

Mary Elizabeth Maczka
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SUMMARY

Experienced traveler and effective researcher exploring the intersection of art history, archeology, and religious studies. Effective communicator and community builder committed to bridging Academia and the Church through lectures, sermons, and retreats.

EDUCATION

Vanderbilt Divinity School 2020-2023
Master of Theological Studies Degree
Certificate in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality
Certificate in Religion, Arts, and Contemporary Culture

Frederick Buechner Prize for the Master of Theological Studies thesis May 2023

J.D. Owen Prize for Accomplishments in New Testament Studies May 2023

VDS Imagination Grant recipient May 2022
Two months of independent research in France, Spain, England, Italy, Egypt, and Turkey.

Davidson College 1981-1985
B.A. Honors Graduate: Cultural Studies in Developing Countries

Thomas J. Watson Fellow 1985-1986
Nationally competitive fellowship for one year of independent study and travel in India, Nepal, Thailand, and China. Studied women's religious communities and local community development.

PRESENTATIONS AND EXHIBITS

Society of Biblical Literature Paper Presenter November 2024
"The Suppression of the Anointing of Jesus's Head in Church-Commissioned Art and Liturgy," The Bible and Visual Art Section.
"Mary Magdalene as *Orante*: A Study of Three Sarcophagi in the Languedoc Region," Archeology of Religion in the Roman World Section.

"Reclaim Mary Magdalene Retreat: Embodied Awareness of the Divine Feminine"
Kirkridge Retreat Center, Bangor, PA February 2025
St. James Episcopal Church, Black Mountain, NC February 2024
Circle of Mercy, Asheville, NC August 2023
Glendale Baptist Church, Nashville, TN July 2023

Sunday School Series, Four consecutive lectures on research and art exhibit. Oct.-Nov. 2023
First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN

“The Anointer and the Anointed,” Guest Sermon

Scarritt Bennett Center, Nashville, TN
Jubilee Community, Asheville, NC
Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN

October 2023
August 2023
March 2023

“Reclaim Mary Magdalene,” Curated Art Exhibit

Scarritt Bennett Center, Nashville, TN
Vanderbilt Divinity School Library, Nashville, TN

September- July 2025
March – September 2023

“Reclaiming Our Roots,” Online International Mary Magdalene Conference

Presentation on 2022 Research Trip
Hosted by Mythica Foundation, Geronimo, CA

February 2023

EXPERIENCE

Scarritt Bennett Center

Nashville, TN

2023 – Current

- Providing Radical Hospitality to individuals and guests at historic retreat center

Chief Executive Officer

YWCA Asheville and WNC

2012-2019

- Promoted YWCA’s mission of Eliminating Racism and Empowering Women through effective advocacy and increased community partnerships.
- Restructured programs and grew budget to \$3.8 million despite significant budget cuts from the NC State Legislature.
- Researched and introduced a new fundraising model, which increased individual gifts by over 300%.
- Effective advocate for racial justice, early childhood education, and access to health care. Strategic gains included the passage of new Use of Force Policies for the Asheville Police Department and a \$3.6 million trust fund for Early Childhood Development.

Senior Program Officer

Community Foundation of WNC (CFWNC)

2007-2012

- Promoted women’s collective giving and advocacy for the Women for Women Giving Circle, granting over \$250,000 annually to regional nonprofits.

Development and Annual Campaign Officer

Pisgah Legal Services (PLS)

2004-2007

- Wrote and reported on over \$1.2 million in grant funds to local, state, and national foundations and government funding sources.
- Increased Annual Campaign by 30% through increasing volunteer involvement and facilitating a successful attorney phone campaign.

Capital Campaign Co-Chair

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

2002-2004

- Successfully led the congregation through a \$1.1 million capital campaign that exceeded consultants’ projections by 57%.

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1993-2000

Executive Director

Affordable Housing Coalition of Asheville and Buncombe County (AHC)

- Led a 12-agency nonprofit coalition recognized for effective collaborations, direct service programs, and advocacy to address critical housing needs.
- Managed development of the nationally recognized Interlace Program for women and children fleeing domestic violence.
- Facilitated partnership between AHC, the Chamber of Commerce, the Home Builders Association, the Mortgage Bankers Association, and the City of Asheville to establish the City of Asheville's Housing Trust Fund in 2000. Thousands of housing units have been built to benefit working low-income families in Asheville.

Director, Western North Carolina

1989-1993

Self-Help Credit Union

Developed a new WNC branch into a productive credit union serving the home loan and small business needs of women and people of color in 20 WNC counties.

- Branch consistently met or exceeded production goals for home loans, commercial loans, and deposits. Helped 70 families achieve or maintain homeownership through non-conventional loans.
- Assisted in renovating, fundraising, and leasing the Public Service Building, a historic 8-story office building in downtown Asheville.

Director of Administration and Volunteer Support Services

1986-1989

Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte

- Coordinated volunteer services for the 1987 Jimmy Carter Work Project which built 14 homes in five days for low-wealth families.

HONORS

Grace Lee Peace Award

2003

Warren Wilson College. Recognized for community leadership in peace and justice work.

NAACP President's Award

2000

Honored for leadership in establishing the NAACP Empowerment Resource Center, a collaboration of local non-profit agencies to address the needs of Asheville's Black, immigrant, and low-wealth communities.

William C. Friday Fellow, Wildacres Leadership Initiative

1995-1997

Chosen for the inaugural class of a Statewide Fellowship to improve human relations through intensive group study and personal reflection. Partnered and collaborated with statewide leaders representing the business, government, and nonprofit sectors across diverse religious, political, economic, and racial backgrounds.

COMMUNITY BOARDS AND SERVICE

- Vanderbilt Divinity School -Student Government Treasurer 2021-2022
- Racial Justice Coalition, Co-founder 2014-2019
- Health Equity Coalition, Founding member 2018-2019
- Childcare Coalition of WNC, Member 2017-2019
- Circle of Mercy, Cuba Mission Group Delegation 2008 and 2010
- Mayor's Task Force on Affordable Housing 2007-2009

- WNC Nonprofit Pathways, Advisory Board Member 2005-2007
- Living Wage Steering Committee of Asheville and Buncombe County 2005-2007
- NAACP Empowerment Resource Center, Board Member and Secretary 1999-2006
- NC Low Income Housing Coalition, Board Member and Public Policy Chair 1993-2000
- Community Reinvestment Association of NC, Board Member 1993-2000
- Vision for Asheville Buncombe, Board Member 1998-2000
- Homes for Asheville Buncombe Task Force, Member. 1999-2000
- Children First, Board Member 1998-2000
- Buncombe Emergency Assistance Coordinating Network (BEACON), Board Member 1990-1995
- Mountain Housing Opportunities, Board Member 1990-1992
- Affordable Housing Coalition, Founding Board Member and President 1991-1993
- Grove Arcade Public Market Foundation, Founding Board Member and President 1991-1993
- League of Women Voters, Voter Advocacy Chair 1990-1991
- Gandhi Peace Foundation and Lisle Fellowship, Co-leader Women's Delegation to India Jan. 1989