

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SLAIN SOUTH CAROLINA SEN. CLEMENTA PINCKNEY’S WIDOW TO RECEIVE HIS POSTUMOUSLY AWARDED DOCTORATE AT MAY 9 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY**

**AT WASHINGTON NATIONAL CATHEDRAL**

WASHINGTON (May 6, 2016) -The widow of the Rev. Clementa Pinckney will accept his posthumously awarded Doctorate of Ministry degree at the Wesley Theological Seminary’s 134th commencement on May 9 at the Washington National Cathedral.

The South Carolina senator (D) was a Wesley Theological Seminary D.Min. student at the time of his hate crime-related assassination with eight of his church members at a Bible study in June 2015 at the historic Mother Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church in Charleston, S.C.

"Rev. Pinckney’s martyrdom completed his requirements for his degree," says Wesley President, the Rev. Dr. David McAllister-Wilson. This is the first time ever that Wesley Theological Seminary has awarded a posthumous degree to a student who has not completed their coursework. The faculty voted unanimously to award the degree to his widow, Mrs. Jennifer Pinckney, at this year's 134th Commencement. At the time of his death, he was working on his thesis describing his dual role as a pastor and public servant. We believe he completed and defended that thesis that night.”

**At the commencement, a letter from President Barack Obama, Rev. Pinckney’s funeral eulogist, will be read to the graduating class, paying tribute to Rev. Pinckney and his posthumous degree.**

“Pastor Pinckney’s legacy of public service and ministry does not die with him. A new Doctor of Ministry track is being formed for pastors to prepare for public engagement, after his example, will be co-located in Charleston and Washington, D.C. so that more pastors like him will rise up in his place.”

**MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: Pinckney’s widow, Mrs. Jennifer Pinckney is available for interviews between 12:15 – 12:45 p.m. . She will attend the Commencement and receive the degree from Wesley Theological Seminary President David McAllister-Wilson between 3:15 – 3:45 p.m. Eastern. Photo opportunities follow at 4:10 p.m. . The ceremony will be live streamed and viewable at** [https://youtu.be/XILNeIWPHSE](https://mail.wesleyseminary.edu/owa/redir.aspx?SURL=AUC1q7fLiuorsWkogiI1v_Pm7VGCxHQ34Y1KiohZYZ2kLIX25HXTCGgAdAB0AHAAcwA6AC8ALwB5AG8AdQB0AHUALgBiAGUALwBYAEkATABOAGUASQBXAFAASABTAEUA&URL=https%3a%2f%2fyoutu.be%2fXILNeIWPHSE" \t "_blank" \o "https://youtu.be/XILNeIWPHSE Ctrl+Click or tap to follow the link).

**CHECK IN AT CATHEDRAL MEDIA DESK AT FRONT DOOR TO BE ESCORTED TO MEDIA OPPORTUNITY. PLEASE HAVE CREDENTIALS WITH YOU.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND CREDENTIALING, PLEASE CONTACT: Sheila George,** [**sgeorge@wesleyseminary.edu**](mailto:sgeorge@wesleyseminary.edu) **or call 202-236-9952 (cell),** [**www.wesleyseminary.edu**](http://www.wesleyseminary.edu)

***Seated in the nation’s capital and centered in the Christian tradition, Wesley Theological Seminary, and our Lewis Center for Church Leadership, equips exemplary teachers, preachers and leaders to be prophetic voices in the church and the world.***

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