

“Thompson Scholars would not have been possible without the visionary leadership of Sarah. Sarah walked beside me, guided me, dreamt with me, innovated with me and made the impossible possible. Sarah was not just my colleague; she became my friend and partner in doing the work of the church. I am grateful for the journey.”

~Ralph Basui Watkins, MFA, DMin, PhD The Peachtree Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth, Columbia Theological Seminary

“Oh Sarah! I read Israel's announcement with joy for you, and bittersweet sadness for us. You've been such a bright and constant light on this campus for so many years, leading us with warmth and wisdom and compassion and steadiness—and always with encouragement, especially in the moments when we needed it most. I couldn't have gotten through so many CLL events over the years without you, Sarah, especially this last one (which ended up being the one I enjoyed most!). Thanks to you, I learned to love teaching in this new format; now, I hope to do many more such courses. But the first one was the hardest and you were the reason I could jump the hurdle. I'm sure I'm one of hundreds of such teachers, and thousands of such learners, who owe you a debt of gratitude, for the positive learning environment you help to create each and every time.”

~Anna Carter Florence, Ph.D. Peter Marshall Professor of Preaching

“Sarah embodies a servant disposition of concern, consideration and collaboration for the other, be they student or colleague. Respectful and thoughtful, she pauses before speaking her mind to honor the voice from another. Her words are carefully measured and insightful, her actions well prepared. This next chapter will continue a life of curiosity, grace and connection.”

~Skip Johnson

“What a contribution Sarah has made to the Certification program and process for POAMN! Taking it under the wings of CLL, scheduling and hosting all four courses, changing course for Covid, and empowering a full program evaluation and review before her retirement has guaranteed this certification is growing and thriving and will continue. It has been a joy to work with her, to watch her work, and to have the privilege of being a partner and colleague in this process! May retirement contain many opportunities to continue to use her tremendous gifts, skills, and coaching talents! And may it offer rest, renewal, and the confidence that she deserves a “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

~Joyce MacKichan Walker

“Sarah is most welcoming, and kind no matter the time of day or situation. She ALWAYS makes you feel comfortable and at ease. In every class that I have attended at CTS Sarah has been the

facilitator who had the room ready, greeted the group with a smile and offered her help in every way. One of Sarah's best features is that she can say "I don't know that but I will research that and get back to you." AND SHE DOES. I will deeply miss seeing Sarah when I come to CTS for classes. ENJOY RETIREMENT, Sarah!"

~Judy Grieve, Presbyterian Woman

"Sarah can see the big picture while attending to the minor details, a rare combination of qualities. It is truly admirable to witness how she utilizes such a gift with a faithful, steady, and persistent effort to lead the Center for Lifelong Learning with excellence while being open to adapting to changing trends and incorporating innovative approaches to enhance the learning experience. I am immensely grateful for Sarah's commitment to coaching, leading, and mentoring me during my first year at the CLL. Despite the challenges of a steep learning curve, I always felt at ease knowing I have a capable director with integrity walking alongside me. I cannot emphasize enough my profound gratitude for Sarah's caring heart. Sarah's unwavering dedication to maintaining high standards and refusing to settle for anything less than what is good inspires me. I value the trustworthy relationship we have built with Sarah's leadership which has provided me with a solid entry point into the lifelong learning field. Sarah, you are a hero!"

~Sharon Junn, Associate Director of Lifelong Learning Spirituality Programs

"I'd like to start with wishing Sarah a retirement filled with joy, peace and relaxation. You have given so much of yourself to the CLL, it's time for you to reap the rewards. The things I have enjoyed most about having Sarah as a director is both her pool of vast knowledge and her talent for listening. If there is someone worth knowing, Sarah knows probably where they went to seminary, where they are currently working and the name of their dog. Her ability to network and make connections will be sorely missed. Sarah is also a great listener. She knows when to offer a blanket (listening to a frustration) or a sword (brainstorming and problem solving). I like to think that if I don't know the answer, then I will know someone else who does, but with Sarah leaving will have to reevaluate that mindset, as she was my go to 99% of the time."

~Alison Riviere, Lifelong Learning Certificate Program Coordinator

"One thing I would like to lift up about how Sarah goes over and above in her love and skills for lifelong learning comes from my engaging her to coach for reKindle congregations. Sarah is one of our best coaches - of course! She is prompt and efficient in communicating; her practice of the unique process of coaching individuals and teams to recognize and reach their goals has made a significant difference for the congregations she has worked with. One special delight was when Sarah made a site visit with me to one of the first reKindlers. A road trip with Sarah is great! We developed meaningful relationships with the team. They were affirmed to be visited. This was all

over and above, and greatly appreciated. Finally, Sarah turns in the BEST payment request form of any I've received!"

~ Julie M Josund, Lifelong Learning Ministering to Ministers and ReKindle Associate

"Sarah is at heart an educator and coach. She tirelessly shares her many gifts and her passion for lifelong learning within the CTS community and throughout the broader church. She is an encouraging colleague, always ready to listen, brainstorm or puzzle through the challenges that arise, closing conversations with an encouraging word. As an administrator she has held the CLL team together and kept everyone moving in a unified direction. She guides the staff with care, compassion and courage always ready to challenge or advocate as needed in any given situation."

~Debra Weir, Former Associate Director of Lifelong Learning Spirituality Programs

From the POAMN Board of Directors and Friends of POAMN

POAMN as well as I am most thankful for the dedicated service of Sarah Erickson through her work at Columbia's Center for Lifelong Learning- Older Adult Ministry Certification courses and her overall involvement with POAMN. She is an honest, straightforward woman who has contributed so much these past many years to make POAMN the great organization it is today. Sarah carefully thinks through everything and has excellent organizational skills! I consider her a true friend and colleague.

~Pat Baker, President of POAMN

"When I think of Sarah Erickson, the word "TRUST" immediately rises in my consciousness. Sarah, I have learned that whenever we are working with you on a challenging project, we can trust and be confident that the task will be done right. Sarah, your work ethic, intellect, leadership skills, empathetic personality, pastoral concern, faith, and passion for older adult ministry have brought new life and vigor to the Certification Program, as well as elevating the entire scope of POAMN's ministry. POAMN has been blessed by your work with CLL."

~Steve Aschmann, POAMN Member

"Sara is a dynamo! She is intelligent, witty, writes beautifully, sings well, and is a delight to know. Her direction and guidance has been so helpful throughout her years of service and friendship. I'm thankful God had our paths mingle." ~Pepe Bowman, POAMN Board Member

“Sarah was very helpful to me as I proposed a relationship between CLL and POAMN (Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network) to provide training for folks interested in leadership in older adult ministry. She helped in making appropriate connections, in tweaking the proposal to meet the expectations of the CLL, and in her follow-up with others in our network. Sarah has been a great promoter of older adult ministry and has been active in our POAMN family. My instinct was that this relationship was an excellent "fit" and I was never disappointed! Giving thanks for her steadfast commitment, wishing her the best retirement has to offer!” ~Jan McGilliard

“Congratulations on your upcoming retirement! Thank you for all you have done, over many years, for Presbyterian Older Adult Ministry Network and for Lifelong Learning. I know you will thoroughly enjoy retirement and I hope you will continue your membership in POAMN.”

~Linda Rauenbuehler

“Sarah, I regret we’ve failed utterly in getting you to stay another five years at the Center for Lifelong Learning. Our loss, but we celebrate your well-deserved retirement. You have had an amazing tenure at Columbia seminary. You’ve helped make the Center for Lifelong Learning a nationally-recognized center, exemplifying what a “learning organization” looks like for participants and staff. You’ve mentored many in their ministry calling and have made them better persons and more effective ministers. On a personal note, you have provided one of the most satisfying and rewarding professional working relationships I’ve had. It has been a pleasure working with you. All the best on your second journey. May it be all you hope. Stay in touch.”

~Israel Galindo, Associate Dean for Lifelong Learning and Director of Online Education

“Sarah is a skilled professional, colleague, and leader. I’ve learned so much from her. She exudes a rare passion for learning and a heightened sense of care for others. I’m grateful to say I can count on Sarah's support and guidance as I carve my own path of lifelong learning. Sarah, I pray your days are filled with peace and joy as you continue onward.”

~Chassidy Goggins, Lifelong Learning Media and Marketing Coordinator