HONORARY DOCTOR of LAWS

SHARON DALOZ PARKS

It is the rare scholar who sees, explores, and helps others understand and respond to a defining issue of an era. For more than three decades, Dr. Sharon Daloz Parks has been that scholar, producing seminal works on young adulthood and leadership in our day. Parks has written exquisitely about the years of young adulthood as a time of seeking place and purpose in the world, of asking questions of faith, and of examining earlier beliefs and assumptions in the process of making formative life decisions. She has drawn on her own research and insights from developmental psychology, religion, theology, leadership, and ethics to examine the underlying developmental patterns of this unique period of life—when one is no longer an adolescent and yet not quite fully adult.

Dr. Parks is a graduate of Whitworth College where she later served on the faculty and staff and developed her early research in partnership with Gonzaga University. She holds an M.A. from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a doctorate from Harvard University, the Divinity School. She has held faculty and senior research positions at Harvard’s Schools of Divinity, Business, and Government. She also has taught at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology, and currently teaches in the Executive Leadership Program at Seattle University as well as in its School of Theology and Ministry.


Parks’ writings have become guiding texts to communities that surround students, communities that seek to help young adults foster life-long habits of reflection, rich imagination, and creative, critical thought. She has taught thousands of professionals, educators, community leaders, supervisors, and parents how to mentor young adults and to create communities where they are helped to grow through being held accountable for the quality of their participation and for their dreams.

A national speaker and consultant in the areas of leadership and ethics for corporate, non-profit, and other professional groups across sectors, Parks is especially experienced in business, higher education, and religion. Today she continues her groundbreaking work as Principal of Leadership for the New Commons and Senior Fellow at the Whidbey Institute in Clinton, Washington—an organization that for more than twenty years has brought together people to engage with the most serious issues of our time.

Whether helping young adults navigate the turning points of their lives or reminding leaders that their artistry is in walking the edge of familiar and emergent, Dr. Park’s clear and thoughtful voice bolsters the courage, creativity and moral commitment of people whose calling is the formation and flourishing of individuals and communities. In recognition of her more than three decades of distinguished scholarship and influential work with and on behalf of those people who are the future, it is with great pride that Gonzaga University confers on Sharon Daloz Parks the degree Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.