

For Immediate Release: June 27, 2024

2024 CHANCELLOR'S SCHOLARS CONFIRMED

VANCOUVER, BC. June 27, 2024. The Vancouver School of Theology has named **Sheila Cook and Krishna Durbha** as the 2024 recipients of the Chancellor's Scholarships. These scholarships are the most prestigious and generous awards offered to VST students each year.

The **Chancellor's Scholars** are celebrated at the annual VST Chancellor's Dinner, scheduled for Thursday, September 19 at the UBC Golf Club. This event raises funds to support VST students through the Chancellor's Awards, bursaries for international students, and the President's Innovation Fund. The evening is hosted by VST Chancellor, Catherine Evans. In addition to honouring the Chancellor's Scholars, the evening will feature keynote speaker Max Wyman (OC), a prominent Canadian cultural commentator, writer, and spokesperson for the arts. He will give a talk titled **Come Together, Right Now: How Art Can Save the World from Itself**. Please contact VST for tickets at (604) 822-6315 or zlau@vst.edu.

The Chancellor's Scholarships are presented annually to two final-year students who show **exceptional promise for ministry** in the eyes of VST faculty and denominational leaders. Chancellor's Scholars are not only high-level students, but servant leaders prepared to commit their time and talent to service in God's church.

VST invited this year's Chancellor's Scholars to introduce themselves and say a word about their journeys thus far. It is VST's great pleasure to introduce Sheila and Krishna.

Sheila Cook (Anglican Church of Canada)

Gilakas'la! I was born, raised and live in the unceded, ancestral Lands of the *Kwakiutl Peoples* in what is claimed as Port Hardy, BC, on the northern tip of Vancouver Island. I am Indigenous from Treaty Six, *Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation*, and settler both. I am so honoured and humbled to have received this award. These funds will help me tremendously with my ISP Summer School and my 2025 classes towards completing my degree. On this reconciliation journey, I pray for what *a theology of do no harm* looks like in liturgy and community presence. I have been working full time since my ordination to the diaconate in September 2022, and eighty days later, my ordination to the priesthood, in the *Anglican Synod of BC Islands and Inlets*. At my services, I was honoured to have the Rev. Dr. Ray Aldred, Bishop Adam Halkett, the Rev. Tony Snow and (then Bishop) Chris Harper with me. I am currently Priest-in-Charge, *Christ Church, Alert Bay*, and priest in the Mid North Island Region in our diocese. Under Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee, my ordination was fast-tracked to serve the *Peoples of the Land* here: The *'Namgis Nation*, the *WheLaLaU Nations*, *Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations*, and the *Quatsino Nations*.



Krishna Durbha (Presbyterian Church in Canada)

I came to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ during my M.B.A first year. I am deeply grateful to God for a godly Christian whose life challenged me to look into my life and make the decision. After my studies, I worked in the corporate sector (especially with the financial institutions, a reputed one is Morgan Stanley in India) for ten years. During this time, I was actively involved in the local church. In the year 2007, as a response to God's call, I decided to quit my work as a banker and enrolled myself in a bible college to study before I served the church. I was able to graduate with an M.A in Pastoral Counselling from Singapore Bible College in 2009,



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and thereafter I served in India as a Christian Counselor. My current education in M.Div is to train myself as a Presbyterian Minister, which I believe the Lord is calling me to be. Me and my family (Neena and Kairos) are deeply grateful to God and to VST for choosing me for the Chancellor's Scholarship. It is a great help. I am seeking your prayers to serve to the best of my ability.

About the Chancellor's Scholarships

Each year two Chancellor's Scholarships of \$7,000 are awarded to students entering their final year of studies at Vancouver School of Theology, as an encouragement to fuller-time engagement in their studies. The award is intended to support the costs associated with the recipient's tuition and related personal investment in theological education.

To qualify to receive a Chancellor's Scholarship, the recipient needs to be: (1) a student who is in a degree program that aims at congregational ministry and who will be entering their final year of study in the fall; (2) a student with at least a B+ average in courses in which a grade is assigned and; (3) a student who shows promise for ministry, in the opinion of faculty and their relevant judiciary. These awards were approved by the Board at their May meeting.

About VST

VST's core mandate is to educate and form thoughtful, engaged, and generous Christian leaders for the church in the 21st century. VST is a leading theological school, viewed as a change agent and innovator for the church.

VST is an affiliated college of the University of British Columbia, ranked in the top 100 schools globally, and in the top 10 of most improved theological schools. VST has been recognized by In Trust Magazine for its realizing transformational change as it renews theological education. A recipient of a prestigious Pathways for Tomorrow grant from the Lilly Endowment, VST is redefining the critical role of theological field education in preparing clergy.

VST is accredited by the Government of British Columbia, and in North America by ATS (Association of Theological Schools).

The Vancouver School of Theology celebrates its foundational relationships with the Anglican Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada, and United Church of Canada. VST also welcomes students from many Christian communions, other faith traditions, and Indigenous communities. The Indigenous Studies Program at VST is central to the school's identity and commitments.

The Vancouver School of Theology celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2021. VST, through its predecessor schools, has been teaching theology in Vancouver since 1893.

The Vancouver School of Theology acknowledges that the land on which they are located is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwm̓əθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) People.

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