

BLACK CELEBRATORY

— 2024 —



A Path Less Traveled

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
31ST ANNUAL BLACK CELEBRATORY
SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2024
POWER CENTER

RECOGNITION FROM UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Congratulations to the Graduating Class of 2024 and the participants of the 31st Annual Black Graduation Celebratory!

The annual commencement day ceremonies are among the most important and joyful times for the University of Michigan community. Commencement recognizes the collective efforts of our students and their families, colleagues, friends, faculty, and alums. It represents the completion of one of many journeys you will experience in your lifetime. We join the U-M community in applauding your accomplishments and share in the optimism of your many future successes.

Black Celebratory is a time for reflection and for looking forward. The student planning committee selected A Path Less Traveled as its theme for this year's celebration. This theme reflects the resilience of Black students who navigated college life amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Their journey is a testament to an unconquerable spirit in the face of adversity.

The traditional emblem for Black Celebratory is a tree supported by deep underground roots. Like the towering tree with roots firmly planted in the ground, we hope you stay connected to the ideas and individuals who represent the past. It is their dreams and hopes that you proudly represent today. Many individuals have planted the seeds that sprouted the roots for you to attend and be successful at higher education institutions, such as the University of Michigan.

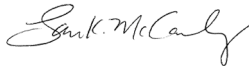
Your wisdom, your commitment, and your energies know no boundaries. As you strive to fulfill the dreams of your ancestors, you connect the visions of the past to the visions of the future.

The Graduating Class of 2024 carries the legacy of the past, the promise of the present, and the hope of the future. You must understand and balance all three, as these vital links are necessary. Although there are still many challenges before you, we must always find opportunities to extend a helping hand to the ones following behind you.

Stay connected, and forever – Go Blue!



Santa J. Ono
President



Laurie K. McCauley
Provost & Executive Vice President
for Academic Affairs



Martino Harmon
Vice President for
Student Life



Tabbye M. Chavous
Vice Provost for Equity & Inclusion
and Chief Diversity Officer



OAMI'S EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

As you celebrate this significant milestone, I congratulate you on your achievement. Graduating from the University of Michigan is no small feat; you should be immensely proud of your accomplishments.

Your path to this moment contained many challenges, obstacles, and moments of doubt. But through it all, you have persevered with determination and resilience. You faced the fears and dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic, yet you excelled. You saw the evils of racism in our world and on our campus made bare by the murder of George Floyd, yet you prevailed. I am sure there were days when your path seemed too much, yet you overcame.

Remember the lessons learned along the way as you embark on the next part of your journey. Remember the strength you discovered within yourself, the wisdom you gained from your experiences, and the community that supported you on this journey. Let this fuel your career ambitions, motivate your community service, and guide your decisions. When you reflect on your time at Michigan, see what we know to be true and what this degree represents: that you are a leader on your unique path to great things.

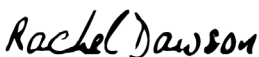
Before you go, we thank you and acknowledge the immense gratitude Michigan owes you. It was an absolute privilege to share this campus with you. Your activism pointed to where our community could do better, be more mindful of the Black experience on our campus, and be more intentional in achieving our goals of inclusion and belonging. We learned so much from you. Because of your engagement, we will continue to inch closer to achieving our goals to be the best. Thank you for challenging us; your efforts for equity and justice are to be celebrated.

After this day, the road ahead may be uncertain, but I do not doubt that each of you has the courage, the drive, and the passion to succeed. Whether you pursue further education, enter the workforce, or blaze your own trail, know that you can achieve greatness. In her essay, "I Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey," Maya Angelou wrote, "I looked up the road I was going and back the way I came, and since I wasn't satisfied, I decided to step off the road and cut me a new path."

So, as you move on, I wish that you may never be satisfied and constantly seek better, that you continue to challenge the status quo and push boundaries, and that you cut new paths for yourself and your communities – paths less traveled. As you walk across the stage, take a moment to reflect on the path that has brought you here. Be proud of how far you have come, and be excited for what lies ahead.

Congratulations, Class of 2024. The world is yours for the taking.

Sincerely,



Rachel Dawson

Director for the Office of Multicultural Academic Initiatives



LAND AND LABOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The University of Michigan is located on the territory of the Anishinaabeg people. The Ann Arbor campus resides on land ceded through the Treaty of Detroit in 1807. Additionally, in 1817, the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodewadami Nations made the largest single land transfer to the University of Michigan, ceded through the Treaty of Fort Meigs, with the agreement that their children would be educated in perpetuity.

We assert the sovereignty of tribal lands and acknowledge the painful historical and ongoing genocide, forced assimilation, and displacement of Native communities in establishing the university.

We affirm contemporary and ancestral Anishinaabeg ties to this land, the profound contributions of Native American peoples to this institution, and the University's commitment to educating the children of Native ancestors.

We further recognize that whether you are on campus in Ann Arbor or elsewhere in the United States, we stand on land developed at the often-fatal expense of forcefully enslaved Black people. We acknowledge that much of this country, including its culture, economic growth, and development, has been made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants who suffered the horror of the transatlantic trafficking, chattel slavery, and dehumanization through segregation and Jim Crow laws.

We remember those who did not survive the Middle Passage, those who were beaten and lynched, and those who are still suffering while fighting for their freedom. We are indebted to their labor and unwilling sacrifice, and acknowledge the violence throughout the generations and the resulting impact and generational trauma still felt today.

The fights against settler colonialism and anti-blackness will always be inextricably linked. To the land, to the collective, and to the ancestors, we thank you, we thank you, we thank you.





The 31st Annual Black Celebratory Theme Statement “A Path Less Traveled”

Completing the final year of high school and beginning the first year of college were supposed to be one of life’s greatest transitions, filled with new and exciting experiences. But for the Class of 2024, fate was filled with life and world-altering events. “A Path Less Traveled” attests to the pandemic challenges that unilaterally impacted the entire planet, including our exit from high school and our entrance into postsecondary education.

We started our Michigan journey about a half-year into the pandemic, filled with anxiety and faced with the unknown. Considering college, young adulthood, and our constantly changing world has led to the understanding that our life paths often diverge from the traditional notion of “normal” that we may have been taught. This realization is increasingly common as we recognize the fluidity and variability in human experiences. With that, we’d like to highlight the uniqueness in the stories behind those graduating and the divergence from what may be seen as “normal.” Neither the class before nor those after us will have quite the same experience as our unique collective journey. Similarly, our individual journeys came with a multitude of wounds that have impacted us in different ways but also, have bound us together through this shared experience. The challenges we faced were like nutrients that allowed us to flourish against the odds, much like a rose growing through concrete. These experiences shaped our identity and sense of community, helping us understand and follow the path toward success.

Black Celebratory 2024 is a time for reflection and for looking forward. A Path Less Traveled reflects the resilience of Black students who, amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, navigated their way into college life during a time of profound societal transformation. Our journey through uncharted educational territories—navigating remote learning and social barriers—is a testament to an unconquerable spirit facing adversity. We navigated our new environment with trust in ourselves and a reliance on each other to make this space, this place, and this journey our own. Through innovative ways of thinking and doing, the Class of 2024 set forth its own path, previously unforged in many ways.

Robert Frost wrote in his poem “The Road Not Taken” (1915):

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I —
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”

The path we venture on will be uniquely our own. Everything has and will continue to change. How we decide to engage with our new surroundings and circumstances will set an example for those who come after us. It will also be the force that will lead us forward. Fate may have led us to this less-traveled path, but our unwavering faith and fortitude led us through it! We are proud “conquering heroes!”

CONGRATULATIONS and FOREVER, GO BLUE!



PROGRAM OF EVENTS

GREETING

Gregory O. Thomas, Assistant Director, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
and Black Celebratory Coordinator

PROCESSION

Administrators, Faculty, Staff, Marshals & Graduates

WELCOME & LAND AND LABOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Benjamin J. Colding, Bachelor of Science, Earth & Environmental Sciences,
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

BLACK NATIONAL ANTHEM

Donovan Rogers, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Theatre Performance,
School of Music, Theatre & Dance

LIBATIONS

Elizabeth A. James, Program Associate,
Department of Afroamerican and African Studies

REMARKS & INTRODUCTION OF THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Dr. Tabbye M. Chavous, Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion
and Chief Diversity Officer

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Dr. Robert M. Sellers, Charles D. Moody Collegiate
Professor of Psychology and Education

REMARKS & INTRODUCTION OF STUDENT SPEAKERS

Dr. Martino Harmon, Vice President for Student Life

UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE STUDENT SPEAKERS

James L. Scarborough, Bachelor of Arts, Political Science,
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
Oluwami Dosunmu-Ogunbi, Doctor of Philosophy, Robotics,
College of Engineering

SPOKEN WORD: "TO BE BLACK AND GO BLUE"

Sarah Oguntomilade, Bachelor of Arts, International Studies,
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts &
Bachelor of Arts in Education, Secondary Education,
Marsal Family School of Education

INTRODUCTION OF THE JOHN MATLOCK CORNERSTONE AWARDS

Dr. Robert M. Sellers, Charles D. Moody Collegiate
Professor of Psychology and Education



PROGRAM OF EVENTS

PRESENTATION OF THE JOHN MATLOCK CORNERSTONE AWARDS

Fatoumata I. Traore, Master of Sciences, Human Genetics,
Rackham Graduate School
Angelique T. Dickson, U-M Junior, 2024 Black Celebratory Planning
Committee Member

JOHN MATLOCK FACULTY & STAFF CORNERSTONE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Robin M. Wilson, Professor of Dance, School of Music, Theatre & Dance
Terrance R. Wilbert, Coordinator of Bridge Scholars Plus,
Comprehensive Studies Program

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Robert M. Sellers, Charles D. Moody Collegiate
Professor of Psychology and Education

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Tiffany Ofili Porter, Pharmacist, Digital Content Creator,
Real Estate Investor, and Sports Broadcaster

INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION OF THE MOODY/MONTS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Dr. Robert M. Sellers, Charles D. Moody Collegiate
Professor of Psychology and Education

MOODY/MONTS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS

Dr. Phillip J. Bowman, Professor, Marsal Family School of Education;
Faculty Associate, Institute for Social Research
Gloria Derr Taylor, Director, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives

PRESENTATION OF THE CLASS OF 2024

Nicole P. Banks, Associate Dean of Students, Dean of Students Office
Antonio Junior-Robins, GEAR UP Program Manager,
Center for Educational Outreach
Kellyn Mackerl-Cooper, Associate Director, Trotter Multicultural Center
Kierra Trotter, Director of Alumni Career and Education, Alumni Association

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN BLACK ALUMNI

Charice Marbury Robinson, Chair, University of Michigan Black Alumni (UMBA)

CLOSING

Maia E. Jackson, Bachelor of Arts, Sociology,
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts



BLACK NATIONAL ANTHEM

“LIFT EVERY VOICE & SING”

Lyric by

James Weldon Johnson

Sung by

Donovan Rogers

*Bachelor of Fine Arts, Theatre Performance,
School of Music, Theatre & 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

Ritual by Elizabeth A. James

Program Associate, Department of Afroamerican 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.



MASTER OF CEREMONIES



Robert M. Sellers, Ph.D.

*Charles D. Moody Collegiate
Professor of Psychology and Education*

Dr. Robert M. Sellers, is the Charles D. Moody Collegiate Professor of Psychology and Education at the University of Michigan. His research focuses on the role of race in the psychological lives of African Americans. He and his students have developed an influential model of racial identity. He has received numerous honors for his research contributions, including election to the National Academy of Science and the American Psychological Foundation Gold Medal Award of Impact in Psychology. In 2023, he was awarded the James S. Jackson Distinguished Career Award for Diversity Scholarship by both the University of Michigan and the Association of Psychological Science.

Dr. Sellers has also had a long career of administrative service to the University including serving as the Chair of the Department of Psychology. Most recently, he served as Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion and as the inaugural Chief Diversity Officer at the University. Before stepping down from the posts in July 2022, he was responsible for the development, supervision, and implementation of the University's first five-year strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI 1.0). He also served as a principal counsel to the President as a member of the University's Executive leadership team.

Currently, Dr. Sellers is a Principal Investigator of the Michigan Program for Advancing Cultural Transformation (M-PACT) in the biomedical and health sciences. M-PACT's mission is to achieve greater inclusive excellence in the biomedical and health sciences at the University and beyond by partnering with 11 schools and colleges to hire and support 30 new tenure-track faculty who all have a demonstrated commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Tiffany Ofli Porter, Pharm.D.

Pharmacist, Digital Content Creator, Real Estate Investor, and Sports Broadcaster

Dr. Tiffany Ofli Porter is a Michigan native and currently works as a pharmacist, digital content creator, real estate investor, and sports broadcaster. She is a former world class Olympic hurdler and ran track professionally for 12 years. During that time, Tiffany competed in the 2012, 2016, and 2020 Olympic Games, earned four world championship medals, currently holds the British National record in the 60 meter hurdles, and formerly in the 100 meter hurdles. She was also European Champion, Commonwealth Games silver medalist, Continental Cup silver medalist, World Junior Championship silver medalist, and earned several European medals during her tenure.

Tiffany graduated from the University of Michigan in 2012 where she earned her Doctorate of Pharmacy. During her time at U of M she was a five-time NCAA champion, team captain, school record holder, Big Ten Medal of Honor recipient, Academic All-American, Vice President of SNPhA, and a member of the pharmacy school Leadership Scholars Program. In 2014 Tiffany was inducted into the University of Michigan Track and Field Hall of Fame, and is in the prestigious University of Michigan's all sport Hall of Honor.

She established and funds two scholarships at her high school to help alleviate some of the financial burdens associated with higher education. Tiffany is also an active member of the Kansas City graduate chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and has previously served as co-chairman of the Health Promotions Committee.

Tiffany met her husband, Jeff Porter, who is also an accomplished athlete and Olympian, in 2005 while at the University of Michigan. The pair got married in May 2011, welcomed their daughter Chidera in 2019, and son Jidenna Jeffrey in 2023.



THE JOHN MATLOCK CORNERSTONE AWARD



Dr. John H. Matlock

Founded in 1999, the Cornerstone Award is given annually to a member of the University of Michigan faculty and staff respectively. Since 2023, the award has been known as the “John Matlock Cornerstone Award” in honor of the late great Dr. John H. Matlock. Dr. Matlock served as Associate Vice Provost in the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Michigan while directing the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI) from 1989-2013.

Dr. Matlock engaged in many activities involving diversity research, multicultural programming, pre-college initiatives, student leadership training, academic and success, and enrichment activities. His work in engaging diverse groups of faculty, staff, and students to advance campus diversity initiatives is unparalleled. The award recognizes the unique contributions and assistance that this individual has given to enhance the academic and social progress of African American students at the university.

**The 2024 John Matlock Faculty Cornerstone Award recipient is
Robin M. Wilson, M.F.A.**

**The 2024 John Matlock Staff Cornerstone Award recipient is
Terrance R. Wilbert, M.S.W.**

Congratulations!



2024 FACULTY CORNERSTONE AWARD



Robin M. Wilson, M.F.A.

Professor of Dance, School of Music, Theatre & Dance

Robin Wilson, Professor of Dance at the University of Michigan, believes that teaching, artmaking, and activism are easy companions that give voice to untold stories and serve as tools for others to speak their truth. As a choreographer, performer, improviser, vocalist, educator, and activist, she sees no contradiction between making art and teaching others to discover the artist within and understanding their history and connection to the greater good. In the breadth

of her talent and expertise, all of these translate to being an advocate for the arts and communities. Wilson's work explores the influences of the African Diaspora in historical and contemporary dance/culture, public scholarship, and social justice through community engagement, and, most recently, through the documentation of the oral histories of black dancers in Harlem during the Black Arts Movement of the early 1970s. She is also a founding member of New York's Urban Bush Women.

Artistic collaborations include Ancestral Haiku as well as What We Ask Of Flesh, in which she performed as a member of the New England-based dance company, INSPIRIT: A Dance Company during the 2022 Reach residency at the Kennedy Center and the 2021 residency at Jacob's Pillow Lab. Wilson's choreography has been presented by Detroit Dance City Festival, Midwest RAD Festival, Detroit's Carr Center for the Arts BAADASS! Women's Dance Festival, the Michigan Dance Festival, the New Orleans Dance Festival, and the National Theatre of Ghana in Accra, Ghana, Athens, and Greece.

2024 STAFF CORNERSTONE AWARD



Terrance R. Wilbert, M.S.W.

Coordinator of Bridge Scholars Plus, Comprehensive Studies Program

Terrance Wilbert is an experienced student academic affairs practitioner who has served students for several years across departments - the Department of Residence Education and University Housing, the Dean of Students Office, and as an Academic Advisor in the Comprehensive Studies Program (CSP). Currently, he serves as the Coordinator of Bridge Scholars Plus in

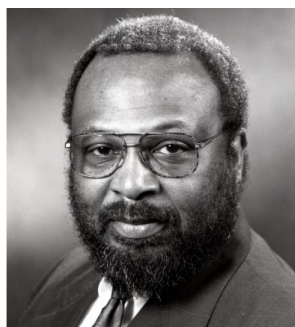
CSP. Bridge Scholars Plus is the university's newest learning community. Terrance values building relationships and working with students and was recognized in 2019 with the Ruth M. Sinclair Award for excellence in academic advising. He is a fierce advocate for supporting students of marginalized backgrounds and is passionate about assisting students in figuring out their WHY and how to maximize their college journey. Terrance understands that students can discern authenticity and if you really care about them. He believes that when you care and are authentic, students are receptive to guidance.



THE CHARLES MOODY AND LESTER MONTS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



**Dr. Charles
Moody**



**Dr. Lester
Monts**

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 to 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. Each year we honor outstanding retired or retiring faculty and staff members for their career commitment to student success at the University.

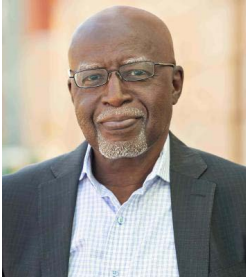
This year's Moody/Monts award recognizes two giants:

**Phillip J. Bowman, Ph.D.
Gloria Derr Taylor, M.Ed.**

Congratulations!



THE CHARLES MOODY AND LESTER MONTS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Phillip J. Bowman, Ph.D.

Founding Director, National Center for Institutional Diversity (2006-2013)

Professor, Marsal Family School of Education; Faculty Associate, Institute for Social Research; and Director of the Diversity Research and Policy Program

(2006-Present)

Dr. Phillip J. Bowman is a Professor of Higher Education at the University of Michigan, where he is also Director of the Diversity Research and Policy Program (DRPP) and Faculty Associate at the Institute for Social

Research. DRPP was launched in 2008 with funding from the National Institutes of Health while Bowman was the Founding Director of the National Center for Institutional Diversity (2006-2013), a national think-tank for bridging innovative scholarship with policy-relevant social change.

Prior to 2006, Bowman served as Director of the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy with the University of Illinois at Chicago and also as a Professor in Psychology, African American Studies and Educational Policy Studies with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At Northwestern University for a decade, Professor Bowman held numerous leadership roles as Professor of Education, Human Development, Social Policy and African American Studies, including Faculty Fellow with the Institute for Policy Research, Faculty Affiliate with the Joint Center for Poverty Research, Co-Coordinator of the Spencer Training Grant in Education and Social Policy, Director of the Summer Academic Workshop, Director of the Social-Behavioral Science Scholars Program, Chair of the Graduate Program in Counseling Psychology, and Chair of the Department of African American Studies. He has been a Rockefeller and Senior Ford Postdoctoral Fellow and serves as a national and international consultant on policy-relevant diversity issues. His research has been supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Spencer Foundation, state agencies, and several federal agencies, including the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Bowman received his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Michigan, where he began his professional career as an Assistant Research Scientist at the Institute for Social Research and Assistant Professor in Psychology and Afroamerican and African Studies.

Since 2013, the DRPP priorities have continued to evolve through strategic alliances between the Marsal Family School of Education, the Institute for Social Research, and other stakeholders at UM and beyond. As a theoretical and applied social psychologist, Bowman's scholarship focuses on higher education, racial/ethnic diversity, and related public policy issues (e.g. workforce inequalities, urban family poverty, health disparities, and social justice.) He has a growing interest in multi-level strengths-based intervention strategies to reduce inequalities, disparities, and opportunity gaps. Professor Bowman teaches several related courses, including Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in Higher Education; Diversity, Merit and Higher Education; and Strengths-Based STEM Pipeline Interventions.



THE CHARLES MOODY AND LESTER MONTS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Gloria Derr Taylor, M.Ed.

*Inaugural Director, U-M Detroit Admissions Office
(1990-1997)*

*Program Director, King Chavez College Day - OAMI
(1997-2013)*

*Director, Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
(2013-2023)*

Gloria Derr Taylor has devoted service to higher education for over 30 years. Gloria's dedication to educational outreach, student engagement, college accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion has made an immense difference in the lives of thousands of students and the campus community overall. She has made lasting impacts through decades of collaboration, research, and learning to improve the complete college experience for every student who attends the University of Michigan and many students beyond. As a result, she has become a symbol of commitment and excellence and a valued mentor, role model, and inspiration to so many in the higher education community.

Gloria received her bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Suffolk University in Boston and her joint master's degree in urban affairs from Cambridge University and Boston University. In 1990, she began her career in higher education after working as the director of admissions and financial aid at the Friends Schools in Detroit. The skills, experiences and relationships from this position provided Gloria with a unique perspective as she pivoted to recruiting students from the greater Detroit and Chicago areas. In this capacity, she served as the inaugural director of the University of Michigan Detroit Admissions Office, a position she held for seven years. In 1997, Gloria moved to the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives to direct the King Chavez College Day program under the direction of Dr. John Matlock. In this position, Gloria hosted over 2,000 middle and high schoolers annually who attended day and week-long visits designed to increase awareness and access to higher education for underrepresented students in southeastern Michigan. Gloria was also instrumental in obtaining grants from the state to assist underrepresented students to achieve academically at U-M and transfer guidance to students enrolled at Washtenaw Community College.

In addition to preparing pre-college students, Gloria worked very closely with U-M student leaders to develop them academically and professionally. Many of these students have continued their interest and passion in student success, completing advanced degrees in areas such as Social Work and Higher Education.

As director of OAMI, Gloria successfully transitioned the office from pre-college outreach to student development and academic success programming. She developed and launched SuccessConnects, a central action item of the DEI 1.0 Strategic Plan, designed for students to gain holistic support involving mentoring, coaching, and community connections and activities. OAMI's impact on students and the broader community continued to grow with a focus on first-generation and undocumented student initiatives, while overseeing an expanding portfolio of multicultural graduation celebrations. Gloria retired from her role with OAMI in January 2024. She leaves behind a legacy of financial stability, programmatic growth, and innovative leadership.



DOCTORAL GRADUATES

Desnor Nicole Chigumba

Rackham Graduate School

Doctor of Philosophy in Chemical Biology

Tiffany Annalisa Cornwall

School of Public Health

Doctor of Philosophy in Health Services Organization and Policy

Oluwami Dosunmu-Ogunbi

College of Engineering

Doctor of Philosophy in Robotics

Ebony Desiree Johnson

Rackham Graduate School

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

Shanice Johnson

School of Public Health

Doctor of Philosophy in Epidemiological Science

Mark-Anthony Adewale Lingaya

Medical School

Doctor of Medicine

Parker Miles

School of Education, School of Information

Doctor of Philosophy in Digital and Educational Studies

Yves Nazon

College of Engineering

Doctor of Philosophy in Mechanical Engineering



DOCTORAL GRADUATES

Precious Okeke

College of Pharmacy
Doctor of Pharmacy

Maribel Esele Kiana Okiye

Rackham Graduate School
Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry

Meghan E. Orr

Rackham Graduate School
Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry

Richard E. Smith

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

Michole Enjoli Washington

Rackham Graduate School
Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Studies

Alexa Brandi White

Rackham Graduate School
Doctor of Philosophy in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Brianna Young

School of Nursing
*Doctor of Nursing Practice in Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse
Practitioner*



MASTER'S GRADUATES

Rahilu Abdulatif

Taylor Joiner

Gloria (Sitso) Ahlijah

Travis Jones III

Tihnae Bennett

Taylor Mitchell

Kimmel Shirley Brown

Oyepeju N. Ogundipe

Shantaris D. Brown

Maribel Esele Kiana Okiye

Jada Childs

Jessica B. Pitts

Camille Dixson

Jack Schmitt

Dominique Downs

Brielle Smith

Christopher Jordan Floyd

Fatoumata I. Traore

**L'Oreal M.
Hawkes-Williams**

Alexa Brandi White

Leslie Igbo

Julia Rose Wicker

Ebony Desiree Johnson

Natasha Zake



BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Alicia Ewuraakua Acquah

Breanna Allen

Matthew Alexander Allen

Nia Carrington Allen

Chiemerie Amanze

Eleanor A. Aro

Sasha Bacon

Leilani A Baylis-Washington

Ayanna Aneesa-Rafia Bell

Hermela Berehan Benyam

Brooklyn Aryeal Blevins

Liaya Nichole Blueford

Maya Simone Boyd

Zariah Bridges

Rita Evelyn Brooks

Destini Monae Brooks

Trinity Brown

Jailyn Burks

Sloane T. Campbell

Ariel Ariana Chatman

Anthony B. Clark Jr.

Benjamin Jacob Colding

Trenton Michael Cox

Aricka Elise Croxton

Abari Davis

Tamariah Davis

Tanay Dixon

Olujinmi Edison

Maria Liberty Fields

Jamaria L. Fields

Aniyah K. Fisher

Joseph Mark Fisher

Sambujang Fofana

Brianna Fox

Freda A. Frimpong

Nyia Noel George

Kelly Goodwin

Ariel Gregory

Riley Noelle Grice

Rachel N. Hall

Payton Harvey

Karis Hawkins

Aaliyah Taja Hickman

Kali Lillia Hightower

Cortez Lorenzo Hill Jr.

Mackenzie Lazette Lucille
Holley

Brittany Chanel Hull-Dennis

Davelle Hunt

Leslie Igbo



BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

Jada Annise Jackson	Treyana Akwonae Reed
Maia Jackson	Myori J. Reeves
Iman Jamison	Alison Lia Roberson
Erica Shanice Jeffery	Simone Roberts
Briarre Marilyn Johnson	Donovan Rogers
Oluwakemi V. Johnson	Mona Saeed
Lauren Yocoli Kouassi	Nia Saxon
Sinit Lijam	James Luke Scarborough
Lauren Paige Lott	Bobbi Scott
Paige Monae Madsen	Taelor Mahki Sherman
Lina E. Magid	Christian Sims C. Sims
Kamryn P. Maples	Aiva Cecilia Smith
Camille Alexis McMurtry	Mia Snowden
Elashia Morgan	Audrey Sophia Inez Thedford
Madyson R. Morgan	Mikayla L. Thomas
Aniya Makayla Myers	Moshay L. Turner
Udoka Nwansi	Nina Rachelle Walker
Sarah Oguntomilade	Daijour Marquez Williams
Abimifoluwa Blessed Onifade	Miriam Marlana Williams
Jackson Kanawha Perry	Minyara N. Willingham
Betsy Magdalena Pichardo	Bryan C. Wilson
Saige Porter	Tamarakro Moni
Tylan M. Porterfield	Sakiko Keikiuluwehi Watkins
Andrew J. Rainey	



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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BLACK CELEBRATORY MISSION

The Black Celebratory celebrates the commonalities and differences that characterize the experiences of African Americans and other students at the University of Michigan. In upholding the expectation of the first Black Celebratory in 1994, this program serves as an example of the University of Michigan's commitment to diversity and African American students.

The ceremony acknowledges the value and uniqueness of the African American experience and serves to commemorate the accomplishments of those students that participate in the Black Celebratory. The Black Celebratory recognizes faculty and staff who provide academic enrichments, research opportunities, programs, and activities that promote the communal striving and sense of accountability that help students to achieve.

The Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI), in partnership with the Black Celebratory Planning Committee, this annual celebration to honor, respect, and remember those from our past and present communities who could only dream of the opportunity. This ceremony marks a tradition of valuing our cultural offerings, not only to the University, but to the world.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

The University of Michigan strives to create an open forum 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, speech that breaks the law, violates the University of Michigan's code of conduct, or threatens harm to another person will not be tolerated. Persons engaging in such speech may be warned by University representatives, and if the warnings are not heeded, may be removed 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.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Office for Institutional Equity - 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388, institutional.equity@umich.edu.

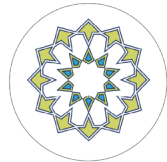
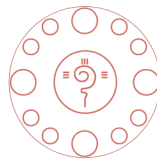


CULTURAL GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS

OAMI's cultural graduation celebrations supplement the traditional U-M commencement. They are held during graduation week to express appreciation for the achievements, commonalities, and cultural differences that characterize the experiences of graduating students. Additionally, they offer a chance for students to recognize the impact of faculty and staff with awards and honors.

CELEBRATION SYMBOLS

These symbols are used by OAMI and the organizing committees to represent the seven cultural graduations:



Black Celebratory
Native Student Graduation
La Celebración Latina
Middle Eastern/North African Graduation

Asian & Pacific Islander Graduation
First-Generation Graduation
Undocumented Students Graduation

oami.umich.edu/grad-celebrations





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