

From the time of its founding in Lexington, Georgia, in 1828, Columbia has been committed to training persons for leadership in the church of Jesus Christ. Throughout its history, Columbia has nurtured, and has been nurtured by, the Presbyterian Church in the South; this connection continues to be a cherished tradition. While Columbia now enjoys an outstanding national and international reputation, it also faithfully upholds its historic covenants with the Synods of Living Waters and South Atlantic.

In 1830, Columbia, South Carolina, became the first permanent location of the seminary. The school became popularly known as Columbia Theological Seminary, and the name was formally accepted in 1925.

The decade of the 1920's saw a shift in population throughout the Southeast. Atlanta was becoming a commercial and industrial center and growing rapidly in its cultural and educational opportunities. Between 1925 and 1930, President Richard T. Gillespie provided leadership that led to the development of the present facilities on a fifty-seven-acre tract in Decatur, Georgia.

Because the early years in Decatur were difficult, the future of the institution became uncertain. Columbia, however, experienced substantial growth under the leadership of Dr. J. McDowell Richards, who was elected president in 1932 and led the seminary for almost four decades. Following Dr. Richards' retirement in 1971, Dr. C. Benton Kline served five years as Columbia's president. In January 1976, Dr. J. Davison Philips assumed the presidency; he retired eleven years later. Dr. Douglas W. Oldenburg became the seminary's seventh president in January 1987. In August 2000, Dr. Laura S. Mendenhall began her service as Columbia's eighth president. She served nine years and was succeeded in July 2009, by Dr. Stephen A. Hayner, who had been a member of the faculty since 2003. As of July 2015, our new president is Dr. Leanne Van Dyk.

