the Theta Alpha Kappa website and from there to "Inducting Student Members."

Nominating Students for the Undergraduate Achievement Award

Every other academic year, each chapter in good standing is eligible to select a student for the Undergraduate Achievement Award. The award comes with a prize of $100. This academic year, chapters with numeric codes ending in the digits 0-4 may designate an undergraduate student for this award. Chapter representatives, if this is your chapter's year for the Undergraduate Achievement Award, simply send the name of the student you wish to recognize (along with the student's current mailing address) to Theta Alpha Kappa Treasurer, Dr. Christopher McMahon.

Celebrating Alumni Members of Theta Alpha Kappa

If you are a chapter representative who was inducted into Theta Alpha Kappa during your own studies or if one of your chapter's alumni has significant accomplishments related to the field of Religious Studies and Theology, drop us a line. We would like to recognize and celebrate our alumni members through profiles we will feature in our Newsletter and Facebook site. Send your news to Dr. Kelley Coblentz Bautch.