The University of Michigan
BLACK CELEBRATORY
Viewbook

BLACK TREASURE,
POWERFUL BEYOND MEASURE
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Greetings: Rob Sellers ............................................................................................................ 2
Greetings: Martino Harmon ..................................................................................................... 3
Territorial Acknowledgement, National Anthem, Libations .................................................. 4
Master of Ceremony Introduction ......................................................................................... 5
The Black Celebratory Cornerstone Award ........................................................................... 6
2021 Faculty Cornerstone Award Recipient ......................................................................... 6
2021 Staff Cornerstone Award Recipient ............................................................................ 7
The Charles Moody and Lester Monts Lifetime Achievement Award .................................. 8
Moody/Monts Award Recipient #1 ....................................................................................... 10
Moody/Monts Award Recipient #2 ....................................................................................... 11
Black Celebratory Spoken Word Address .......................................................................... 12
Undergraduate Student Speaker Address .......................................................................... 13
Graduate Student Speaker Address ................................................................................... 14
Black Celebratory Keynote Address .................................................................................. 15
University of Michigan Black Alumni (UMBA) Address .................................................... 17
2021 Black Celebratory Planning Committee ................................................................... 18
2020 Doctoral ........................................................................................................................ 22
2020 Bachelor’s ..................................................................................................................... 24
2021 Doctoral ........................................................................................................................ 26
2021 Master’s ....................................................................................................................... 29
2021 Bachelor’s ..................................................................................................................... 44
Graduates Quotes ................................................................................................................ 75
Words of Encouragement from UM Faculty & Staff ............................................................ 79
Group Photo Memories ....................................................................................................... 84
Special Thanks to “Relive the Bar” ...................................................................................... 90
Acknowledgements, Special Thanks, Regents .................................................................... 91
Black Celebratory Mission and University of Michigan Statements .................................... 92
Greetings,

It is with great pleasure that we recognize the 28th annual Black Celebratory at the University of Michigan. This celebration is an opportunity for us to highlight the accomplishments of this year’s graduating class of African American students and the communities that have supported them.

The Black Celebratory began in 1993 to publicly recognize the distinctive contributions that graduating African American students have made to the University of Michigan.

As we honor this extraordinary graduating class, I am enthusiastic about the opportunities that await them. I am confident that they have all the skills, talent, drive, and commitment necessary to overcome whatever obstacles they may face and to make a real difference in the world. They have endured one of the most challenging times in memory both at the University and the broader society. Nonetheless, they have more than endured. They have overcome.

While we recognize this is an exciting time for our graduating students, it is also a bittersweet moment. It is a time where nostalgia is met with mixed emotions for what lies ahead. We often think of graduation as the conclusion of a long journey. However, it is important to remember that the Latin root for the word “commencement” means beginning. I am confident that the Class of 2021 is empowered with the skills and determination necessary to overcome any challenges that may await them.

Make no mistake, the Class of 2021 has made a difference during their time here. We are a better university for having them as students. The University of Michigan will always be their home, and they will always be welcome.

Please join me in congratulating the class of 2021 for their outstanding accomplishments.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Sellers
Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion
Chief Diversity Officer
Wolverines, congratulations on your graduation!

Wolverines, you never cease to amaze. You spent the past year striving for academic excellence in the middle of a pandemic that put life as we know it into lockdown — and you still came out of it with your head held high and a shiny new degree from the University of Michigan. That takes courage. That takes commitment. That takes the kind of grit and self-love and respect that will serve you well for the rest of your lives.

To be a Michigan graduate is not just to join the community of over 500,000 Michigan alumni spread around the globe — 500,000 friends who are ready to help welcome you into your next chapter. It is also to embrace the idea that the knowledge and experiences you have earned here are a gift to be used. Your talents, dreams, and aspirations, along with the book-learning and real world practicums that you have seized all along here on campus, are not meant to be hoarded, but shared.

Go out and do great things with what you have learned. Do them well, with integrity and joy in the honest work of it. Carry with you the sense of self-assurance that even a pandemic could not stop you from chasing your dreams. You have overcome sleepless nights of studying for finals, the sweaty-palms feeling of just before a thesis defense, and so many other challenges, big and small. Whatever the next chapter of your story brings, I know you can handle it, and make us still here in Ann Arbor so very proud.

In fact, we are already proud. Your friends, family, and classmates could not be prouder of your achievements. But I hope you know that the most important opinion in all of this is how you see yourself. Wolverines, be proud of yourselves. Recognize and celebrate you for all you have done. Have there been times of self-doubt and struggle for you? I am sure there have. After all, that is what it means to be human.

You are not alone. I have those moments, too — and I am the vice president for Student Life at "the greatest university in the world!" as the voice for Darth Vader (James Earl Jones) put it. Every single other Michigan alum has been through this before you, and as you cross this finish line and set your eyes on a new horizon, remember that they are excited for you to join them, and we the staff and faculty at the University of Michigan will always be here to support you, wherever you go.

And, wherever you go — Go Blue!

Congratulations again, Wolverines. We are so proud of you.

Martino Harmon
Martino Harmon, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Life
**Territorial Acknowledgement**

The University of Michigan was founded through the Treaty of Fort Meigs in 1817, when the Anishinaabeg - the Three Fires Confederacy of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi - along with their neighbors, the Seneca, Delaware, Shawnee, and Wyandot nations ceded portions of their land so that their children could be educated.

Through these words of acknowledgement, their ancestral, traditional, and contemporary ties to this land and the founding of the University are renewed and reaffirmed.

**Black National Anthem**

“LIFT EVERY VOICE & SING”
Lyric by James Weldon Johnson
*Sung by Jack Williams III, Class of 2021, School of Music, Theatre and Dance*

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise,
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of faith
that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope
That the present has brought us.
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

**Libations Ritual**

By Elizabeth James
Program Associate, Department of Afro-American and African Studies

The libations ritual is the custom of pouring a liquid, oftentimes a locally brewed wine, as a religious event that reunifies and harmonizes the past, the present and the future. In human terms, this embodies the Creator, the ancestral spirits and those currently present. This age-old tradition is practiced throughout Africa and the Diaspora.
2021 Black Celebratory Master of Ceremony
Dr. Harold Waters

Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, Dr. Harold Waters began his career at the University of Michigan as a Summer Bridge student back in 1991. After completing his Bachelor’s of Art degree in Psychology and English, Dr. Waters went on to get his Master’s of Art degree in Counseling Education and worked for several years as a teacher, Assistant Principal, and Principal in the Detroit Public School System.

He also worked as a high school guidance counselor and NCAA coordinator for a public school district in Georgia while working on his Doctor of Philosophy degree. Dr. Waters has presented at several national conferences and written articles on the political process theory and the constitutionality of ballot initiatives designed to end race-based affirmative action programs in higher education.

Dr. Waters worked for the University of Michigan from 2012-2019 as an academic advisor and then the Director of the Comprehensive Studies Program. Since 2019, Dr. Waters has worked as the Executive Director of Academic Advising and Student Services for the Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Science and Adjunct Professor for the Rossier School of Education in the Educational Counseling Program at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, CA.
Founded in 1999, the Cornerstone Award is given annually to a member of the University of Michigan faculty and staff. The award recognizes the unique contributions and assistance that these individuals have given to enhance the academic and social progress of African American students at the University of Michigan. This year’s Faculty Cornerstone Award recipient is Dr. Ebbin Dotson, Assistant Professor for the School of Public Health. The Staff Cornerstone Award recipient for this year is Andarius Taylor, Academic Advisor for the Comprehensive Studies Program. Congratulations!
Dr. Ebbin Dotson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Management and Policy (HMP), the Faculty Director for the UM Summer Enrichment Program (UMSEP), and the Director for the Health Equity Leadership Pipeline Collaborative (The Collaborative) at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Dr. Dotson’s research topics include organizational theory and behavior, health equity, leadership competencies, health professions pipelines, workforce diversity, predictive assessment, health literacy, and community health.

Dr. Dotson teaches HMP courses in organizational behavior, leadership, and health equity management and serves as the student case competition faculty director and faculty liaison to the HMP Alumni Board. Dr. Dotson’s role in SPH is to support recruitment and retention pipeline program initiatives and advise the student organization Public Health Student of African Descent (PHSAD).

Before joining UM SPH, Dr. Dotson served as the Assistant Dean of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and an Assistant Professor in Community Health Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health. Dr. Dotson received his Ph.D. in Health Services and Policy Analysis from the University of California at Berkeley School of Public Health. He earned a Masters of Health Services Administration degree and a Bachelors of Science degree in Organizational Studies from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He was also an administrative fellow at Michigan Medicine. Dr. Dotson serves on the University of Michigan SPH Health Management and Policy Program Alumni board. Several of his community service efforts are focused on mentoring youth, especially young men.

“We look up to Dr. Dotson! He served as a kindhearted mentor and advisor to us during our time at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. From working with students on case competitions, to being available to complete recommendations for students during internship and job searches, he always makes time for those within our community. We appreciate his support and will continue to value his advice over the years.”

-Kyra Freeman, Master, School of Public Health, Health Management and Policy, Class of 2021

-John Rhodes, Master, School of Public Health, Health Services Administration, Class of 2021

-Yonathan Tessema, Master, School of Public Health, Health Management and Policy, Class of 2021
**2021 Staff Cornerstone Award**
Andarius Taylor, Academic Advisor, *Comprehensive Studies Program*

Andarius Taylor (A.T.) is a proud native of Saginaw, MI. He was born and raised in a single-parent household and the oldest of 6 children. The core of his identity is a spiritual relationship with God that was sewn into his early life and has impacted his career. After high school, Andarius only had faith that he would go to college, as he never had the pre-college experience. His dream school was the University of Michigan, but he was too intimidated to apply (imposter syndrome big time) and could not pay the application fee. During the summer of 2005, he attended the Academic Career Empowerment program at Central Michigan University. He spent several weeks taking classes, becoming acquainted with the campus and gaining valuable experiences. This experience lead him to become an active leader in the student body and the first point of contact for many Black undergraduates as they entered campus.

With his Bachelors of Science degree in Interpersonal Communication and Masters degree in Educational Leadership, he has been able to make a remarkable impression in the lives of countless students. After graduate school, A.T. became the Assistant Director in the Office of Multicultural Services at Saginaw Valley State University. After demonstrating excellence and an unmatched impact on students, he became one of the Assistant Directors in the Academic Advancement Center where he created the role Coordinator of Black, Hispanic and Multicultural Student Initiatives. Assuring the support, advocacy and success of Black students has always been and will always be one of the top priorities of his career. Every student interaction is highly valued and has been a distinct feature in his advising and leadership style from the beginning. As an esteemed advisor and asset in the Comprehensive Studies Program, A.T. has had the opportunity to impact Wolverines from all over the world.

One of his most treasured goals is to never be out of reach from a student in need, especially Black or underrepresented. No matter how far he goes in life and his career, his humble walk with Christ and desire to please God keeps him sound and centered. It is also the reason behind why his service to scholars, colleagues and people from all walks of life is so intentional.

“Andarius is a rare and extraordinary leader and has been a steadfast pillar of wisdom and support. He cares for students, with a level of authenticity second-to-none. Andarius routinely makes time to send encouraging and uplifting messages out to his cohort. A.T is an excellent advisor because he's not only concerned about his students' academic performance, but he also shows great interest in the social and mental well-being of students. In troubled times, we can always run to A.T. His impact on the lives of so many students, especially among the UM African American community is insurmountable.”

- Jaylen Ausley, Bachelor, College of LSA, Psychology, Class of 2021
- Quantae Carr, Bachelor, College of LSA, Sociology, Class of 2021
- Kai Dotson, Bachelor, College of LSA, Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience, Class of 2021
- Franchion Jefferson, Bachelor, College of LSA, Sociology and Social Work, Class of 2021
- Maya Lyght, Bachelor, College of LSA, Sociology, Class of 2021
- Carlina Toombs, Bachelor, College of LSA, Communication and Media, Class of 2021
- Mia Wilson, Bachelor, College of LSA, Communication and Media, Crime and Justice, Class of 2021
The Black Celebratory inaugurated the Charles Moody and Lester Monts Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019. This award is named in honor of Dr. Charles Moody, who served as the first Vice Provost for Minority Affairs from 1987 - 1993, and Dr. Lester Monts, Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs from 1994 to 2014. Both Dr. Moody and Dr. Monts were academic giants, engaging in excellence through teaching and research in addition to their administrative roles.

This year, two of the Moody/Monts Lifetime Achievement Awards are presented posthumously in memory of James S. Jackson and J. Frank Yates for their commitment to outstanding research, academic excellence, and student success at the University. It is a great pleasure to honor the legacies and the remarkable careers of these two outstanding leaders.

The third recipient of the Moody/Monts Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to Monique Washington to recognize forty years of commitment to quality student services for undergraduate and graduate students.
2021 Recipient of the Moody/Monts Lifetime Achievement Award

James S. Jackson, Ph.D.

Daniel Katz Distinguished University Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology
Research Professor Emeritus, Research Center for Group Dynamics, Institute for Social Research
Director, Institute for Social Research (IGR)
(1971-2020)

Dr. James S. Jackson was the Daniel Katz Distinguished University
Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Research Professor Emeritus,
Research Center for Group Dynamics in the Institute for Social Research.

For many, he was the face of ISR for an era, directing the institute from
2005-15. Since beginning his career at U-M in 1971, Jackson was a highly
recognized voice in his field and beyond. His leadership roles began early in
his career, including serving as chair of the National Association of Black
Psychologists in 1972-73, serving on National Institutes of Health review
boards in the 1970s, and serving on the National Academy of Sciences
Committee on Aging from 1978-82. James combined these academic service
positions with a commitment to local community activities, advising groups such as the Maxey Boys Training
School, the Highland Park School District, and the Metro Youth Program.

Born in 1944, Jackson, a proud native of Inkster, Michigan, was the first in his family to go to college and had
an illustrious career making important contributions to research and teaching. His research efforts include
carrying out a number of national and international surveys of black populations and several studies of Racism
and Xenophobia in Europe. His teaching centers on the intersection of social and biological factors in physical
and mental health, racial and ethnic group influences and discrimination and racism in an international context.

Dr. James Jackson became known for his studies of race relations and disparities in minority health. His
pioneering National Survey of Black Americans, begun in 1977, has generated a wide range of influential
research. The Program for Research on Black Americans, which he founded in 1976, has been an important
center for research and training, producing a leading group of scholars.

Jackson’s contributions have earned him numerous distinctions, including election to the National Academy of
Medicine, National Academy of Sciences, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Jackson’s
leadership roles spanned the social sciences, health, medicine and science. One of the most notable is his
appointment by President Barack Obama to the National Science Foundation’s National Science Board, which
advises Congress and the president on national science and engineering policy.

He has served on numerous advisory committees in the National Institutes of Health and received many awards
recognitions including the University of Michigan’s Inaugural Distinguished Diversity Scholar Career Award,
an award that now bears his name: The James S. Jackson Distinguished Career Award for Diversity Scholar-
ship. In spite of his busy schedule, Dr. Jackson served as the Master of Ceremony for the Black Celebratory for
many years. The university is grateful to Dr. Jackson for his enormous service.
2021 Recipient of the Moody/Monts Lifetime Achievement Award

J. Frank Yates, Ph.D.
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor Emeritus of Psychology
Professor Emeritus of Business Administration, Michigan Ross
(1969-2020)

In 1969 Professor J. Frank Yates joined the University of Michigan faculty as a lecturer, was promoted to assistant professor in 1971 after receiving his PhD from the university, and spent his entire academic career in Ann Arbor. Upon retiring in May 2020, he was the Arthur F. Thurnau Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Professor Emeritus of Business Administration at Michigan Ross.

Serving more than 50 years on the university’s faculty, Professor Yates’ contributions were immeasurable. His groundbreaking research defined the field of judgment and decision-making. Throughout his career he was recognized with numerous awards and honors, including election to the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

As the author of over 100 publications and numerous books, Professor Yates advanced our understanding of real-world decisions in business, in healthcare, and across cultures. Beyond his scholarship, he was widely recognized for his teaching excellence in the classroom and as an outstanding and generous mentor who fostered the successful careers of many students.

Professor Yates was also a visionary and unparalleled advocate for advancing diversity in higher education. In the late 1960s, he was instrumental in forming what is perhaps the longest-standing association for Black graduate students in psychology, the U-M Black Students in Psychology Association. Then, as a graduate student in 1970, he envisioned a service to improve Black students’ academic success, which ultimately became the Comprehensive Studies Program, and a Black studies center, which became the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies at the U-M.

In 2005 he founded and directed Michigan Ross’ Preparation Initiative, a thriving learning community designed to foster the excellence and success of undergraduate business students from economically distressed backgrounds or from racial or ethnic groups that historically have been underrepresented in business leadership.

In 2016 the Psychonomic Society announced a new award named after Professor Yates: The Inaugural J. Frank Yates Student Travel Award-- supporting diversity & inclusion in cognitive science by providing graduate students from underrepresented groups with cash awards. In recognition of these contributions, Professor Yates received the Harold R. Johnson Diversity Service Award in 2019. The university is indebted to Dr. Yates contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion. May his legacy continue to impact students for many generations to come.
2021 Recipient of the Moody/Monts Lifetime Achievement Award

Monique Washington
Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions
Assistant Director of University Housing, Residence Education
Director of Admissions and Academic Records and Dissertations, Rackham Graduate School Administration (1979-2020)

During Monique Washington’s 40 years of service, she served in academic affairs and student life leadership roles. Her commitment to a quality student experience from recruitment, admissions, enrollment to graduation impacted undergraduate and graduate students, including non-degree and non-traditional students. The experience as a Rackham graduate student (Urban Planning), shaped how she served in the roles of Associate Director of Undergraduate Admissions, Assistant Director of University Housing (Residence Education) and Director of Admissions and Academic Records and Dissertations (Rackham Graduate School Administration). Monique’s guiding principle, ‘To whom much is given, much is expected’ (Bible verse Luke 12:48) influenced her advocacy for services, policies and procedures that aligned with the evolving student needs and University goals and priorities.

Monique’s primary leadership roles included administration of processes and policies, human resource and budget management and student services. Using a student-centered approach, collaborative efforts with many offices including Dean of Students, English Language Institute, International Center, Information Technology, Provost, Registrar, Undergraduate and Professional School Admissions, University and Development Events resulted in responsive service to students. She also collaborated with businesses that support higher education student administration.

Monique also served on campus committees including Academic Services Board (Chair), Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management Search, Information Technology Student Administration Advisory, Michigan League Board of Directors, Michigan Union Advisory, Undergraduate Admissions Advisory, University of Michigan Dearborn and Flint Rackham Administrative Transition Task Force and University of Michigan Diversity Blueprints Task Force (Co-chair Graduate Student Recruitment, Retention and Pipeline subcommittee).

Recognition for significant contributions to the UM community were presented by Human Resources (UM Workplace), President’s Office (Diversity Blueprints Report), Provost Office (Academic Services) and Women of Color Task Force (leadership). Monique left a legacy of servant leadership, collaboration, continuous improvement strategy and mentoring.

Presently, Monique and her husband, Darrell Washington, reside in Ann Arbor. She is an active member of several non-profit organizations serving the community and she provides mentoring to youth and college students. Congratulations, Monique. Your achievements are an inspiration to inspiring future higher education administrators and community servants.
Black Treasure /blak 'treZHər/: The most opulent embodiment of excellence in existence, which has historically belonged to descendants of Mother Africa, a race of people deemed the blueprint for every aspect of life.

Such treasure is powerful beyond measure; untarnished, ubiquitous, and highly-coveted. Black Treasure can only be harnessed by those who take great pride in their Blackness. We require that the brilliance, the innovation, and the joy Black people have brought the world to be acknowledged. From music, movement, academics, and activism, we have made our nation what it is today. Complex systems have been built on the foundation of our strong backs and our radiant geniuses and complex barriers, have been built to restrain us from living out our majesty as heirs to all the earth has to offer.

But like a phoenix from the ashes, we have victoriously overcome what was designed to overpower us. As we move beyond our present place, we will part from one another physically, but remain forever spiritually connected; encouraged to take pride in our existence and experiences, unyielding to anyone who says differently. The world tells us in so many ways that we are not welcome here, but that fuels our fire to change that narrative. Black people span the entire world, shifting space and shaping time with our mere presence: without us, where would humanity be? The power we possess is infinite, and we hold it in our very being. We are not a treasure that needs to be found, but one that is ever-present - individually and collectively - powerful beyond measure.
20 days
This is the number of days I had been on the University of Michigan’s campus before attending my first protest
Having one's identity targeted before even understanding the meaning of Leaders and Best A detail of my experience as a Wolverine
Of learning to be a voice, a ripple, in calm and rampant seas

As Black people on this campus, we entered with a unique spark
Quite interestingly enough, to be ignited never required it to be dark
We held a peculiar a voice, a flame, which burns even when the world assumes that everything is okay A voice, a flame, which is critical even when injustice is not seen clearly in the day A voice, a flame, which never burns out, our spark never dims only to intensify and run wild, sometimes small but never mild
We entered this place with a unique spark

But we have been tried
There were moments when some of us questioned if we would make it here
There were moments when some of us questioned how we would survive here Walking with our heads held high, while simultaneously wondering how we would get by We move forward, with heavy loads on our sides
Yes our sides because when so much has been placed on our backs we begin to carry elsewhere Black people, we carry, we carry, while our never dimming spark allows us to still make strides How to do you even begin to celebrate a class so strong, yet so compassionate, delicate but consistently passionate
Our success and growth is no accident
Because we were born with a peculiar richness

You see, there is a treasure which adds to our uniqueness
Black Treasure
Imagine an underground cavern
Filled with the rarest, richest, the most pristine
Home to creators
The treasure which each of you has displayed in uncountable ways
Our time here as a creators, game changers, each and every day

20 days
A reminder that we have time but it is quick to be taken
We have worked and tried, we’ve persisted
We have learned
Not just how to challenge the present and enrich the future
But grip the past, create new histories, leave unique marks

Our marks
Black Umich, we have made our mark

The words of Maya Angelou And Still I Rise, well we have risen even when we were ready to fall We have risen, even when we had to crawl
Because were born with Black Treasure
Because we were born with a spark
A spark which the world needs and will never dim
Our spark will never dim

-Jolyna Chiangong
Greetings distinguished guests, administrators, staff, faculty, friends, parents, and everybody else who may be joining us from around the world today. Then, of course, I must recognize and say, Congratulations to the Graduating Black Students of The University of Michigan!

It is truly an honor to be here in this space (whether this celebratory event ended up being virtual or in-person), and I could not feel any prouder of us than I am right now. This is all because today is a day of celebrating our many accomplishments, recognizing our worth, valuing our collective and personal contributions to this institution, and laughing or crying as we reflect on all the experiences that we have had here. There may have been missed hours of sleep cramming for exams or assignments after spending countless hours at either Tina Tuesday or Thirsty Thursday (if not both); or working at places around campus where you hoped they would allow you to study in-between “working”. Then, there was catching up with friends and running into someone in the back section of the original Student Union before renovations. (You know, where the air conditioner or electric plugs would work sometimes or the heat would be on full blast in the winter).

On a serious note, these years of memories may have gone by fast for some of you, and for others, it may have seemed like they went on forever. Regardless, you can sit back, relax, and live in this moment – a moment filled with this great accomplishment of completing your undergraduate studies at the University of Michigan. I want to especially shout out the First Gen students on becoming the first in their families to embark on this higher education journey- you and your families should be very proud!

No matter if you are a Winter 2020 graduate (like I was) or a Spring 2021 graduate, we are about to fully embark on our dreams, passions, and wonderful opportunities to make a difference in this world. Even if you are still trying to figure out what those dreams are or what your calling is in life - you are on a great trajectory because of your own accomplishments at this point and time! Now, let’s be real and recognize the challenges that are in our future. We are still living in a global pandemic that has disproportionately affected the black community. Also, as Black UMICH, we have had continuous conversations surrounding the #BBUM movements, thanks to the Black Student Union, members of the Divine 9, and other countless black student organizations. We still recognize that we must work harder than most because of our identities and who we are proud to be, UNAPOLOGETICALLY BLACK.

We are a part of an exceptional class that has already persevered through so much and not being afraid of some “good trouble”. On campus, we as a community have faced hate speech, racial intimidation, and so many other personal experiences that we simply cannot forget occurred during our time here. Don’t forget how we were blocking the roads near the Chem Building so busses could not go past - to make our voices heard on the changes that need to be implemented. These changes were needed for us to feel more included as black students. I’m sure many of you can recall when members of our class rose up at the Regent’s meetings, President’s house, and other places on campus demanding administration to act on racial injustices. These are just a few of the many things we have experienced here, but we are resilient and powerful as we advocate for ourselves.

Folks tend to call us Gen-Zers - “the generation not to be played with”. I concur, because we will have representation of melanin in every field, domestic and international (period). We are going to continue to break any glass ceiling as our ancestors have always done (and what we have seen play out for years.) In fact, this is what has gotten me so far in my own journey in politics, law, and public policy. My journey has been filled with continuous setbacks, obstacles, and testing of my faith or character – but this did not stop me from going on to further my career and education. I am headed to Georgetown University this Fall to study public policy and to begin my legal education. This is all the while I stand tall because of the shoulders of my many ancestors.

Black Treasures, now is the time for you to take that power that you possess and do something great. Remember, we are a graduating class full of leaders and go-getters with the determination, the drive, and the dynamics, to face adversity head-on. We were, and still are, powerful beyond measure - graduating Black Wolverines who will forever “Go Blue!”
Greetings, family, friends, faculty, staff, alumni, and the memorable class of 2021. My name is Raquel Ellis hailing from San Francisco California. It is with great honor that I am granted this opportunity, to serve as the Graduate Student Speaker for this year’s Black Celebratory Virtual Celebration. As we take this time to use this platform to celebrate black excellence, I want you to take this time to acknowledge your blackness, embrace your originality, your uniqueness, your outright gift on what makes you black treasure. Being powerful beyond measures rising through all trials and tribulations that were set before you. Please take this time to give yourself a pat on the back. You are here at this very moment to solidify your success.

Although this past year is not what most of us were expecting, as we continued our education this milestone in your life is definitely worth celebrating regardless of circumstances. Last year starting my first fall semester as a graduate student at the University of Michigan was not what I expected. In all honesty, I had some underlying hope deep down that life would go back to normal. I hoped for new and exciting opportunities to support and help expound my social work career and have the chance to connect in-person and network with like-minded individuals. As most of us may have wished for the full university experience, it just wasn’t ideal. So I had a long and rough battle with myself about deferring a year away from school. For this past year, I have been challenged to work beyond measures, to never limit my abilities, and to believe in the power I hold as a Black Woman with strength and perseverance. Yes, I am graduating from zoom university but I am never limited to new opportunities because of this. Establishing a strong connection to the university has increased my sense of self-identity and quality of life. Here I stand today proud to say that I am graduating from the number 1 school of social work! I have become resilient to all obstacles that were set before me, opposed all naySayers, and combat it ALL with the grace of God’s power.

The remarkable late Chadwick Boseman once stated “I don’t know what your future is, but if you’re willing to take the harder way, the more complicated one, the one with more failures at first than successes...then you will not regret it”. He added, “Purpose is the essential element of you. It is the reason you are on the planet at this particular time in history. Your very existence is wrapped up in the things you are here to fulfill.” As you embark into the work world please always remember success does not come without hardships and hardships help build good character. Everyone’s journey and story are different but we are all here together to celebrate your accomplishments. As we Lift every voice and sing we are Black Treasure, and Powerful Beyond Measures. Congratulations class of 2021 you did it! And remember GO BLUE!
Hello, University of Michigan Graduates!

It’s a privilege and honor to be able to speak to you today and be a part of the 28th Annual Black Celebratory Graduation. My name is Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence, and I serve as the United States Representative for Michigan’s 14th Congressional District, which includes the City of Detroit. The University of Michigan is an education powerhouse in our great state and around the country and its success and reputation is because of the dedication and commitment of your academic faculty, administrators, and everyone else who keeps this campus running smoothly.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the parents, family members, loved ones, mentors and friends for being on this journey for you. While I know this isn’t the celebration you envisioned at the end of your undergraduate or graduate career, I want you to really enjoy this moment. You’ve earned it and you deserve to feel the joy and accomplishment from working hard toward your degree. If there’s one thing this pandemic has brought out in us, is that despite the adversity and challenges we face, we are resilient, determined, and courageous.

Now more than ever, you’ll need those traits as you take the next steps in your life. Not only do we celebrate you receiving your degree, but we celebrate Black excellence. We have young Black graduates who are heading out into the world trying to make it their own. For some of you, you are the first person in your family to graduate from college. That is not an easy feat and you should be so proud of this milestone. Know that you're inspiring your younger siblings, cousins, and even older family members to get their higher education. Every person has their own story, and they will be vastly different from the people you attended college with.

I grew up on the eastside of Detroit, graduated from Pershing High School, and attended Central Michigan University. After that, I spent nearly 30 years working my way up through the United States Postal Service. I felt like I could do more for my community and continue my public service serving on the Southfield Public School Board of Education. I then ran for mayor for the City of Southfield, and became the first African American and first woman mayor of the city. In 2014, I ran for the United States Congress and have been serving in the House for what is now my 4th term. I serve as the Co-Chair to the Democratic Women’s Caucus, 2nd Vice Chair to the Congressional Black Caucus, and Co-Chair of the Caucus on Black-Jewish Relations. I sit on the powerful Oversight Committee and Appropriations Committee, working tirelessly to bring back the funding that our communities need.
It’s always a privilege and responsibility to serve the American people, and I never lose sight of that. I’m reminded everyday that I’m the little Black girl who grew up on the eastside of Detroit who now walks the halls of Congress built by slaves. I wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for the people around me. No one goes through life alone. There will be plenty of times when we all need help and support along the way. I challenge you to make an impact on the world, and on a life, by supporting others, as someone supported you.

The last year has not been easy for Black Americans as we’re dealing with an unprecedented pandemic that disproportionately impacts our community while also facing racial injustice. I know that you’re fully aware of what’s happening in our country, and I know many of you want to make a difference, to change the status quo, and build a better world for yourself and for future generations.

Your celebration’s theme illustrates the influence you have: “Black Treasure, Powerful Beyond Measure”. We need you and your creativity, passion, and forward-thinking to address our country’s most pressing problems. You’re going out into the world with a world-class education. There will be bumps along the way, but you will preserve. Show those around you what Black excellence is all about, and never back down from a challenge. As my friend and former colleague, the late-Representative John Lewis said “Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”

Congratulations again on this incredible achievement and remember, no matter where you go in life, you’ll always be a wolverine!

Sincerely,

Congresswoman Brenda L. Lawrence
Michigan’s 14th Congressional District
Newest Michigan Wolverines,

Welcome to the family and congratulations! I’m Sherise Steele, chair of the UMBA and proud LSA/DAAS graduate. I walked across the state at Hill Auditorium in 1997 during the Black Celebratory; which an event held by the students for the students. As with most great ideas, someone has to keep them going. Thank you to OAMI for keeping our tradition alive!

The University of Michigan Black Alumni is celebrating our 45th year in 2021! We are the forever home of Black Wolverines across the country. We encourage you to join us by visiting our website at: www.umbagoblue.org

You’ve been watching enough videos so I’ll get to the point. Here are 3 things that I want you to keep in mind:

3. Organizations take you farther:
We all have great ideas and opinions but organizing is how our elders were able to make progress. Many organizations need your skills and newer ideas. Before being a founder, be a volunteer.

2. Keep current with your student loans and other debts:
It’s okay to make a minimum payment until you’re on your feet but don’t miss it. A 30 day late payment today, until a 9th grader graduates from Michigan.

1. Stay in touch with your classmates, staff, and faculty:
If you made genuine connections during your time in Ann Arbor, stay in touch! Be old fashioned, send holiday cards or birthday cards. Share your good news and your not-so-good news.

We look forward to growing with you and for you! What have we been doing since 1976? We’ve been expanding and changing. We support the alumni endowed MLK scholarship and the MLK LEAD scholarship. We host events in Texas, the DMV, ATL, Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles and NYC; where you gather, we help connect.

Congratulations and GO BLUE!

Sincerely,
Sherise Steele
UMBA Chair
Black Celebratory
Planning Committee Team

Elise Butler
Christopher Floyd
Alyssa Hall
Ashley Hayes

Kiante McKinley
KyJuanna Taylor
Danielle Williams
Jasmine Williams

Gregory O. Thomas
Black Celebratory Coordinator
Administrators, Faculty & Staff

Riana Elyse Anderson, Assistant Professor, School of Public Health
Naomi Andre, Associate Professor, DAAS, Residential College, Women's Studies
Nicole Banks, Interim Associate Dean of Students and Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life
Marushka Baoh, Assistant Director Area Coordinator, University Housing - Residence Education
Nadia Bazzy, Director, Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs
Benedicte Boisseron, Associate Chair & Professor, Department of Afroamerican and African Studies
Phillip Bowman, Professor of Education, School of Education
Ethriam Brammer, Assistant Dean, Rackham Graduate School
David Brown, Associate Vice President, Associate Dean & Associate Professor, Medical School
Sharon Burch, Assistant Director, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Jade Burns, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing
Dwaine Campbell, Assistant Director of Psychology Training, Counseling & Psychological Services
Julio Cardona, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Human Resources, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Intermittent Lecturer, Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education
Tabbye Chavous, Director, National Center for Institutional Diversity and Professor of Psychology & Education & Associate Vice-President for Research-Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts
Jacques Chestnut, Administrative Assistant, School of Information
Susan Collins, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost
Charles H.F. Davis III, Assistant Professor of Higher Education, School of Education
Kadija Deen, Pre-Law/Academic Advisor, SAA - LSA Advising
Ebbin Dotson, Assistant Professor, Health Management and Policy - School of Public Health
Abigail Eiler, Clinical Assistant Professor of Social Work, School of Social Work
Angela Espinosa-Gould, Administrative Assistant, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
RaShonda Flint, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education, LSA
Dwight Fontenot, Associate Director, Comprehensive Studies Program
Evelyn Galvan, EEO Diversity Representative Associate, Office of Institutional Equity
Hector Galvan, Program Coordinator & Success Coach, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Juana Gissendanner, Adjunct Clinical Lecturer in Dentistry, School of Dentistry
Anita Gonzalez, Dean for Faculty Affairs & Professor of Theatre and Drama, SMTD
Folake Graves, Masters Program Administrator, Medical School
Grant Grimard, Research Associate, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
April Gross, HR Business Manager, Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Brittany Hamilton-Reed, Hall Director, Residence Education
Krishna Han, Associate Director, Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs
Martino Harmon, Vice President for Student Life, Office of the Vice President for Student Life
Rebecca Hasson, Associate Professor, Kinesiology
Kendra Hearn, Clinical Associate Professor of Educational Studies and Director Academic Program, School of Education
Lumas Helaire, Senior Associate Director, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Adrienne Hill, Student Engagement Director, University of Michigan Black Alumni
Brenda Hill, Delta Sigma Theta Advisor, U-M Retiree
Meredith Hope, Research Fellow, LSA
Paul Horvath, Lecturer, Comprehensive Studies Program
Liese Hull, Academic Advisor/Counselor, Comprehensive Studies Program
Adan Hussain, First Generation Program Manager, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Kedra Ishop, Vice Provost, Enrollment Management
Elizabeth James, Program Associate, Department of Afroamerican and African Studies
Keith Jason, Coordinator of New Student Programming, Comprehensive Studies Program
Erika Johnson, Program Director & Success Coach, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Judy Johnston, Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Student Life, Office of VP Student Life
Janice Jones, Program Director & Success Coach, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Carole Lapidos, Program Manager & Success Coach, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Denise Lee, Lecturer II Mathematics, Comprehensive Studies Program Mathematics
Shylynn Lofton, Lecturer IV Mathematics, Comprehensive Studies Program
James Logan, Program Coordinator & Success Coach, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Brandon Lucas, Program Manager, Health Equity and Inclusion
De Bora Lucas-McIntosh, Administrative Coordinator, Housing Bureau for Seniors
Timothy Lynch, Vice President and General Counsel
Kellyn Mackerl-Cooper, Associate Director, Trotter Multicultural Center
Kyle Manley, Admissions Officer, Office of Undergraduate Admissions
Dwayne Manuel, Hall Director, Residence Education
Jacqueline S. Mattis, Professor, LSA Department of Psychology
Courtney Monroe, Advisor to Culturally-Based Fraternal Organizations and Community Liaison for Multicultural Engagement, Fraternity & Sorority Life
Mike Morland, Marketing and Communications Manager, Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Cari Neubrand, Multimedia Coordinator, Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Charles Ransom, Librarian, Library Research - Social Sciences, University Library
Leah Robinson, Professor, Kinesiology
Stephanie Rowley, Associate Vice President for Research & Professor of Psychology, LSA
Sheri Samaha Sr., Program Manager, Center for Educational Outreach
Erica Sanders, Director, Office of Undergraduate Admissions
Robert Sellers, Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion, Chief Diversity Officer, and the Charles D. Moody Collegiate Professor of Psychology and Education
Grace Sims, Hall Director, Residence Education
Brittany Smith, Senior Public Relations Officer, LSA Advancement
Alan Hernandez-Solis, Success Coach, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Deirdre Spencer, Librarian for History of Art, University Library
Sherise Steele, Chair, University of Michigan Black Alumni
Gloria Derr Taylor, Director, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Simone Himbeault Taylor, Interim Vice President for Student Life
Kyra Taylor, Academic Advisor, Newnan LSA Academic Advising Center
Gregory O. Thomas, Program Manager & Success Coach, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Monita Thompson, Co-Director, The Program on Intergroup Relations & Adjunct Lecturer in Curriculum Support
Rhonda Todd, Director of Academic Success, Office of Undergraduate Programs, Ross School of Business
Katrina Wade-Golden, Deputy Chief Diversity Officer, Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Katherine Weathers, LSA Scholarship Senior Manager, LSA Advancement
Felecia Webb, Program Evaluation Specialist, Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Chandani Wiersba, Program Coordinator & Success Coach, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
Veronica Wilkerson Johnson, Director, U-M Lansing Service Center
Deborah Willis, Assistant Director, Rackham Graduate School
Robin Wilson, Associate Professor, Dance
Wendy Woods, Associate Director, Michigan Community Scholars Program
David Wooten, Alfred L. Edwards Collegiate Professor, Ross School of Business
Magdalena J. Zaborowska, Professor, Afroamerican and American Studies
Chelsea Zhang, Research Associate, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
2020 Graduates
“Thank you Momma (the original Dr. Mathews) for being my light in some dark times. Thank you to my cohort (CPEP 2014!) for inspiring me at every step. With over 180 people present for my Zoom defense, I remember the multitude of villages that have brought me to this point in my life’s journey. You all have been God’s blessing to me in my journey to Dr. Mathews.”
Alexandria Nicole Bly
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts: Psychology

“Thank you for all the love and support you showed me before, during, and after my undergraduate career. You are all huge blessings from God sent to help me on my journey, and I appreciate each and every one of you <3”

Jaylen T. Bradley
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts: Political Science, Sociology, Law Justice and Social Change

“Thank you to who were part of my village who helped paved the way for me to succeed. Whether it was the long motivational talks, giving me my marching orders to take complete a task, or challenging me to explore new opportunities - these all molded me into who I am today.”

Lorna M. Brown
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts:
Organizational Studies, Minor: Sociology of Health and Medicine

"Thank you to my wonderful family and friends who encouraged me to pursue my interests and saw my potential to grow throughout my journey in undergrad. Without your support, I know that I would not have achieved some of the most important milestones in my life so far and because of you, I am ecstatic for my next path in life. Thank you and I love you all dearly <3”

Bria Lynn Bush
School of Public Health: Public Health

“I appreciate my family and the family I have gained through my undergraduate journey. Without the support of my parents, grandparents, siblings, and the faculty of the School of Public Health I wouldn’t have been able to achieve this accomplishment.”
Leandra L. Chapman
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biology

“Stay unapologetically Black and Go Blue!”

Camille Hollins
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; General Studies

“I would like to thank my family and friends for their love and support of my education. I am truly grateful of all their love”

Robert D. Parker-Mason
College of Engineering; Electrical Engineering
Arrice Chanel Bryant

Medical School, School of Public Health
Doctor of Allopathic Medicine, MD
Master’s in Public Health Management & Policy

“To my Bryant Family, thank you for always loving me. To my Howze Family, thank you for always praying for me. To my Detroit Family, thank you for making me proud of my roots. To my Yale & UofM Family, thank you for giving me the tools to reach my dreams. I’m so thankful for all of you! We made it! – Dr. Arrice Chanel Bryant”
Eleni G. Temeche

College of Engineering, Rackham Graduate School
Materials Science and Engineering

“I would like to thank my advisor, parents, family, and friends. This journey was only possible with their support. Congrats class of 2021!”
2021
Master's
Kalane A. Abbey
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

“It truly takes a village and the U of M community have proved this old adage to be true in so many ways for me. I am forever indebted.”

Lauren J. Abuouf
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

“I would like to thank my Mom and Dad and my brother who have supported me throughout my journey at business school. I am incredibly lucky to be able to follow in my brother’s footsteps and earn the MBA!”

Jacque Adams
School of Information; Health Informatics

Ejike Anusiem
School of Information, School of Public Health; Health Informatics

“Without sacrifice there can be no victory. Thank you to my fellow students and faculty members that have supported me unconditionally over the past two years. Be great today and never forget that the history books will always be waiting to write our names in them.”
Thank you to my wonderful network of Black people that have given me the strength, confidence, and courage to get my Master’s degree
Leon D. Barber  
School of Social Work; Community Based Initiative Scholar, Advance Standing, Macro Social Work

“Mother, for you, life has not been a Crystal stair. Although I can never repay you, I want you to know that I appreciate all you have done to get me to this point. I Love and admire you very much!”

Jazmyn N. Becker  
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

“Grateful for God who made a way for me to pursue an MBA, my family - especially my mother for the endless encouragement and reminding me who I am, and for my friends new and old who remind me each day to pursue love, brilliance, and loyalty.”

Sara Bemporad  
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Ryan Joel Bernard  
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration: Finance & Strategy
**MASTER’S**

Alyssa La’Dawn Brandon  
School of Education; Educational Leadership & Policy

“I am so thankful for my friends and family for always keeping me motivated and believing in me when I didn’t believe in myself. I couldn’t have made it here without you!”

Amir R. Carter  
School of Public Health; General Epidemiology

“Young you to the Torres, Carter, Galloza, Rivera, and Chaparro families for supporting me throughout my journey! Lastly, thank you to my parents and siblings for always believing in me. I love you all!”

Serena M. Day  
College of Engineering; Manufacturing

“I am so thankful for my friends and family for always keeping me motivated and believing in me when I didn’t believe in myself. I wouldn’t be here without you all!”

Esenam Dogoe  
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration
Amani Danielle Echols
School of Public Health; Health Management & Policy

“A BIG thank you to my family, friends (near and far), and SEP family in supporting me in this journey to becoming a double wolverine! Your support has greatly motivated my academic, professional, and personal growth.”

Raquel R. Ellis
School of Social Work: Interpersonal Practice in Integrated Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse

“Dear family, friends, and mentors, thank you for your contribution to my success, your knowledge will always remain in my heart. Many thanks for your support, guidance and encouragement.”

Kyra Freeman
School of Public Health; Health Management & Policy

“Thank you to my amazing family and friends who served as my support system over the last two years. Also special thanks to all of my faculty mentors who provided advice and assistance during my time at University of Michigan.”

Julian J. Goods
School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Music in Choral Conducting

“This journey would not be possible without the love and support of my family, especially my mother and grandmother. A special shoutout to my teachers Dr. Eugene Rogers, Prof. Mark Stover, Prof. Daniel Washington and so many more for all of your encouragement and teaching moments! Lastly, to my friends, thanks y’all for holding me up in one of the most challenging season of my life!”
Kenny Haastrup
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Economics

“Thank you to my CGSM Fam. Couldn’t have done it without you all!”

Jordan Elyse Hartgens
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Caleb O. Idiaghe
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Jade Ellen James-Gist
School of Public Health; Epidemiology

“So grateful for the community I found in my program! Couldn’t have made it without my people <3 The group! The group! ”
Mojisola Omolola Jimoh
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

“I wouldn’t be here today without the constant support of my large crew of friends, staff and faculty members. Thank you for believing in me when I couldn’t and reminding of my greatness when I couldn’t remember.”

Briana Alexis Jones
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

“Thank you to my BBSA Family, My CGSM Family and The Ladies of 102! <3”

Shardé Kiara Jones
Rackham Graduate School; Public Administration, Health Administration conc.

“First off, I would like to start by thanking God for this journey and this amazing accomplishment. Without Him, none of this would be possible. I would also like to thank my family and friends for always supporting me, motivating me and cheering me on. To MPA Director Kim Saks-McManaway, thank you so much for all of your help and kindness during this journey.”

Michelle L. King
School of Social Work; Master’s of Social Work

“I want to thank all my family, friends, and church family for supporting me through this journey. Your love and support is what pushed me through!!”
Line Kouecheu
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

“My immense gratitude towards my family and my friends at Ross! You have made the past two years memorable and I am excited about the future, with you in my tribe!”

Donald Akeem Lindsay
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business and Data Analytics

“Thank you God for making all of this possible. To my Wife for being my rock and showing me this pathway was possible. To my Mother, whose resilience taught me how to persevere in a world that oppressed us. My father, who is here in spirit.”

Christopher Bryan McClain
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy; Public Affairs

Sierra P. McCray
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

“My family and friends have been and continue to be an amazing support systems.”
MASTER’S

Marcus L. McKay
School of Public Health: Epidemiology; Graduate Certificate in Health Informatics

Kianté J. McKinley
School of Social Work: Social Work

Lauren Montgomery
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Alexandra Moore
School of Social Work;
Master’s of Social Work, Interpersonal Practice with Children & Youth in Families
Rachel Ngare
School of Information; Health Informatics

“Am grateful for my mother for always being the rock I need, and for my family for always believing in me.”

Sandrine Nkuranga
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Nadia Ogene
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Strategy

“Thank you to my fiance for constantly supporting my dreams. I'm so lucky that we are able to do life together.”
Kevin Ojo
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Adaora Okpa
School of Public Health: Epidemiology

Kene Onuorah
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration
“I would like to thanks the Ross Consortium family for all its support!”

Carly Marie Paris
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration
“Thank you to my parents, family, and friends for their unyielding support as I pursued my MBA. Thank you to my mentors for the invaluable advice as I paved my way through this journey. Thank you to my Ross community for the memories, the challenging conversations, and the learning.”
John Solomon Rhodes
School of Public Health; Health Services Administration

“I am thankful for my friends, family, and SEP family who supported me along this journey. I would not be where I am today without your support.”

Imani Juliana Rickerby
School of Public Health; Health Services Administration

Ezana Tadesse
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Yonathan Tekadu Tessema
School of Public Health; Public Health, Health Management and Policy

“I just want to thank all the sacrifices that my parents have made to help me get to where I am today. My parents have done nothing but be my backbone and guide me. To my friends who have been with me every step and for the support I thank you for keeping me on track.”
MASTER’S

Leslie Akua Asah Tetteh

Colin Veney
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Yamani Rikia Vinson
School of Public Health; Health Services Management

Maurice Watkins
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration
Alex Weaver
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Public Policy; Business Administration

Jacquelyn A. Wheeler
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Management

Russell Williams
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Alethea G. Young
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Executive Master’s of Business Administration

“Grateful to my family, friends, classmates and the entire Ross community for their love, grace, support and influence over these last 21 months. I have grown in many ways because of all these people. It’s been a great ride and I am forever thankful!”
2021 Bachelor’s
Leila Akan
School of Information; Information

“Thank you to the village who got me to where I am today! I will always be grateful for the amazing experiences that have shaped my growth on this campus.”

Lee H. Alexander
School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Musical Theatre; Minor: Performing Arts Management and Entrepreneurship

“I would like to thank my Family my Parents, Les and Veeda and my sister Tay for supporting me through my educational and artistic journey here at the University of Michigan. I would like to thank the entire faculty of the Department of Musical Theatre, for imbuing me with the wisdom and confidence I need to pursue a career in the arts.”

Erik L. Anderson
College of Engineering; Environmental Engineering

“I want to thank my mom and dad for always being my rock and loving me unconditionally. Thank you to my family and friends for all the love and support that kept me going. I appreciate each and every one of you. A special thanks to Dr. Cherie Dotson for always giving me guidance during my time here in Michigan.”

Sopuluchukwu Anidobu
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biology, Health & Society

“Daalu maka ịhụnanya na nkwado gi niile. Agaghị m anọ ebe m no ma o bughi unu niile. (Thank you for all your love and support. I wouldn’t be where I am without you all.)”
Selina Asamoah  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts;  

Jeremy Andrew Atuobi  
College of Engineering; BSE, Industrial & Operations Engineering

Jaylen J. Ausley  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology

Kimberly C. Austin-Baker  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology; Minor: English

“Special thanks to Judith Walker and disability services.  
This has been a long road, full of twists, turns and bumps, but you persevered so congratulations and celebrate yourselves and your accomplishments.”
Jose Miguel Angel Aviles-Elrod
School of Music, Theatre & Dance;
Acting; Minor: Community Action and Social Change

"I want to honor God who is the head of my life and has kept me through this journey. I can do all things through He who strengthens me. Thank you to my family and close friends who have supported me and encouraged me unconditionally, I love you all. Shout out to me for all of my hard work and faith in myself, I deserve the world and I'm coming for it all gas no breaks!"

Camryn L. Banks
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy;
Public Policy, Urban Environmental Justice conc.;
Minor: Community Action and Social Change

“Thank you Professor Jones for seeing me when no one else did. Thank you Professor Strongman for grounding so many things for me and introducing me to AAS 394. Thank you SPB for the best writing class I've taken at Michigan.”

Dierra Monae Barlow
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts;
Film, Televison, and Media;
Minors: Creative Writing; Afroamerican and African Studies

“Thank you Professor Jones for seeing me when no one else did. Thank you Professor Strongman for grounding so many things for me and introducing me to AAS 394. Thank you SPB for the best writing class I've taken at Michigan.”

Skylar Nicole Linnett Bartley
College of Engineering; Chemical Engineering
Bachelor’s

Mariah Christina Benford
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Sociology & Social Work

“To my friends and family who never let me give up, with high gratitude, thank you. Our journey through Umich was a unique one, BUT the challenges and trials didn’t stop us from achieving our goals. I’m grateful to have been able to share moments, from funny to teary-eyed with you all. I’m so proud to see what we’ve all been able to accomplish over the years, and I know that our futures are even brighter. This is it, we did it!”

Tyler Briana Bentley
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Political Science; Psychology

Autumn Black
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Jordyn JeNae Boggan
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Gender and Health Studies Pre-Ames Track

“To my family, friends, and loved ones, thank you for all of your unconditional love and support throughout these past four years of my life. I couldn’t have done this without it.”
BACHELOR’S

Charles Brown
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Communication and Media

Diamond Buchanan
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biology, Health, and Society
“To all of those that supported me, prayed for me, and pushed me further thank you. Congrats grads! Continue to soar, challenge norms, and inspire others.”

Jaylen D. Burch
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Elise M. Butler
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Communication and Media

“First, all glory goes to God for allowing me to make it this far. Thank you to my amazing family and friends who have supported me throughout this college journey. I am forever grateful for my experience here at Michigan and for the people I have met along the way that have made this experience worth while. I am especially thankful for the Black community for providing a greater sense of belonging and making me feel more at home.”
Chase Laurence Camp  
**College of Literature, Science, and the Arts:** Economics  
“"I’m thankful for everyone that has helped me make it this far, I could not have done this alone!’”

Belinda Cargile  
**College of Engineering:** Biomedical Engineering

Quantae Carr  
**College of Literature, Science, and the Arts:** Sociology

Jolyna Lum Chiangong  
**College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biology, Health, and Society:** Gender and Health  
“"Family, thank you for supporting me, believing in me, and loving me. These 4 years have been challenging but you have always been behind each decision which I have made and reminded me of my greatness, even when it was hard to see. I love you forever and always.”
Semia Monet Clay
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts: International Studies: Political Economy and Development

“I would like to thank my family for supporting me, particularly my Aunt Donna, without whom my college experience would not have been the same. I’d also like to thank my advisors, those few instructors I’ve bonded with, my lifelong friends, and the University for all of the support and encouragement I’ve received throughout my time here.”

Michele Aleczandria Cochran
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts: Communication

“I dedicate my accomplishment to my grandmother, Shirley Feaster, may she rest in peace. I would like to thank my mother, Linda, and my father, Michael for their continued love and support throughout this entire journey. I also want to thank and show love to my grandparents, my best friends Shanay and Ronesha, my pastor, and my boyfriend Ron, for all of their encouragement along the way! I love you all!”

Kadasjah M. Cochran
School of Kinesiology: Sport Management

Cameron Cox
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration, Marketing conc.

“We did it in a pandemic!!!! We are the unstoppable class.”
Breanna L. Cross
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Communication and Media; Spanish

“Thank you to the Bridge program, Preparation Initiative (Rhonda, Dwana, and Dr. Yates), thank you to the Residential College Spanish program for my educational, social, and professional development. Thank you to the Michigan Gospel Chorale for being my spiritual and musical outlet. Thank you Bronze Elegance for my creative community. Thank you to the Black community who supported me as a young hustling hairstylist. And thank you to my prophytes and sister friends for your love and support. Thank you Michigan for paying me to be here to learn and grow.”

Ricardo Caleb Cummings
College of Engineering: Industrial and Operations Engineering

“I would like to thank my parents, family, and friends for helping me get through these years of undergraduate in the College of Engineering. It has been tough but you all have been with me through it all, and I thank you for that.”

Grant Cutler
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration: Finance and Strategy

“Thank you to all of the staff and advisors that took the time to check on me and my progress throughout school and my career”

D’Onna Dandridge
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Economics

“I want to thank my family for getting me to the University of Michigan, and I want to thank my friends for getting me through the University of Michigan.”
Oluvakemi Dauda
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology

“Thank you to my friends who have supported and encouraged me since our freshman year of college. I am so proud of us and very excited to see what our journeys are going to look like. I'm so thankful to have had genuine friends to go through college with.”

Le’Elle Davis
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology; Women’s and Gender Studies

“Thank you to all my family and friends for the endless love and memories.”

Olivia Paige Dotson
College of Engineering; Chemical Engineering

“I would like to thank all of my friends and family (my sister, my mom, and my dad) for supporting me throughout this journey at the University of Michigan. I want to thank the faculty that have served my professors and advisors (Dr. Montgomery, Dr. Cotel, Dr. Liu, Dr. Hirshfield, and Dr. Eniola) who have guided and supported me over the years.”

Kai M. Dotson
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience; Sociology with Health and Medicine sub-plan

“Thank you to the Black faculty, who enlightened me with lessons beyond their academic or professional expertise. Thank you to the best roommates and my beloved friends for reminding me how to give and receive love even in the face of adversity. And thank you to Mom, Dad, Cam, Kellen, Ryan, and those who came before me for setting the foundation for me to actualize my dreams!”
Isra Elshafei
School of Education; Secondary Education Mathematics

Zoe Elizabeth Evans
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Emphasis in Marketing; Minor: Moral Philosophy

“Thank you to my family, friends and sisters for supporting me through the last four years, I feel so humbled to be at this point and I wouldn’t be a Black Wolverine without each of you!”

Nando Marco Felten
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Education Policy

“Long Live J Nice”

Christopher Jordan Floyd
School of Public Health; Public Health Sciences
Bachelor’s

Centraya Forbes
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology

“Coming from an out of state PWI in high school to a PWI in college, I knew I wanted to get closer to my community and the Black community at Michigan was so welcoming, as I felt comfortable right away. I want to say thank you to my family, the Comprehensive Studies Program, Residential College, my personal friends, and all of Black Umich for allowing me the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than myself and finding life long friends and connections.”

Audrey Nangah Funwie
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Cognitive Science; Science, Technology and Society

“Thanks to my family for always being there for me when I needed a laugh through the hard times!”

Oladele Gaba
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business

Olivia Yoonne Gardiner
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biology, Health, and Society
Cydney P. Gardner-Brown
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy; Public Policy

“Thank you, mom for always being in my corner and for answering my 2 AM phone calls when I just needed someone to remind me things will work out. I love you!”

Elaine Garjo
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Gender & Health

Kailyn Geter
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology

Alexis Grace Greear
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience
Taylor Simone Grier
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; General Studies

“As a soon to be graduate of the greatest university in the world, I am incredibly grateful for the support that helped get me here. My family have been along this journey each step of the way. I look back and appreciate just how much every meal, text, or impromptu visit encouraged me.”

Alyssa M. Hall
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Economics

“Thank you for your love, support, and encouragement throughout my journey. This one is for you!

Keep going, the sky is not the limit, the limit does not exist!”

Devin S. Harris
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology

“My Grandmother told me "go to school and keep in them books," so I did. I know she's watching over me proud. Thank you to the rest of my family that pushed me as well. My mama said I HAD to come to Michigan, so I decided I HAD to graduate and my auntie made sure it happened. This was definitely a team effort.”

Chandler Harris
College of Engineering; Mechanical Engineering

“Mama I love you P.O.P holll it down”
Ashley M. Hayes
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Afroamerican and African Studies

“To every family member, friend, mentor, professor, advisor, and program that helped me get here -- you challenged me in the moments when I would ask myself 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' with the question of 'Actually, who are you not to be?' Thank you for never giving up on me, encouraging me to get my education and dream big, and to never stop learning.”

Regis Haynes
School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Choral Music Education

Lauren Gabrielle Henderson
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology

“I would like to thank the amazing parents that raised me, Keith and La’Sheita Henderson for instilling in me confidence and love! I would like to thank my amazing friends that pushed me towards self discovery and were there for me when I couldn’t reach out to my parents and all the professors and GSI’s for believing in me. Lastly, I thank myself for keeping with it!!!”

Asha D’Mya Hill
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Sociology; Health and Medicine

“I would first like to thank God for never giving up on me and giving me the strength to complete school. I would like to thank my mother. The lady who has been my biggest supporter since day one and has also pushed me to be great. I would also like to thank both of my grandmothers, all my family, and friends for their unconditional support.”
Amber Hooks
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts: Biology, Health, and Society

Franchion Nicole Jefferson
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts: Sociology and Social Work

“Proud of us! Good luck in all your future endeavors!”

Olajide Justin Adeoluji Jegede
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; General Studies: Focus in Computer Science and Information Sciences

“Thank you to all my friends, family, and teachers who have been with me on this journey. I would not be where I am now without you. I am so happy and blessed to have made it to the finish line! Now it’s on to the next race!”

Ravynne Mechelle Jenkins
College of Engineering; Computer Engineering
Anju Zakiya Jindal-Talib
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Sociology: Law, Justice, Social Change; American Culture
“Thanks to my family and all the staff who made my academic journey a success. Special thanks to Andarius Taylor, Amanda Loh, Dr. Laura Olsen, Prof. Alford Young Jr, Prof. Renee Anspach, Prof. Rachel Best, Prof. John Cheney-Lippold, Prof. Scott Larson, Prof. Sandra Levitsky, Erin Cinanek, and Prof. Sarah Koch”

Kiyara M. Johnson
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Sociology of Health and Medicine
“I am immensely grateful for my my mom, my family, and my friends who have supported me along the way. Also, thank you to the professors and faculty members who pushed me to be the best version of myself.”

Briyana J. Jordan
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Communication and Media Studies

Latise M. Jordan
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; General Studies
“Family, you are my heart. The strength in my bones. The wind under my wings. Ma, thank you for raising me and showing me that the only way is forward. Granny, thank you for always being there and teaching me the true value of tough love. Sister, we have been through it, but I wouldn’t have had it any other way. Thank you for putting up with me! You truly are my other half. Little brother, know that you are a light and don’t you ever let anyone take that from you, because you, my love—are the future.”
Ashley King
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; English

“Thank you to my family for motivating, my friends for loving me, and my line sisters for inspiring me. Without their support I would not be here.”

Jade Kissi
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Sociology of Health and Medicine

“Congratulations y’all we made it!!”

Clarissa N. Kitching
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience

Alyssa Lynn Knight
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; International Studies; Asian Studies
BACHELOR’S

Chyanne Laldee
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Sociology of Heal

“We made it. We’ve been waiting for this time and it’s finally here-- the first moments before I enter the rest of my life. I am thankful for the love, support, and ability to lean on my family and friends these past 4 years. Despite the challenges, I can’t think of a more rewarding undergrad experience.”

Evan Latham
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

Maya K. Lyght
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Sociology, Law, Justice and Social Change conc.; Minor: Political Science

“We made it. We’ve been waiting for this time and it's finally here-- the first moments before I enter the rest of my life. I am thankful for the love, support, and ability to lean on my family and friends these past 4 years. Despite the challenges, I can’t think of a more rewarding undergrad experience.”

Kori M. Maxie
College of Engineering; Materials Science & Engineering
Bachelor’s

Kenedi McCormick
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Political Science

“This is only the beginning -- the world awaits all of us! We're the future movers and shakers of society and I can’t wait to see what each and every graduate conquers in their journey ahead.”

Taylor Jasmine Mitchell
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biology, Health, and Society

“I want to thank my family and friends for providing endless encouragement and love over the last 4 years. Mom and Dad, I am forever grateful for your mentorship and support. I am extremely proud to call you my parents. Madi and Jordan, thank you for being my best friends and always making me laugh. Words cannot express how excited I am to tackle the next journey in my career!”

Camille Moore
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Communication and Media

Brianna R. Morigney
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Political Science
Angelique Nichols
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Sociology

“Thank you to all of my teachers, friends, and mentors for making these 4 years worthwhile! But most of all, I want to thank my family. E se goni o!”

Destiny M. O’neal
College of Engineering; Mechanical Engineering

“Thank God I made it.”

Mariam O. Oloko
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biology, Health, and Society

“Thank you to all of my teachers, friends, and mentors for making these 4 years worthwhile! But most of all, I want to thank my family. E se goni o!”

Oluwikunayo T. Olutomiwa
College of Engineering; Mechanical Engineering

“Thank you so much to my family and friends for supporting me through this journey. I wouldn’t be where I am today if it weren’t for all of you. Thank you for eating, drinking, laughing with me and being by my side physically and virtually. I am excited to see what the future holds for us all and I hope you are all there to witness it with me. I love you all <3”
Efe Osagie
School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Theatre Arts

“Thank you so much to my family who has supported through this journey. To Mama, Daddy, Rabi and Austin, I couldn’t have done it without you!”

Anita Ovbude
College of Engineering; Biomedical Engineering

“I would like to thank my family and friends for continuously supporting me throughout my college career. I would not be graduating and reaching my goals without them. Whether it was emotional, academic or financial support my loved ones have always been there for me and continued along this journey. I am so grateful to finally be graduating and moving on to the next stage of my life with all of them by side. I love all of you!”

Jasmine Paige Penny
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience

“I would like to thank God and my mom for getting me through these last four years as my biggest supporters <3”

Mylan P. Phelps
College of Engineering; Mechanical Engineering

“Thank you to everyone who helped me throughout my time here. From faculty, to classmates, so many have helped me succeed here. Thank you to my family for being patient with me, and always lending a helping hand whenever needed.”
Angel Phillips
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Economics

“I want to thank everyone who has supported me and helped me get here. I want to thank everyone black woman before me for paving a way. I want to thank myself for finding joy in the worst days.”

Jeremiah E. Price
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Music

“I’d like to thank my family, friends, and the U-M community for investing in me and allowing me to grow and prosper.”

Briona Jasmine Reed
School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Theatre Design & Production - Stage Management

“I would like to thank my parents for allowing me to go to my dream school and providing so much love & support the last few years. Thank you to my lovely sisters because they truly motivate me to be my best self. I also am very grateful to my Devivo Sistas for being my besties for the resties and for always being the light of my day!”

Destini T. Riley
Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design; Art and Design, Film, Video, Animation and Moving Images conc.

“Just want thank everyone who supported me in this journey! God, Family, Friends, my advisors at Stamps and peers.”
Lynnitaane Riley
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Sociology & Social Work

“I am grateful for the support I received from family, friends, faculty, and CSP staff. My college journey was enjoyable because I had great people cheering me on. This experience was one I will never forget. Thank you all!!!

*Special shout out to my dad, Ashley, Elise, Mariah, Alex, Lexi, and Lauren. I Love y'all!*

Jasmine M. Rogan
School of Education; School of Education

“Thank you to my mother Shelia. May she rest in peace. Thank you to my father Donald. My husband Matthew, sister Jacarra and Aunt Sylvia. My teachers and friends and God!”

Jon’Tise B’Nai Samuels Lewis
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology

“Thank you to God, my family and friends; and all my instructors and advisers!”

Mikah A. Sherrill
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience

“Thank you to my family for always being supportive throughout my time here, and also to the students and staff here that made my experience memorable!”
Silas Shorter  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts:  
Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience  

“Thank you to everyone who has played a role in pushing me past the finish line! Love you all!”

Charles W. Simms  
College of Engineering: Computer Science  

“Thank you to my family and friends for all the support and encouragement.”

Sydney Chanel Singal  
School of Kinesiology: Applied Exercise Science

Daniel J. Smith  
School of Kinesiology: Movement Science  

“I would like to thank my Mom and Dad who has continued to push me to be the man that I am today. I’m grateful for all of the things I’ve experienced, good and bad, for they’ve brought me to the very point. Thank you UMich Volleyball, Danita and Jasmine, and the Nupes of Sigma Chapter for the support.”
BACHELOR’S

Savon T. Smith
School of Education; Education with Elementary Certification

Aidan Sova
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Communication and Media

KyJuanna Marie Taylor
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology

“This has been a wild and very interesting journey thus far, I want to thank everyone who has supported me throughout it. College isn’t easy and in order to succeed you do need a wonderful support team behind you!”

Kyle D. Terry
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biomolecular Science
BACHELOR’S

Brianna Thomas
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Psychology

Carlena D. Toombs
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Communication and Media

“Mama, Mama Beth, Nadia, Neika, Joelle, Dr. Hutchings, Cydney, Jasmine, Karla, Jerome, Alexxus, Addey, Jana, Kai, Kenneth, Nick, Raina, Russell, Solomon, Taylor, Tihnae and Trinity: Not only did we make it, but we had so much fun doing it. Thank you for your unwavering support. This hasn’t been an easy journey, but it’s been a beautiful one. I am so excited for what's next to continue to share it with you all.”

Thomas Nelson Vance
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Political Science; Afro-American & African Studies

“To all my family, friends, and UM faculty, thank you for allowing me to grow and learn throughout my time here at Michigan. I’m not the same person I was when I first stepped foot on campus in 2017. It’s been challenging at times, but I have learned a lot about myself. None of my successes here at UM would have been possible without everyone’s support along the way, so thank you.”

Robert Vowels
College of Engineering; Industrial and Operations Engineering

“To my family (educators and friends, you all know this includes you) thank you for your unwavering support. This hasn’t been an easy journey, but it’s been a beautiful one. I am so excited for what’s next to continue to share it with you all.”
Deshawn Jamar Wafer
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts: Psychology
“Congrats to the class of 2021!!”

Jordan Wallace
College of Engineering: Mechanical Engineering
“Thank you for the love, support, and guidance over the years!”

Tyra R. Weeks
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts: Communications and Media

Maitri Alegria White
School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Vocal Performance; Minor: Performing Arts Management and Entrepreneurship
“Thank you to my amazing parents, friends, and Professor Daniel Washington!”
Danielle E. Williams
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Afroamerican and African Studies; Film, Television, and Media

“I want to thank my parents— Dan and Karen, you are AMAZING— and my siblings: Jonathan, Jennifer, and Destin. To Angelo: thanks for believing me and for the numerous bags of hot puffs to get me through the rough weeks! Thank you to my incredible campus ministry, the Black Student Union, and OAMI for giving me homes away from home. Gilbert and Margie... Herschel and Ernestine, I know you’re celebrating with me today.”

Donnell Williams
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Biology

Jasmine D. Williams
Stephen M. Ross School of Business; Business Administration

“Thank you to my family and friends for showering me in love and support these past four years. This is not only my degree, but it is yours as well. I would not have gotten to this point without you all.”

Justin Williams
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Political Science; Psychology
Jack Williams
School of Music, Theatre & Dance; Choral Music Education

“I’d like to thank my mother for everything that she taught me before her passing and my father for continuing to support me in every way to this day. ’06 to the Bruhs as well”

Kionna Willingham
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Communication and Media

“Thank you to my mom, dad, brothers, sister, my aunties and uncle, everyone that calls me Ahboo, and the rest of my family for always being supportive of me! The biggest thank you to my grandma Alma who I love so much! And thanks to the friends I've made along the way during college for making it fun!”

Mia T. Wilson
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts; Communication and Media; Crime and Justice

“To my family and friends: Thank you so much for your support along my journey at the University of Michigan. If it weren't for you all, and of course, Lyric, I wouldn't have made it this far!”

Kourtney Young
School of Public Health; Community and Global Public Health

“I'm so so thankful for my family, my cat, and all of the faculty at the School of Public Health who helped me get here.”
“Always think about making lasting connections. Don't let a valuable conversation only happen once.” - Kalane Abbey

“I would share my favorite quote: "Everything in your life is teaching you something you need to know to move forward." Roll with the punches and treat everything like a learning opportunity!” - Lauren Abuouf

“If I were to share a piece of advice to future Black Celeb graduates I would tell them to always move forward no matter what. Life is unpredictable and unbearably at times; but as long as you roll with the punches and keep achieving you will be successful in whatever you want to do.” - Lee Alexander

“Don't tell me the sky's the limit when there are footprints on the moon.” - Paul Brandt” - Erik Anderson

“The odds will always be stacked against us. There will be people who do not want to see you succeed. Never stop believing in yourself and continue reaching for greatness.” - Ejike Anusiem

“If you ever feel alone, know that you are not. Keep your head up and seek out people who will help you become the person you want to be.” - Dorian Ballard

“Never internalize microaggressions. Recognize them for what they truly are...jealousy!” - Leon Barber

“Who you are today will not be the same person you are four years from now. Embrace your growth, embrace you change.” - Dierra Barlow

“Don’t despise the day of small beginnings” - Jazmyn Becker

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).” - Mariah Benford

“There is only one of you, so don't deprive the world of your beauty by being anyone else. This is YOUR journey.” - Alexandria Bly

“It is fine to not know what may be in your future forecast - just be aware of what is under your current radar. In other words, pay attention to your current situation and think about how to progress from there. Life is not a sprint, but a marathon.” - Jaylen Bradley

“There is place waiting for you, your gifts, your skills, your talents, your passion. Trust that your path, your inner wisdom, your radical authenticity will lead you there.” - Alyssa Brandon

“Take that trip to the place on your bucket list, stay up all night talking with friends, snap that picture, and cherish those moments that you feel warm and fuzzy, take risks. Life is full of surprises and detours, I know that your time at Michigan was not always easy but today you can celebrate that degree with your loved ones! Make your life your own and live it proudly, be creative, and travel when you can - the more we expand our horizons the more we can use our experiences to balance ourselves when life becomes overwhelming to ground ourselves. Graduating is only the beginning and the world awaits your ingenuity, courage, and creativity!” - Lorna Brown

“You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.” - Arrice Bryant

“Take care of you. Know your limits and abide by them because your health is more valuable than any job.” - Diamond Buchanan

“Try new things. Meet new people. Have new experiences” - Jaylen Burch
“It’s always important to keep going no matter how long it takes, and to make sure you celebrate the milestones and accomplishments. Not just for you, but your supporters who love you!” - Bria Bush

“One piece of advice I’ve received that I want future Black Celeb graduates to know is to never forget your excellence. Even in your low moments, remember that you are excellent. You’re exactly where you’re supposed to be so bask in your excellence as a whole, beyond single moments in time.” - Elise Butler

“Use your resources, there are too many that aren’t utilized.” - Chase Camp

“It is important to remember that you entered college with so much. So much knowledge, experience, ability, and strength. There are times when you may compare yourself to others and potentially feel inadequate in some aspects but remember the greatness you carry and to always give yourself grace in the process.” - Jolyna Chiangong

“We are our ancestors wildest dreams... make them proud!” - Michele Cochran

“Tap in with your community and tap in outside your community as well. Experience all that you can and make the most of the resources and funding at your disposal while you can. Travel abroad every year if possible. Learn from other’s mistakes and your own to come out of this with as much as possible. Take a shot at Tina’s for me.” - Breanna Cross

“Keep Pushing.” - Ricardo Cummings

“You can’t exactly hit a home run if you don’t even try to swing” - Grant Cutler

“Don’t give yourself your first no.” - Oluwakemi Dauda

“I think it is important to make sure that you find community at this big school as quick as possible. It’ll make your transition into college so much easier and lead to a lot more fun over the years.” - Serena Day

“Know your resources, find your people, and lean on those closest to you.” - Olivia Dotson

“Conversations with yourself are just as meaningful as conversations with loved ones. Be sure to extend the same grace, forgiveness, and love that you do for others to yourself! And thank yourself for it when you do!” - Kai Dotson

“There is nothing out of your reach. You can do ANYTHING you put your mind to. Success is already yours.” - Kennedy DuBose

“Never dim your light so others can shine.” - Raquel Ellis

“No matter what other people say, follow your passions and do what makes you happy!” - Isra Elshafei

“You are not failing, you’re just rerouting- put in the work, trust the process and ask for help.” - Zoe Evans

“Network” - Nando Felten

“It's okay not to know what's next!” - Cydney Gardner-Brown

“The growing never stops. Never shy away from the challenging things in life because it is in those most challenging moments that you find out who you truly are and what your purpose truly is!” - Julian Goods

“Grades might not matter but your networks do.” - Kenny Hastrup

“It took me 5 years. Had I faltered, it could’ve been 6. But none of that really matters. Have fun, live, experience things, and make some time to study on your off days. As long as you reach the finish line, you win the race. Do not let this time pass you by and leave you with regrets.” - Devin Harris

“Office hours are key” - Chandler Harris
“Continue to challenge the status quo, don’t just go with the flow, and be confident in what you know. Don’t wait until you graduate to celebrate, enjoy each moment along the way.” - Ashley Hayes

“Take classes with Black professors and Black people, make this experience what YOU want it to be. You deserve the world!!!” - Lauren Henderson

“There are many things that may cause your world to be shifted. Shift and evolve with the world, but do not allow for it to push you over.” - Camille Hollins

“Find your passion and practice patience. It took me a minute to find the right degree and the right path. However, once I did and I learned how to pace myself, it did wonders for me. There also different people along the way that helped me in my college journey. It won't be easy, but once you find out what you love and find people to support you, the pieces will start to fall into place.” - Olajide Jegede

“A dream written down with a date becomes a goal. A goal broken down into steps becomes a plan. A plan backed by action becomes reality” - Mojisola Jimoh

“Use campus resources at every opportunity ” - Anju Jindal-Talib

“Always remember: positive brings positivity!” - Kiyara Johnson

“"Nothing That Is For You Will Ever Pass You By. -Unknown Everything Is Figureoutable. -Unknown"” - Briana Jones

“None of this is easy but the work is definitely worth the reward. Being only 4% of the population in this campus doesn’t mean you can’t accomplish something beautiful you just have to be willing to do it.” - Ashley King

““I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” - Maya Angelou” - Michelle King

“It’s only bad on your part if you don’t try!” - Chyanne Laldee

“Michigan is what you make it. Mold it, Shape it, Create it to reflect the future that you want. Don’t let the challenges and bad days discourage you. Know that those before and after you have felt what you are feeling, you will survive and accomplish everything people said you wouldn't.” - Maya Lyght

“Always remember your hardest moments in becoming a University of Michigan graduate. Remember the people who held you in those moments, and act accordingly. Always hold grace for those who are going through hard times, by reminding yourself of those who held space for you.” - Channing Mathews

“Don't be afraid to push beyond your comfort zone, because you might just surprise yourself with what you're capable of.” - Kori Maxie

“It's okay to not have it all figured out. You have a village behind you to love and support you every step of the way, and everything aligns in the end!” - Kenedi McCormick

“You are enough. Live the life you want, unapologetically. Lift others as you climb.” - Sierra McCray

“One piece of advice I want to share with future Black Celeb graduates is to make the most out of your time at the University of Michigan. The time flies by so make sure you are 100% present throughout college. Take advantage of the world-class opportunities that being a Michigan Wolverine will offer you. Continue to make your voices heard and break down barriers for future generations. Good luck everyone!” - Taylor Mitchell
“It's tough but it's worth it.” - Destiny O’dneal
“You deserve to take up space.” - Nadia Ogene
“Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars.” - Les Brown
“One of my advisors told me that "whatever is meant for you, you will have". So trust yourself and put yourself out there and whatever is meant to be yours, will be yours.” - Olufikunayo Olutomiwa
“Always strive to inspire, both yourself and others” - Kene Onuorah
“Setbacks don’t define you and can only make you stronger.” - Carly Paris
“Make the most it and live every day to fullest and at the end, the entire college experience will feel worth it” - Jasmine Penny
“Enjoy campus post-corona as much as you can.” - Mylan Phelps
“The work will always be there. Find time to care for yourself and fill yourself up because all you have is all you can give.” - Jeremiah Price
“Always appreciate where you came from, and appreciate the real ones who were there for you at your lowest point.” - John Rhodes
“One piece of advice for future Black Celeb graduates is to live life fearlessly and keep God first.” - Lynnitaane Riley
“Don't give up!” - Jasmine Rogan
“You're capable beyond what you can imagine.” - Daniel Smith
“You belong here” - Ezana Tadese
“ENJOY YOURSELF! Take this time away at college to have fun, explore and find out who you are and your interests, everyone's path is different so don't compare yourself to anyone.” - KyJuanna Taylor
“To whom much is given, much is tested” - Eleni Temeche
“Know your worth” - Yonathan Tessema
“Keep it movin’” - Thomas Vance
“Take the time to exhale.” - Maitri White
“Don't sell yourself short-- apply for that position, scholarship, fellowship, and program. Don't tell yourself "no," let them say it. What's for you is truly for you!” - Danielle Williams
“You don't have to have it all figured out. Graduating is just one step of the way.” - Kionna Willingham
“When times are rough, always remember what your goals are and why you want to achieve them. I am positive that alone will give you the strength to keep going.” - Mia Wilson
“You are fully equipped with all that you need to be great and to be successful. In the same token, it is ok to not have all the answers all the time or to know everything. Don't be afraid to ask for help, seek out additional information, be resourceful and to remain curious. At the end of the day, you can do hard things and you are great!” - Alethea Young
“Find your community!” - Kourtney Young

Quotes
Congratulations, graduates! The future awaits you. Step into it with bold vision and a grateful heart. You are indeed, powerful beyond measure!

As a former Black Celeb Co-Chair (c/o 2006!), I am elated to continue this tradition, like so many of the things we do culturally together to lift as we climb. I am so proud of you and will support you as you complete this major milestone and all the others to come. GO BLACK! GO BLUE!

Congratulations on your graduation from the University of Michigan! Wishing you the best in all that you do and forever Go Blue!

"Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it." --Paulo Freire    Congratulations, Class of 2021!

Congratulations, graduates! The future awaits you. Step into it with bold vision and a grateful heart. You are indeed, powerful beyond measure!
Congratulations, 2021 Black Celeb Graduates! We are extremely impressed with all that you have accomplished during your time at the University of Michigan. You are now joining a group of distinguished alumni across the world. Stay connected as we continue to evoke change through education, business, science and beyond. “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” – Barack Obama
Congratulations 2021 Graduates!

On behalf of the University of Michigan Black Alumni we are honored to extend congratulations and well wishes to our newest Black Michigan Alumni! As you prepare to navigate life after Michigan, we encourage you to continue to foster communication, fellowship, and professional development through UMBA! We strive to enhance your experience as alumni by providing educational, networking, and social opportunities! Through UMBA, you will encounter many generations of Black excellence, with one experience. Join us! We are Victors for LIFE! Go Blue!

Dr. Anita Gonzalez
Professor and Associate Dean; School of Music, Theatre & Dance

Celebrate your accomplishments Graduates and be good to yourselves as you venture out to manifest. The best is yet to come. Congratulations!

Dr. Martino Harmon
Vice President for Student Life; Student Life

As you set out into the world, remember your worth. People and events may try to tear you down or trick you into forgetting that you are a treasure beyond measure, that you are powerful beyond measure, but you must not let them. You’ve been forged in fire — now it’s time to rise up, lift your voice, and tell the world your truth. Go Blue!

Kendra Hearn
Clinical Associate Professor, Department Chair; School of Education

Welcome to the club, fellow U-M Black Alumni! Congratulations on your accomplishments. You may be relatively few in numbers, but the power of your voice is infinite. Carry what you’ve learned explicitly and implicitly from your U-M experience - in the classroom, from social interactions, and participation in volunteer and student organization activities - into the world, and especially back to your communities to affect positive change. You have been, are, and will forever be "Leaders and Best"

Adrienne Hill
Student Engagement Director; University of Michigan Black Alumni

Congratulations 2021 Graduates!

On behalf of the University of Michigan Black Alumni we are honored to extend congratulations and well wishes to our newest Black Michigan Alumni! As you prepare to navigate life after Michigan, we encourage you to continue to foster communication, fellowship, and professional development through UMBA! We strive to enhance your experience as alumni by providing educational, networking, and social opportunities! Through UMBA, you will encounter many generations of Black excellence, with one experience. Join us! We are Victors for LIFE! Go Blue!
Paul Horvath
Lecturer II; Comprehensive Studies Program

I am so proud of you all! Congratulations on this achievement. I look forward to where you go from here!

Dr. Janice Jones
Co-Program Director; Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI)

“At the end of the day, it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished. It's about what you've done with those accomplishments. It's about who you've lifted up, who you've made better. It's about what you've given back.” Denzel Washington, A Hand to Guide Me.

Courtney Monroe
Advisor to Culturally-Based Fraternal Organizations and Community Liaison for Multicultural Engagement; Fraternity & Sorority Life

Fraternity & Sorority Life would like to congratulate the class of 2021, especially students within the National Pan-Hellenic Council and Multicultural Greek Council, on graduation and all of your accomplishments this year. Keep striving for excellence!

Grace Sims
Hall Director; Residence Education/Michigan Housing

Comparison is the thief of joy. Do not miss the beauty in your growth by watching others. YOU ARE THE ONLY PERSON WALKING YOUR PATH! Congratulations graduates! #BBUM
Congratulations to the Class of 2021

Congressman David E. Wooten

Congratulations, Black Celeb Class of 2021. Be proud of your achievement! Despite this tumultuous year, you continued to thrive and arrive at this moment. As you set out to make your mark on the world, remember the inspiring words of Maya Angelou, “The horizon leans forward offering you space to place new steps of change.” Go, be great and forever GO, BLUE!

Adjunct Associate Professor and UM Alumni Mentor; UM School of Information (Student Mentor); PhD; Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Office of the Provost

Staff & Faculty

Gregory Thomas
Program Manager - University Programs & Success Coach; Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI)

Congratulations to all my young, gifted and black Michigan graduates! You have weathered a challenging storm and finished your education strong! This shows your strength and tenacity, and I know the best is yet to come. Always remember that you have a family here at the University of Michigan that is rooting for you to achieve everything your heart desires. It has been an honor and privilege to celebrate your greatness. You are truly “Powerful Beyond Measure”! Salute, God bless and forever GO, BLUE!

Dr. Katrina Wade-Golden

PhD; Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Office of the Provost

Congratulations, Black Celeb Class of 2021. Be proud of your achievement! Despite this tumultuous year, you continued to thrive and arrive at this moment. As you set out to make your mark on the world, remember the inspiring words of Maya Angelou, “The horizon leans forward offering you space to place new steps of change.” Go, be great and forever GO, BLUE!

Dr. Veronica Wilkerson-Johnson
Adjunct Associate Professor and UM Alumni Mentor; UM School of Information (Student Mentor)

Congratulations esteemed graduates of 2021! I am so proud of all that you have accomplished, and all that you will achieve in changing our world. Through the most challenging of times you have persevered and succeeded. Make this the time you make your mark, excel at your work and shoot for the stars! Forever the Victors Valiant! God bless you richly in all of your endeavors! GO BLUE!

David Wooten
Associate Dean for One-Year Master’s Programs, Alfred L. Edwards Collegiate Professor, University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor, and Professor of Marketing; Stephen M. Ross School of Business

Congratulations to the Class of 2021
Special Thanks to

ReliveTheBAR

Black Celeb 2021 Apparel
Now Available At ReliveTheBAR.com

Black Celebratory Shirt Designers
www.relivethebar.com
Acknowledgements

Gloria Derr Taylor
Director, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives

Gregory O. Thomas
Program Manager-University Programs & Success Coach,
Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives

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Program Coordinator & Success Coach, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives

Cari Neubrand
Multimedia Coordinator, Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Mike Morland
Marketing and Communications Manager, Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Special Thanks

OAMI Staff
Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives

Midwest Global Group
“BLACK GRAD MATTERS” Kente Stole Providers
www.midwestglobalgroup.com

Regents of the University of Michigan

Jordan B. Acker, Huntington Woods
Michael J. Behm, Grand Blanc
Mark J. Bernstein, Ann Arbor
Paul W. Brown, Ann Arbor
Sarah Hubbard, Okemos

Denise Ilitch, Bingham Farms
Ron Weiser, Ann Arbor
Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor
Mark S. Schlissel, (ex officio)
Black Celebratory Mission

The purpose of Black Celebratory is to celebrate the value and uniqueness of the African/African American experience and serves to commemorate the accomplishments of graduating students. Black students organized and implemented the first Black Celebratory in 1993 and remain an integral part of the planning process. With assistance from the Office of the Provost & the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives, Black Celebratory has become a tradition at the University of Michigan.

The University of Michigan Statement of Affirmative Action

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, sex*, color, religion, creed, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or Vietnam-era veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Senior Director for Institutional Equity and Title IX/Section 504 Coordinator, Office for Institutional Equity, 2072 Administrative Services Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1432, 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388. For other University of Michigan information call 734-764-1817.

Freedom of Speech and Artistic Expression

The University of Michigan strives to create an open form in which diverse opinions can be expressed and heard. Members of the University community, speakers, artists, and other invited guests have a right to express their views and opinions, and the University will protect that right. The University also supports the rights of those with differing views to express their opinions. In the interest of protecting these rights for all, University representatives may warn anyone unduly interfering with a speaker of performer’s freedom of expression, and if the warnings are not heeded, may remove those individuals from the building. The policy extends and affirms University policies set forth by our Civil Liberties Board in our Student Handbook; and in the U-M Standard Practice Guide; Regents Ordinance Article XII, Section 1; and state statutes.
Congratulations and Forever, Go Blue!
These symbols represent the cultural graduation ceremonies that are coordinated annually through the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives.

Top left to right: Black Celebratory, Native American Graduation, La Celebración Latina

Bottom left to right: Middle Eastern/North African Graduation, First Generation Graduation, Asian & Pacific Islander Graduation

oami.umich.edu
BLACK CELEBRATORY IS COORDINATED BY
THE OFFICE OF ACADEMIC MULTICULTURAL INITIATIVES
A UNIT IN THE OFFICE OF
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

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