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Nate Tinner-Williams

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The Oblate Sisters of Providence, the nation's oldest operating Black Catholic religious order, have elected Sr. Marcia Hall as their new superior general, the 21st

in their 196-year history.

The order elected their new administration on April 24 in Baltimore, where they were founded in 1829 by Venerable Mary Lange and the Sulpician Fr. James Nicholas Joubert.

The new leadership team, which will serve a four-year term, includes Hall, assistant general Sr. Anthonia Ugwu, second councillor Sr. Bernarda Montenegro, third councillor Sr. Ricardo Maddox and fourth councillor Sr. Brenda Cherry.

Hall hails from Trenton, New Jersey, where she was raised Catholic by devout parents. She attended Catholic schools, including Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd in Trenton, where she was taught by the Oblate Sisters.

Hall felt a call to religious life during graduate school, but did not pursue the vocation until more than a decade later. She graduated from Bryn Mawr College and received a doctorate in sociology from the University of Michigan before serving as educator and administrator, including at Simmons College in Boston.

"I wasn't all those things when I first had the idea about being a sister. I was in graduate school, and I had an image, vision, of myself in an Oblate habit," Hall told NPR in 2008.

"I realized at some point that I wasn't happy doing the things I was doing. I didn't want to stay in academia, and I decided maybe I ought to check this out. And so I started visiting Baltimore and spending time with the sisters."

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After a time of discernment with the Oblates, she entered the community on her 42nd birthday in 1998, professing first vows in 2001 and final vows in 2006. She has since served as principal of the order's flagship school, St. Frances Academy in Baltimore; at the former St. Benedict the Moor School in Washington; as vocations director; motherhouse coordinator; and as a guide for pilgrimages related to Mother Lange, who is now on the path to sainthood.

Most recently, Hall served as second councillor for the Oblates, who continue to teach in schools and provide social services. As superior general, she succeeds Sr.

Rita Michelle Proctor, who was elected to lead the order in 2017.

In her nearly quarter century of ministry, Hall has served on the boards of St. Frances Academy and the National Religious Vocation Conference, and helped to produce a video project encouraging African American vocations in the Catholic Church. She has appeared in Ebony magazine, Crux, Global Sisters Report and "Matter of Fact with Soledad O'Brien."

In 2016, Hall was honored as a distinguished alumnus of her high school alma mater, Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart in Princeton, New Jersey.

Hall and the other members of the Oblates' new leadership team will be installed at a Mass on June 24, at 11:30 a.m. ET at the order's motherhouse, Our Lady of Mount Providence Convent in Baltimore.

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