



United Church Funds

Investing Together for a Sustainable World

The Brown Endowment for Pastoral Leadership



The Impact of Legacy Giving: Richard and Helen Brown Endowment for Pastoral Leadership

In 1994, the United Church of Christ (UCC) learned that Richard and Helen Brown, long-time members of Mizpah UCC in Hopkins, Minnesota, had passed away and left an unexpected bequest totaling over \$5 million to the UCC. The Browns' gift is among the largest gifts received that have benefited the UCC.

Because they had no children, little was actually known about the Browns' motivation for this extraordinary gift. In addition to active church membership, Helen had been a board member of the United Church Board for World Ministries – now Wider Church Ministries – and Richard had served on the Minnesota Conference Board of Directors. Perhaps these experiences inspired them to make a gift that would benefit the UCC and its partner churches around the world.

The Browns had left two instructions: 1) That an endowment be created to benefit the leadership training needs of ministers in the UCC and its global partner churches, and 2) that the endowment be entrusted to the United Church Foundation – now United Church Funds – to manage, invest and administer.

In faithfulness to their wishes, UCF has been the steward of what is now known as the Richard and Helen Brown Endowment for Pastoral Leadership. And in this 30th anniversary year of the Browns' death, UCF examines how the Browns' legacy gift has made a lasting and continuing impact on the training and nurturing of ministerial leadership in the UCC and beyond.

To date, since awards were first handed out in 1998, the Brown Endowment has provided nearly \$7 million in scholarships for the training of ministerial candidates and the continuing education and professional development of authorized ministers – all across the UCC and in partner churches around the globe.

Total Available Distribution



Total Distribution from 1998-2023 is \$6,802,960.76

Supporting Members in Discernment

A notable concern from the start was what to do with monies left unawarded. In earlier years, UCC seminaries, Wider Church Ministries (WCM) and Council for Racial and Ethnic Ministries (COREM) were responsible for identifying and awarding scholarships to qualified persons, but they were not always able to do so. In an effort to maximize the distribution of funds and benefit the greatest number of ministers and ministers-in-training, the program and criteria have been updated. Over the years, the percentage of awards compared to the amount available – based roughly on a 5% moving average – has increased steadily, aside from certain years when more was awarded due to previous year rollovers (and, in 2020, amid the Covid pandemic.)

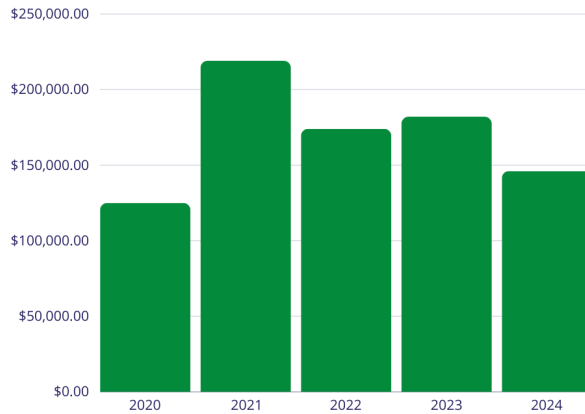
In some years, unused funds were used to provide travel subsidies for Members in Discernment (MID) to attend General Synod. For many of them, this was their first – and sometimes only – experience of seeing this national gathering and witnessing the wider church.

The majority of awards over the years have been to MIDs attending a seminary, divinity school or regional theological education program.

MID Scholarships

A major portion of the Brown Endowment provides scholarship funds for Members in Discernment (MIDs) – those who are preparing for authorized ministry in the UCC – to support a course of study.

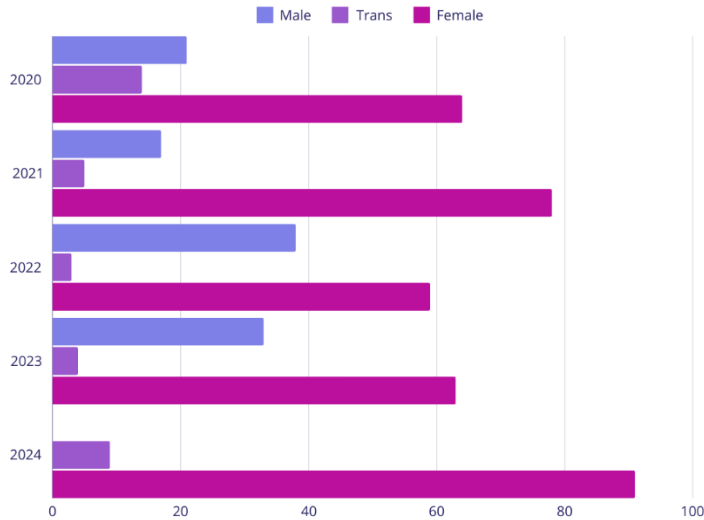
The Brown Endowment also supports MIDs attending regional theological education programs.



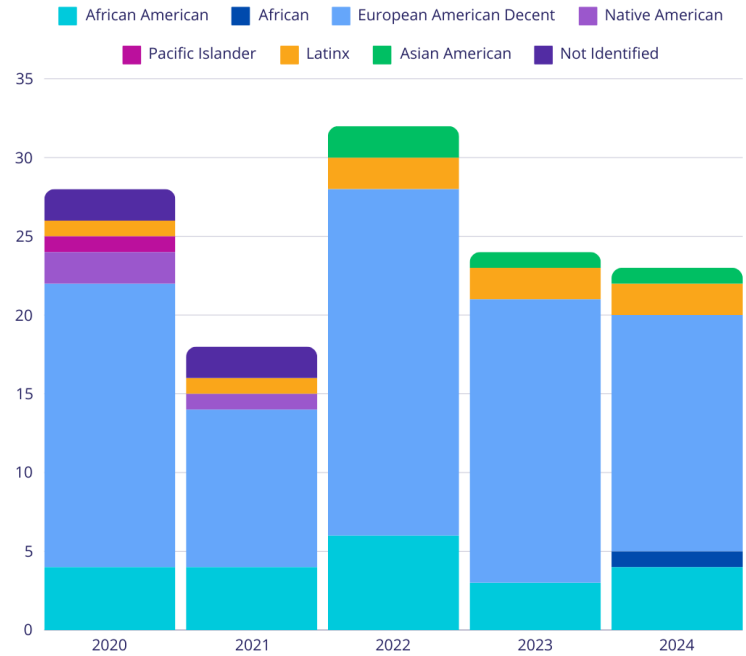
Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

In recent years, there have been deliberate and concerted efforts to effect diversity, equity and inclusion in the award recipient selection. Consistent with the larger numbers of women candidates over the past two decades, an average 71% of Brown recipients over the past five years have been female-identified; an average 7% have identified as transgender; and an average 41% have identified as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).

Diversity by Gender



Diversity by Ethnicity



Many UCC ministers serving today have been recipients of Brown scholarships or attended continuing education events funded by Brown grants. However, since recipients can receive multiple scholarships – for example, three times for each of their three years in seminary – or have participated in more than one continuing education event, it is difficult to determine unique numbers. However, it is not unreasonable to estimate that over 30 years, there are over 1,000 ministers who have benefited, both in the UCC and in global churches.

The 30th anniversary of the Brown Endowment illustrates the profound synergy between UCF’s prudent principles of long-term endowment management and investment approach while supporting the mission of providing scholarships for training and continuing education. The endowment also highlights the far-reaching and long-lasting impact that individuals can make through legacy gifts.

To learn more about endowment management, contact UCF at info@ucfunds.org. To learn more about the Brown Endowment, visit ucfunds.org/brown-scholarship. To learn more about making a legacy gift to the UCC, contact the UCC Philanthropy Team at giving@ucc.org or 1-800-846-6822.

GET IN TOUCH

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United Church of Christ Philanthropy Team
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Learn more about the Brown Endowment at ucfunds.org/brown-scholarship