As she made history as an African American woman scholar of religion, the Rev. Dr. Cannon also broke ground as a founder of Womanist theology. Novelist and poet Alice Walker is often acknowledged as the coiner of the term Womanism—Katie Cannon took this term and weaved it into her theological studies and teachings. Womanist examines the intersection of feminism, racial identity, and more; the Rev. Dr. Cannon applied a womanist approach to theology, and made history doing so.

In 2018, Cannon was honored at the PCUSA’s General Assembly, where she received the Excellence in Theological Education Award a few months before she passed. Cannon’s final success in her long legacy was the founding of the Center for Womanist Leadership at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, VA. Prior to this faculty position, she had worked at Temple University, Episcopal Divinity School, and Harvard Divinity School.

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The Presbyterian Historical Society, in collaboration with Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond and The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary (Columbia University Libraries), has digitized over 450 sermons, lectures, and writings of Cannon’s. The Rev. Dr. Katie Cannon’s memory and influence lives on, and the Katie Geneva Cannon Digital Collection, which exists in Pearl, PHS’s digital archive, is only one fragment of her legacy.