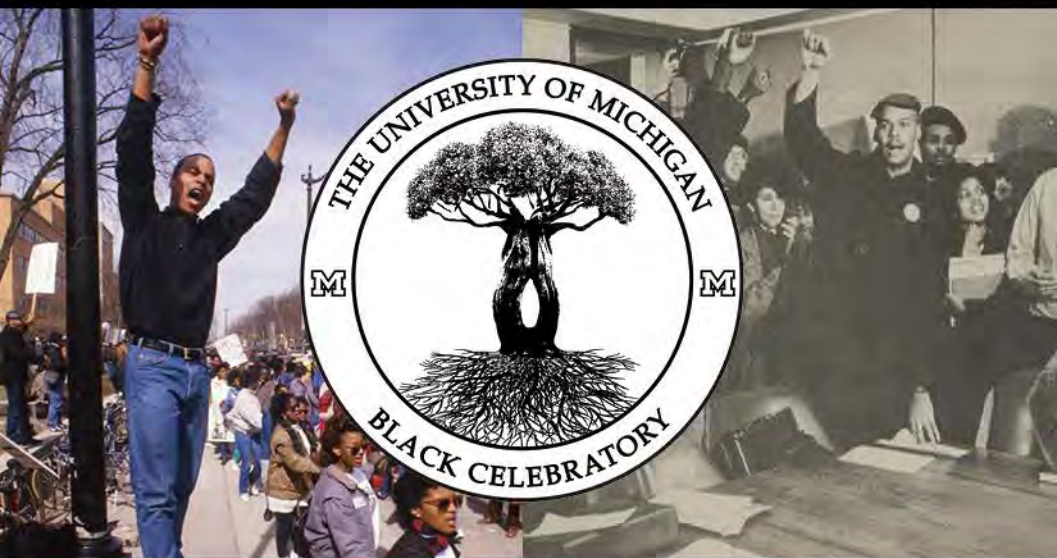


# BLACK CELEBRATORY

## 2025



**THE AUDACITY OF US!**



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
32<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL BLACK CELEBRATORY  
SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2025  
POWER CENTER

## OAMI'S EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

To the Graduating Class of 2025,

Congratulations to all participants in the 32nd Annual Black Celebratory!

Black Celebratory offers a unique opportunity to come together as a community and recognize one another's immense accomplishments. It is a space to honor your academic and personal milestones, to celebrate with those who have walked alongside you, and to recognize the fullness of your journey through the University of Michigan.

As you look toward the future, remember the lessons learned during your time here. Remember the strength you discovered within yourself, the wisdom you gained from your experiences, and the relationships that helped you grow as a person. 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.

This year's theme, "The Audacity of Us!" speaks to your willingness to take bold risks as individuals and as a community. You are building on the long legacy of Black students pushing the university to do better, be more mindful of the Black experience on our campus, and be more intentional in upholding the values of inclusion and belonging. From the many iterations of the Black Action Movement to the sustaining mission of the Black Student Union, you have been restless in uplifting one another and making your voices heard.

As you move on, we 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. 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.

With gratitude,

The Office of Academic Multicultural 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 32nd Annual Black Celebratory Theme Statement** **“The Audacity of Us!”**

It was never just a want—it was a need. A need to prove that we can be better than what they thought of us. To prove we belong here, to prove our worth. How did we do it?

Audacity.

The Class of 2025 stands as a testament to the power of audacity—the boldness to defy expectations, the courage to tackle adversity, and the resilience to turn challenges into victories. That same spirit has been echoed by many long before us, those who understood that without struggle, there is no progress.

In his memoir, *The Audacity of Hope*, former President Barack Obama’s memoir, reflects on his career as a Black politician and provides a clarion call for action and unity to reclaim the American dream. In the same way he invites us to reclaim the dream, we reclaim our power— by having the audacity to finish strong and continue rising.

The Class of 2025 can map out the countless moments and movements throughout our undergraduate journey that demanded not only perseverance, but the audacity to demand better, to push forward, and to carve out a future that reflects our vision.

With an unyielding commitment to success, we refuse to be defined by anything other than our greatness. This is the “audacity of us,” and we are ready to fill every room with our presence and continue to break barriers, one achievement at a time. We are not just a group of graduates—we are a movement, a force, and a legacy in the making.

However, our journey doesn’t end here. We have the audacity to fill courtrooms, government offices, classrooms, and corporate spaces. We will continue to celebrate one another and achieve even more. With every barrier we break and every room we fill, we prove that our audacity is not just a trait but a promise: to ourselves, to each other, and to the world.

## **CONGRATULATIONS and** **FOREVER, GO BLUE!**



# **PROGRAM OF EVENTS**

## **GREETING**

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

## **PROCESSION**

Administrators, Faculty, Staff, Marshals & Graduates

## **LAND & LABOR ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Kendall M. McCaskill, Bachelor of Science, Economics,  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

## **WELCOME**

Lakya N. Keys, Bachelor of Science, Psychology & Sociology,  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

## **BLACK NATIONAL ANTHEM**

Tyae L. Grant, Bachelor of Science, Sociology,  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

## **LIBATIONS**

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

## **REMARKS & INTRODUCTION OF THE PROVOST**

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

## **REMARKS & INTRODUCTION OF THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

Dr. Laurie K. McCauley, Provost and Executive Vice President  
for Academic Affairs

## **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



## **PROGRAM OF EVENTS**

### **UNDERGRADUATE & GRADUATE STUDENT SPEAKERS**

Morgan D. Brown, Bachelor of Science, Psychology,  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts  
Aya M. Waller-Bey, Doctor of Philosophy, Sociology,  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

### **SPECIAL PERFORMANCE:**

“THE THINGS WE DON’T HAVE TO FIGHT FOR”  
Angelique T. Dickson, Bachelor of Arts, International Studies,  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts  
Cristina G. Benn, Bachelor of Arts, Dance,  
School of Music, Theatre & Dance

### **INTRODUCTION OF THE JOHN MATLOCK CORNERSTONE AWARDS**

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

### **PRESENTATION OF THE JOHN MATLOCK CORNERSTONE AWARDS**

Liam H. Gakodi, Bachelor of Science, Biomedical Engineering,  
College of Engineering  
Ka’Lynn Savage, Bachelor of Science, Political Science,  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts  
Eric L. Veal Jr., Junior, 2025 Black Celebratory Planning  
Committee Member  
Gregory O. Thomas, Assistant Director, Office of Academic Multicultural  
Initiatives & Coordinator, Black Celebratory

### **JOHN MATLOCK FACULTY & STAFF CORNERSTONE AWARD RECIPIENTS**

Dr. Jade Burns, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing  
& School of Public Health  
Dr. Julie Simmons Ivy, Department Chair & Vivian L. Carpenter  
Collegiate Professor, Industrial and Operations Engineering  
Dr. Debby Mitchell Covington, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Equity  
Initiatives, College of Engineering  
Joseph Ballard II, Director, MI-LSAMP & Student Access, Belonging,  
Engagement, and Success, College of Engineering



## **EPROGRAM OF EVENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

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

### **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Lisa L. Howze, Empowerment Speaker, Author, CPA, and Career Strategist

### **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 RECIPIENT**

Robin M. Wilson, Professor of Dance, School of Music, Theatre & Dance

## **PRESENTATION OF THE CLASS OF 2025**

Nicole P. Banks, Associate Dean of Students, Dean of Students Office

Reginald Beasley, Program Manager for Medical Student Programs

Norris Chase, Director of First-Generation Commitment,

LSA Undergraduate Education

Antonio Junior-Robins, GEAR UP Program Manager,

Center for Educational Outreach

Kyra Shahid, Director, Trotter Multicultural Center

Kierra Trotter, Director, Alumni Career and Education

### **UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN BLACK ALUMNI**

Charice Marbury Robinson, Chair,

University of Michigan Black Alumni (UMBA)

### **CLOSING**

Kobby Nyankson, Bachelor of Science, Biopsychology, Cognition and  
Neuroscience, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts



# BLACK NATIONAL ANTHEM

“LIFT EVERY VOICE & SING”

*Lyric by*

James Weldon Johnson

*Sung by*

Tyae L. Grant

*Bachelor of Science, Sociology*

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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



### **Lisa L. Howze, MSF**

*Empowerment Speaker, Author, CPA, and Career Strategist*

**Lisa L. Howze** is a nationally recognized empowerment speaker, author, CPA, and career strategist with three decades of experience in government, higher education, and the accounting profession. Her journey from childhood eviction to entrepreneurship and beyond serves as a powerful testament to resilience and determination.

As the founder and CEO of The Lisa Howze Experience, LLC, Lisa is committed to helping professionals and next-generation leaders navigate life and career challenges and advance to the next level. In her book, “Candy Girl Mentality: Keys to Turning Bitter Moments into Sweet Success,” she introduces her signature ‘Bounce Back Framework’ to aid in self-reflection and career elevation.

Having served in diverse leadership roles, Lisa’s impactful career is evident by a legacy of service. During her tenure as a Michigan state representative, she drove legislation for Detroit’s economic growth and facilitated tax relief for low-income residents, as the Duggan administration’s chief government affairs officer. As vice president of a university, Lisa championed student retention and debt reduction. Currently, she actively serves as an ambassador for the accounting profession to help strengthen the CPA pipeline.

With a background in accounting and finance, Lisa earned undergraduate and graduate degrees from Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan and Walsh College, respectively. Beyond her professional achievements, Lisa treasures the title of “Best Auntie Ever,” as given by her adoring nieces and nephews.



## 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 2025 John Matlock Faculty Cornerstone Award  
recipients are**

**Jade Burns, Ph.D.  
Julie Simmons Ivy, Ph.D.**

**The 2025 John Matlock Staff Cornerstone Award  
recipients are**

**Debby Mitchell Covington, D.Min.  
Joseph Ballard II, M.Ed.**



## 2025 FACULTY CORNERSTONE AWARD



### **Jade Burns, Ph.D.**

*Assistant Professor, School of Nursing & School of Public Health*

**Dr. Jade Burns** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan School of Nursing and holds a joint appointment at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Her research focuses on innovative, community-engaged approaches using technology such as social media, messaging, and digital platforms to improve access to reproductive and

preventative health services for adolescents and young adults in community health centers. Her work is supported by community and federal agencies, including the NIH and the Division of Minority Health and Health Disparities.

As a pediatric nurse practitioner, Burns specializes in adolescent healthcare, family planning, health promotion, and HIV/STI prevention. She is dedicated to improving nursing practice and training in underserved communities. In addition to her academic and clinical work, Dr. Burns actively collaborates with community partners in Detroit and is involved in several nursing and non-nursing organizations. She is a proud board member of Detroit Teen H.Y.P.E. (Helping Youth by Providing Education), which has reached over 35,000 youth in the Detroit area since its inception, and the March of Dimes (Detroit). She has mentored students across various disciplines, including nursing, public health, business, informatics, pre-med, engineering, and social work. Dr. Burns also works with the Michigan Academic and Athletic Center's MATCH program, supporting student-athletes pursuing healthcare careers.

Dr. Burns holds degrees from the University of Michigan (BSN/PhD) and the University of Pennsylvania (MSN) and a post-doc in health policy from the National Clinician Scholars Program. She is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc., an organization for professional Black nurses. She is married to Dr. Robert Burns and has two sons, Robert II and Cade Burns.



## 2025 FACULTY CORNERSTONE AWARD



### **Julie Simmons Ivy, Ph.D.**

*Department Chair & Vivian L. Carpenter Collegiate  
Professor, Industrial and Operations Engineering*

**Julie Simmons** is the Vivian L. Carpenter Collegiate Professor and Chair of the Department of Industrial and Operations Engineering at the University of Michigan. Dr. Ivy is also the Edgar S. Woolard Professor Emerita of the Edward P. Fitts Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering at North Carolina State University. Dr. Ivy received her B.S. and Ph.D.

in Industrial and Operations Engineering from the University of Michigan. She also received her M.S. in Industrial and Systems Engineering from Georgia Tech.

Dr. Ivy's research seeks to model complex interactions and quantitatively capture the impact of different factors, objectives, system dynamics, intervention options and policies on outcomes with the goal of improving decision quality. Dr. Ivy develops and applies systems science methods, including the analysis and modeling of large data sets, simulation modeling, decision theory, and stochastic modeling including Markov decision processes and partially observable Markov decision processes, to improve hunger relief and health decision making. This research has made an impact on how researchers and practitioners address complex societal issues, such as health disparities, public health preparedness, hunger relief, student performance, and personalized medical decision-making and has been funded by the CDC, NSF, and NIH.

Dr. Ivy was elected as a 2022 Institute of Operations Research and Management Science (INFORMS) Fellow and as a 2023 Institute of Industrial & Systems Engineers (IISE) Fellow. In February 2023, Dr. Ivy was nominated to the National Academies Board on Mathematical Sciences and Analytics (BMSA). Dr. Ivy's service has focused on empowering women of color and underrepresented minorities in IE, OR, and STEM through INFORMS Minority Issues Forum (MIF), NSF ADVANCE grants, and various workshops supporting the professional development of minority graduate students, faculty, and working professionals over the past 25+ years. She was selected as an inaugural INFORMS 2021 MIF Fellow and as a 2020 and 2021 INFORMS DEI Ambassador. She received the INFORMS 2020 WORMS Award for the Advancement of Women in OR/MS.



## 2025 JOHN MATLOCK STAFF CORNERSTONE AWARD



### **Debby Mitchell Covington, D.Min.**

*Director, Strategic Partnerships and Equity Initiatives,  
College of Engineering*

**Dr. Debby Mitchell Covington** is a multi-talented professional who has made significant contributions as an executive leadership coach, higher education professional, social worker, organizational leader, and ordained associate pastor. Currently, she serves as the Strategic Partnerships and Equity Initiatives Director at the University of Michigan College of Engineering, where she leads initiatives focused on student access, retention and excellence, partnerships with minority-serving institutions, and community harm reduction. She has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Willie Hobbs Moore Mentoring and Distinguished Diversity Leader, Outstanding Innovative Graduate Program Award, and Staff Innovation Award for her dedication to fostering educational, business, and personal growth. In 2023, Dr. Covington founded VestedIn U, LLC, a coaching and consulting firm, after completing an Executive Leadership Coaching program at Georgetown University. She is a credentialed coach specializing in emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, and leadership development.

Dr. Covington also plays an active role in preserving Black history and promoting community development. Since 2014, she has served on the Board of Directors for the African American Cultural and Historical Museum (AACHM), becoming Chair in 2020. Under her leadership, the museum secured a permanent location and significant funding for renovation and growth. In 2024, she was appointed to the Washtenaw County Historic District Commission, further emphasizing her commitment to preserving the county's historical sites, particularly those related to Black heritage. Dr. Covington's academic background includes a bachelor's degree in urban development, a master's degrees in social work and practical theology, and a doctorate in ministry, reflecting her broad expertise across multiple fields.



## 2025 JOHN MATLOCK STAFF CORNERSTONE AWARD



### **Joseph Ballard II, M.Ed.**

*Director, MI-LSAMP & Student Access, Belonging, Engagement, and Success, College of Engineering*

**Joseph Ballard II** is a seasoned student affairs professional with over 13 years of experience. For the past three years, he has served as the Director of MI-LSAMP & Student Access, Belonging, Engagement, and Success in the College of Engineering. In this role, Joseph oversees the Michigan Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (MI-LSAMP), focusing on

supporting underserved and underrepresented students in STEM across the state. As a strategic advisor to the Executive Director for the Office of Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, he emphasizes holistic student success, belonging, and engagement. Joseph also collaborates with university partners to enhance access and opportunities for historically underrepresented students. His commitment to mentorship and community-building was recognized with the Mentoring & Inspiration North Campus MLK Spirit Award.

Joseph's dedication is deeply personal, informed by his own experiences as a first-generation student of color navigating higher education. He views his work as a chance to pay it forward, advocating passionately for equal access and opportunity in higher education. Joseph strives to ensure that students feel deserving and capable of achieving their goals at Michigan and beyond, acting as both a coach and a "safe and brave space" for their college journeys. His greatest joy comes from witnessing students realize their dreams. Joseph holds a bachelor's degree in marketing and management from Oklahoma State University and a master's in Higher Education and Student Affairs from the University of Oklahoma. Actively involved in several professional and community organizations, including the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), Joseph also enjoys traveling and spending time with his community outside of work.



## **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 a giant:

**Robin M. Wilson, MFA**

**Congratulations!**



# THE CHARLES MOODY AND LESTER MONTS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



**Robin M. Wilson, M.F.A.**

*Professor of Dance, School of Music, Theatre & Dance  
(1995-2025)*

**Robin M. Wilson**, currently Professor of Dance at the University of Michigan, sees teaching, artmaking, and activism as easy companions – giving voice to untold stories and giving tools for others to speak their truth. Choreographer, performer, improviser, vocalist, educator, activist, she sees no contradiction between making art, teaching others to discover the artist within, teaching others to understand their history and connection to the greater good and being an advocate for the arts and communities. A founding member of New York's Urban Bush Women with an MFA in Choreography from Temple University with a soon-to-be completed certification in Katherine Dunham technique, 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, documenting the oral histories of black dancers in Harlem during the Black Arts Movement of the early 1970s.

Recent collaborations include Ancestral Haiku, as vocalist and movement artist, with Detroit bassist Marion Hayden and visual artist M. Saffell Gardner, and *What We Ask Of Flesh* as a member of the New England-based dance company INSPIRIT: A Dance Company during the 2022 Reach residency at the Kennedy Center and 2021 residency at Jacob's Pillow Lab. In September 2020, she premiered her solo *Shattered Globes: For Tamara 2020* at Detroit Dance City Festival with subsequent performances at the Michigan Dance Festival and Midwest RAD Festival in early 2021.

Wilson's choreography has been presented by Detroit Dance City Festival, Midwest RAD Festival, the Detroit's Carr Center for the Arts, BAADASS! Women's Dance Festival, Michigan Dance Festival, New Orleans Dance Festival, the National Theatre of Ghana in Accra, Ghana and in Athens, Greece. Her teaching includes artist residencies and master classes at Queensborough Community College, Brown University, Washington University in St. Louis, University of California Los Angeles, Savannah College of Art and Design, the Ohio State University, Plymouth State University, Western Michigan University, Northern Colorado State University, Duke University, Arizona State University, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Paramaribo, Suriname. The former director of UM's First-Year Touring Company, Wilson currently co-directs University of Michigan's annual MPulse Summer Dance Institute.

In 1992, Wilson received a New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Award as a former member of Urban Bush Women for her collective work on the company's dances *River Songs* (1984) and *Praise House* (1990). She continues to perform and collaborate with artists across cultures, bridging communities through dance and scholarship and activism.



## DOCTORAL GRADUATES

**Adaeze Eneli**

College of Pharmacy  
*Pharmaceutical Sciences*

**Shayla Eilene Harrison**

School of Public Health  
*Health Management and Policy*

**Gabriel Lee Johnson**

School of Public Health  
*Public Health - Health Behavior Health Education*

**Gabrielle Kubi**

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts,  
Rackham Graduate School, School of Education  
*Education & Psychology*

**Shana Littleton Denise Renée Littleton**

College of Pharmacy, Rackham Graduate School  
*Clinical Pharmacy and Translational Sciences*

**Nia A. Nickerson**

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts,  
School of Education  
*Education and Psychology*



## DOCTORAL GRADUATES

### **Kelsie Marissa Thorne**

Rackham Graduate School, School of Social Work

*Psychology; Social Work*

### **Aya M. Waller-Bey**

College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

*Sociology*

## MASTER'S GRADUATES

### **Amari R. Aaron**

School of Social Work

*Interpersonal Practice in  
Integrated Health, Mental Health,  
and Substance Abuse*

### **Naomi N. Bailey**

A. Alfred Taubman College  
of Architecture and Urban

Planning  
*Urban and Regional Planning*

### **Marlena Branham**

School of Information

*UX Research and Design -  
Advanced Studies in Innovation  
and Entrepreneurship*

### **Stephanie Rena Crochran**

University of Michigan- Flint

*Education Specialist (Ed.S.)*

### **Tamariah LaShey Davis**

School of Information

*Information Science - Big Data  
Analytics*

### **Tanay Dixon**

School of Information

*Information - User Experience  
Research and Design*

### **Faith J. Gowen**

School of Information

*Information - Human Computer  
Interaction*



# MASTER'S GRADUATES

## **Chelsea Hampton**

A. Alfred Taubman College  
of Architecture and Urban  
Planning

*Urban and Regional Planning*

## **Micherlange Hemsley**

School of Information  
*Information - Library Science*

## **Zariah Hernandez**

A. Alfred Taubman College  
of Architecture and Urban  
Planning  
*Architecture*

## **Personna T. Hover**

School of Social Work  
*Social Work; Private Practice  
Therapist*

## **Alysha M. Johnson**

School of Management  
*Business Administration*

## **Janaye Jones**

School of Public Health  
*Epidemiology; Health Behavior &  
Health Equity*

## **Milanna K. Jones**

School of Management  
*Business Administration -  
Organizational Leadership*

## **Flora Kibong**

School of Information,  
School of Public Health  
*Health Informatics*

## **Louisa Kilgore**

School of Education  
*Higher Education Administration*

## **Jon'Tise B'Nai-Samuels Lewis**

Rackham Graduate School  
*Liberal Studies/American Culture*

## **Kali D. Lindsey**

Stephen M. Ross School of  
Business  
*Executive MBA*

## **Mia McPherson**

School of Public Health  
*Population and Health Sciences*

## **Sophia McPherson**

School of Information  
*Information - Big Data Analytics*



# MASTER'S GRADUATES

**Angelica Mgbeafulu**

College of Engineering

*Mechanical Engineering*

**David Quentin**

**Wilkerson-Lindsey**

College of Literature, Science,  
and the Arts

*Ecology and Evolutionary Biology*

**Aadia Moseley-McCloud**

College of Literature, Science,  
and the Arts

*Ecology & Evolutionary Biology*

**Daijour Williams**

School of Information

*Information*

**Sharmane Powell**

College of Engineering,  
Rackham Graduate School

*Robotics*

**Danielle E. Williams**

School of Education

*Diversity and Social Justice in  
Higher Education*

**Treyana Reed**

School of Information

*UX Research & Design*

**Shanae Williams**

College of Health Sciences

*Physician Assistant Studies*

**Endia Iyanna Scales**

School of Education,  
Rackham Graduate School

*Educational Studies - Educational  
Equity, Justice and Social  
Transformation*

**Jada Dorothy Young**

Rackham Graduate School

*Educational Studies - Educational  
Equity, Justice, and Social  
Transformation*

**Aaryana Stringfellow**

School of Public Health

*Public Health - Epidemiology*



## BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

**Adesola Adeleye**

**Benjamin James Bradley**

**Berachiah Aloiyee Ajala**

**Myah Monique  
Bridgewater**

**Jardine Nkechi Olita Allen**

**Dan M. Brown**

**Cyra Anderson**

**Morgan Delise Brown**

**Wisdom Andino**

**Alexis Buckley**

**Terrence J. Bartell**

**Miyah Burton**

**Jeffery James Bass**

**Emiko Clark**

**Brooklynne Bates**

**Timari Alexander  
Claybourne**

**Cristina G. Benn**

**Cailyn Benton**

**Rhegan Clemons**

**Bryan Stephen Berteaux**

**Ciera Collier**

**Morgan N Bettie**

**Lauren Collins**

**Denise Akua Pokuah  
Bonsu**

**Mariah J. Collins**

**Quincy Bowles**

**Isabella Cook**

**Olivia Marie Cook**



## BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

**Kelci Coy**

**Donovan Christopher  
Flournoy**

**Bella G. Crayton**

**Lauren Freeman**

**Jada V. Cunningham**

**Liam Hewitt Gakodi**

**Maegan Davis**

**Sierrah Galloway**

**Alayah Davis**

**Anaya Chere Gardner**

**Abria Micaha Dent**

**Lawrence Gilliam**

**Jacqueline Aja Dianis**

**Tyae Lakyla Grant**

**Angelique Taylor Dickson**

**MaShelle Nia Gregory**

**Dana N. Dixon**

**Devyn Darrell Griffin**

**Imani F. Dramé**

**Ibrahim H.**

**Chloe Sky DuBose**

**In'Dia Chantel Harris**

**Dana Elobaid**

**Katelyn Elise Hayes**

**Omosiuwa Enakpene**

**Kyle A. Heard**

**Daniel Fairfax**

**Cameron Alexander  
Henry**



## BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

**Camron C. Herbert**

**Laike C. Leatherwood**

**Lauren Ashlee Horne**

**Cierra Elise Leggs**

**Joshua Hudson**

**Ananda Raye Lewis**

**Alicia Jackson**

**Ashley Denise Lewis**

**Aidon Jenson**

**Mark Lewis**

**Kennedy R. Johnson**

**Dorian J. Lofton**

**Jordan M. Jones**

**Hailey Alexandria Love**

**Austin Edward Jordan**

**Nicholas Love**

**Brandon Keyes**

**Tyrek Mahomes**

**Lakyra Noel Keys**

**Justin Mason**

**Danielle Dianne Kiminyo**

**Myles Sherwin Mathews**

**Lamar Najee King**

**Brittany Divine Mauridi**

**Shantaisa King**

**Jada C. Maxwell**

**Sophia Alexandra Lane**

**Princess-J'Maria Jean**

**Monique Mboup**

**Jordan Lawton**



## BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

**Kendall Mary McCaskill**

**Dayo C. Ogundipe**

**Tyler R. McLaurin**

**Opeyemi Ojubanire**

**Liyu Mesay**

**Ojochilemi Daniel Okoka**

**Thomas Mezgebu**

**Oluwadamola S. Olaiya**

**Dana Elizabeth Minor**

**Mowaninuola Taiwo  
Olorunsola**

**Diya Mitchell**

**Jordan William Orr**

**Brayden Moore**

**Jeremy Kwame Owusu**

**Olivia Morris**

**Adetola Gloria Oyelade**

**Jalen Muse**

**Rochelle Alexandria Parris**

**Angel P. Mwila**

**A'mya N. Paul**

**Kobby Nyankson**

**Darnell Perkins Jr.**

**Nneka A. Obiekwu**

**Antoine Perkins**

**Odiso S. Obiora**

**Raven Perry**

**Ashley Moyosolaoluwa  
Odunuga**

**Angelique Phillips**

**Dayssi Phills**



## BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

**Sydney Patricia Pitter**

**Kennedy Kaiya Smith**

**Philip Abeiku-Buabin  
Quansah**

**N'Dea Denise Spence**

**Marquis Deon Sullivan**

**Karis Victoria Rivers**

**Jalen Sumlin**

**Chris Robinson**

**Kelsi Helen Sumter**

**Amya Lynnae Saffore**

**Amaya Taylor**

**Mignonne Jilliana Neneh  
Sarre**

**Lydia Lael Taylor**

**Ka'Lynn Savage**

**Teanna Thomas**

**Cayla Seay**

**Khadidiatou Toure**

**Diamond Chanel Sharpe**

**Sierra Lynn Turner**

**Brett Christopher  
Sherwood**

**Chidimma Jessica  
Udegbumam**

**Youssouf Sidibé**

**Rianna Urquhart**

**Hillary Simmons**

**Mikel C. Vaughan-Coston**

**Alexandria J. Smith**

**Devin Vowels**

**Jalen Smith**

**Ansileen L. Washington**



# BACHELOR'S GRADUATES

**Leslie Aaryn Washington**

**Imani A. Williams**

**Paris Watkins**

**Scotland A Williams**

**Kennedi Sean Werdlow**

**Shakira Lorraine Woods**

**Elijah Holland Williams**

**Idris Young**



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**Kendall McCaskill, Liam Gakodi, Kalyann Savage, Lakyra Keys,  
Kobby Nyankson, Angelique Dickson & Eric Veal Jr.**  
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Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives

**Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives Staff and Students**

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Faculty & Staff Marshals

**Midwest Global Group**  
Kente Stole Providers

**Stadium Trophy**  
Award Services

**Foresight Group**  
Printing Services

**Michigan Media**  
Videography Services

**City Events Group**  
A/V Support

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## LETTER OF THANKS TO TABBYE CHAVOUS

Dear Dr. Chavous,

We are truly grateful to have you with us at the Power Center today for the 32nd Annual Black Celebratory. For over 25 years, your presence in the Michigan community has been a profound blessing. As a teacher, mentor, and a staunch advocate for students, you have been a courageous and outspoken champion from whom Black students across the university have drawn immense pride, hope, and inspiration.

Your leadership has been felt at every level— from the department to the college and throughout the central administration. You have consistently used your influence to drive the university towards greater inclusivity and equity. More than this, your impact has reached generations of students within our community and beyond.

In 2023, you assumed leadership of the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. Through this role, you have applied your expertise and commitment to help students find their places, people, and voices on campus -- empowering them to stand up for themselves and their communities.

Under your guidance, the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives has continued to strengthen and expand celebrations like the Black Celebratory, enabling students, families, and loved ones to gather here today in recognition of our significant achievements. Black Celebratory stands as the oldest of these cultural celebrations, a testament to the deep roots that support our history within this institution.

This year's theme, "The Audacity of Us!" captures the enduring legacy of activism and resilience that Black students continue to build upon each year. You have become a crucial part of this legacy, not just by supporting Black students, faculty, and staff, but also by persistently speaking truth to power, even when it involves significant personal risk.

We are immensely grateful for the commitment, encouragement, and friendship you have extended to us. You are a vital part of our collective, our village, and we thank you for all you have done and all you will continue to do.

With heartfelt appreciation,

The 2025 Black Celebratory Committee



## 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.

## STATEMENT OF 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/employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination. 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. (Standard Practice Guide Policies)

Inquiries or complaints may be addressed to the Equity, Civil Rights, and Title IX Office, 2072 Administrative Services Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1432. Phone: 734-763-0235, TTY 734-647-1388. Email: [ecrtooffice@umich.edu](mailto:ecrtooffice@umich.edu).

For other University of Michigan information, call 734-764-1817.



## OAMI STUDENT CELEBRATIONS

OAMI Student Celebrations take place during graduation season to honor the achievements, shared experiences, and diverse backgrounds that shape our students' journeys.

All of OAMI's celebrations are open to all students at the University of Michigan, recognizing and honoring the diverse experiences and identities within our community.

### CELEBRATION SYMBOLS

These symbols are used by OAMI and the organizing committees to represent the eight student celebrations:



**Native Student Celebration**  
**La Celebración Latina**

**Black Celebratory**  
**Asian Student Celebration**  
**Oceania Student Celebration**  
**Middle Eastern & North African Student Celebration**

**First-Generation Student Celebration**  
**Undocumented Student Celebration**

[oami.umich.edu/celebrations](http://oami.umich.edu/celebrations)



