

APRIL 25, 2024

20

THE CLASS OF

24

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE

**MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION
CELEBRATION**

Presented by the Office of Multicultural Student Life

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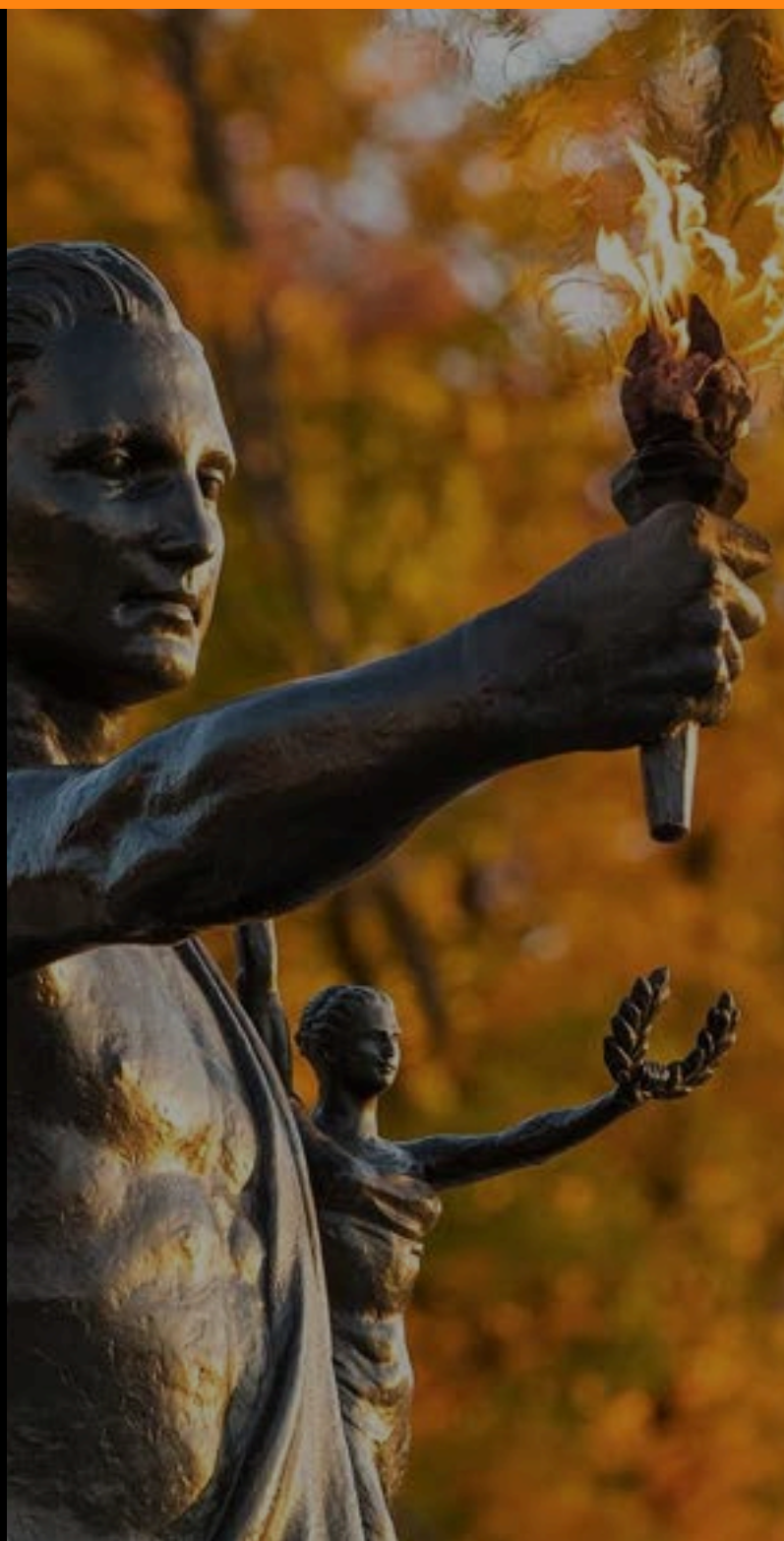
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*"ONE THAT BEARETH A TORCH SHADOWETH ONESELF TO GIVE LIGHT TO OTHERS"
- THE VOLUNTEER CREED*



PROGRAM

WELCOME AND PURPOSE

UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

Crystal Hardeman-Ikem
Associate Dean of Students, Director of Inclusive Excellence

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Alvin Robertson

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Dr. Tanisha L. Jenkins Beacon of Light Award

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

Kaiya Moore

PRESENTATION OF GRADUATES

Dignitaries, Graduates, Faculty
Office of Multicultural Student Life Staff

GRADUATE REFLECTION

Joshua Lane

CLOSING REMARKS

Anthony Prewitt
Office of Multicultural Student Life Director

RECEPTION (STUDENT UNION 270)

"ONE THAT BEARETH A TORCH SHADOWETH ONESELF TO GIVE LIGHT TO OTHERS"

- THE VOLUNTEER CREED

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

DR. TANISHA L. JENKINS BEACON OF LIGHT AWARD

About the Award

Established on April 23, 2015, the Tanisha L. Jenkins Beacon of Light Award recognizes a faculty or staff member who has made outstanding contributions to diversity and multiculturalism at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Dr. Jenkins once said, "We have the opportunity to positively impact the next generation and help them understand and appreciate the global society we all live in and know that they have the opportunity to change the world for the better."

During Dr. Jenkins' time at the University of Tennessee, she was a leader, mentor, and advocate for students of color. The recipient of this award demonstrates the characteristics of what the Beacon of Light Award represents.

This award is presented once a year at the annual Multicultural Graduation Celebration hosted by the Office of Multicultural Student Life.



Photo: Dr. Tanisha Jenkins

STUDENT PERFORMANCE MEET THE PERFORMER



Kaiya Moore

Kaiya Moore is a first generation college student from Chattanooga, TN. She is proudly graduating from the Haslam College of Business with her Masters of Science in Marketing.

In the future, she hopes to impact the world through sharing music she's created, and she hopes to create a non-profit organization focused on the fine & performing arts for children in grades K-12.

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Alvin Robertson

Alvin Robertson of Memphis is studying therapeutic recreation in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences with a minor in public health. Robertson is a member of the 1794 Scholars Program, where he served as the inclusion director for the Honors Student Engagement Council in Spring 2023. He is also part of the Dean's Undergraduate Advisory Board for the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences, visiting high schools and giving tours to prospective students. During his time as a student, he has been an undergraduate teaching assistant for the Department of Anthropology, a resident assistant for University Housing, a VOLbreaks leader, an ambassador for the Jones Center for Leadership and Service, and a campus ambassador with the VolCorps Program. Off campus, Robertson has worked as second vice regional director for the southeastern region for Phi Beta Sigma and served as a volunteer for the Knoxville Center of Autism. Recently, Robertson was also named a 2024 Torchbearer, an honor reserved for the university's top-achieving students.

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MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION GRADUATE REFLECTION



Joshua Lane

Joshua Lane is graduating with his Masters of Science in College Student Personnel. Since Summer 2022, he has worked as a Graduate Research Assistant in the Office of Multicultural Student Life where he oversees the department's marketing and social media while serving as a Success Coach for several student organizations within MSL.



2024 GRADUATES

BACHELORS, MASTERS, AND
DOCTORATE DEGREES

Names of graduates are presented
alphabetically and by college

"ONE THAT BEARETH A TORCH SHADOWETH ONESELF TO GIVE LIGHT TO OTHERS"

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COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BACHELORS

Anhaar Ajaz

Roxanne Al-Nimri

Nor Alkhasali

Arianna Barnes

Saloni Boghani

Azaria C. Boyd

Deashia Carpenter

Julia Cavanaugh

Louise Charles

Samantha Coach

Jason Albert Cornelio

Nikolas Dalton

Ariel Denson

Maron Desta

Sarah Mohamed Mokhtar Desouki

Maya Dickson

Madaline Dople

Darin Franklin

Lauren Goldston

Rachel Goudy

Mark Hancock

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BACHELORS

Jordan Jamison

Cassandra Jones

Ruhama Kebede

Arriane Love

Cing Lun

Lutfiyah Madyun

Elizabeth Martinez

Yuri Matsuoka

Hailey McGonigal

Malaika Kanth Nallabantu

Andrew Nguyen

Grace Nystrom

Siddhi Jay Patel

Himani Patel

Cindy Tien Pham

Mary Kate C. Placencia

Annie Powers

Gabriella Valentina Rosellini

Julie Sahrai Ruiz Archundia

Shrujana Senthil

Heather Shoffner

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BACHELORS

Antiqua Simpson
Michaela Summey
Gabriela Sweet
Julliana Maximina Terry
Vy Tran
Arketa VanArsdale
Abish Faith Villanueva Mendoza
Kayla Jevonne Whitehead
Claire Yi

DOCTORATES

Dr. Cecily Bernard
Dr. Lahai Wicks

COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

BACHELORS

Chelsea Chan
Joceline Guadarrama
Amari Mills
Autumn Murphy
Ashley Rodas

MASTERS

Leslie Hernandez
Teneria Orange

DOCTORATE

Dr. Jessica K. Barfield

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND HUMAN SCIENCES

BACHELORS

Jada Allen
Zaria Black
Kiersten Brown
Kevonna Cook
Montserrat Huerta
Demetrice Jones
Jasmine Keoviengxai
Tammy Nguyen
Grette Nicimpaye
Weilin Ouyang
ReKiyah Owens
Kiona Ray
Alvin Robertson
Eva Sparks
Blanca Valencia
Karina Warchick
JaMeshia Watkins

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, HEALTH,
AND HUMAN SCIENCES

MASTERS

Shamatanni Chowdhury

Joshua Lane

Jing Li

Simphany Renee

DOCTORATE

Dr. Kimberly R. Hill

COLLEGE OF MUSIC

BACHELORS

Jaylyn McCoy

HASLAM COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

BACHELORS

Alissa Alvarado Flores
Lesly Botello Avila
Riona Grant
Keondra Kirkendoll
Melanie Luke
John-Michael Joseph Lyons
KJ Malone
Majed Amer Massad
Angel Joy Miñoza
Ashanti Moore
Terra Ann Murphy
Kim Nguyen
Makala Utai
Vivianna Veloz

MASTERS

Savannah Brown
Kaiya Simone Moore

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND
DESIGN

BACHELORS

Jalah Johnson

MASTERS

Samin Saboor Rooh Mofrad

HERBERT COLLEGE OF
AGRICULTURE

BACHELORS

Keren Hernandez

MASTERS

Sakar Jha

COLLEGE OF NURSING

BACHELORS

Rachel Regener
Leah Ryczko

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

BACHELORS

Drieka Maxwell-Davis

MASTERS

Adrianna Smith

TICKLE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

BACHELORS

Abrian Abir

Seoyoung An

Anna Chen

Ricardo Valentine Crescencio

Dean Ellorando

Kendall Flores

Regine Gomez

Victoria Hall

Jessie Li

Fellah Mohsun

Jordan Morris

Weilin Ouyang

Manan Utpalkumar Patel

Riya Patel

Ronnie Rainer

Deunta' Sailes

Tulsi Tailor

Nagendra Upadhyay

Gia Vergara

TICKLE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

BACHELORS

Stephen Walker Jr.
Mengjun Wang
Abbie White

MASTERS

Sarah Godfrey
Riya Patel
Mariah Wakefield
Xiande Zhang

DOCTORATES

Dr. Lei Ding
Dr. Manu Rathore

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION SPECIAL THANKS & RECOGNITION



Photo: (left to right) Simphany Renee, Savannah Brown, Joshua Lane

Savannah Brown, Joshua Lane, Simphany Renee

Among the Class of 2024 graduates are Office of Multicultural Student Life Graduate Research Assistants Savannah Brown and Joshua Lane, and MSL Coordinator, Simphany Renee. Savannah is graduating with her Masters in Business Administration, Joshua is graduating with his Masters of Science in College Student Personnel, and Simphany is graduating with her Masters of Science in Higher Education Administration.


Multicultural Student Life is so proud of you. Thank you for all you do to uplift and empower our students and campus.

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION COLLAGE OF FLAGS

AS A WAY TO PAY HOMAGE TO OUR GRADUATES' MANY TRADITIONS AND CULTURES, WE ASKED GRADUATES TO SHARE IMAGES OF ANY FLAGS THAT BEST REPRESENT THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITIES AND HERITAGES. 25 UNIQUE FLAGS WERE PROVIDED BY OUR GRADUATES AND ARE DISPLAYED BELOW.



(TOP ROW, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): FLAG OF THE BANGLADESH, THE BLACK AMERICAN HERITAGE FLAG, FLAG OF BURUNDI, CANADIAN FLAG, CHILEAN FLAG; (SECOND ROW): FLAG OF CHINA, FLAG OF COSTA RICA, EGYPTIAN FLAG, GERMAN FLAG, FLAG OF GHANA; (THIRD ROW): FLAG OF GUYANA, FLAG OF HONG KONG, FLAG OF INDIA, STATE FLAG OF IRAN, FLAG OF IRAQ; (FOURTH ROW): FLAG OF JAPAN, KOREAN FLAG, FLAG OF LIBERIA, FLAG OF MEXICO, FLAG OF NEPAL; (FIFTH ROW): NIGERIAN FLAG, FLAG OF PAKISTAN, PANAMANIAN FLAG, FLAG OF THE PHILIPPINES, FLAG OF SOUTH VIETNAM



THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE

GIVING THANKS

GRADUATE THANKS AND DEDICATIONS

We would like to provide space for our graduates to publicly thank the people who positively impacted their educational journeys.

All submissions are ordered alphabetically by graduates' last names.

"ONE THAT BEARETH A TORCH SHADOWETH ONESELF TO GIVE LIGHT TO OTHERS"

- THE VOLUNTEER CREED

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION GIVING THANKS: A WORD FROM OUR GRADUATES

Alissa Alvarado Flores

"I would like to thank my family and loved ones for supporting me and instilling confidence in me when I could not do so for myself. I would also like to thank the Haslam College of Business Office of Access and Community Connections for creating a safe and welcoming space full of opportunities and advice. And lastly, I would like to thank everyone else who participated in multicultural life through campus for representing and celebrating the differences we all bring to the table at the University of Tennessee."

Cecily Bernard

"I would first like to thank God for giving me the health and strength to make it through the program. Next I would like to express my gratitude to my divine appointed support community: my sister and mentor Dr. Dale Dan, her mentor and fellow journeyer, Dr. Jennifer Hoyte. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the guidance and support provided me by the members of my dissertation committee, Drs. Luis Cano, Dawn Duke, Rudyard Alcocer, and Delia Ungureanu."

Lesly Botello Avila

"I would like to thank my parents, they are the reason I have made it this far academically. I wanted to prove my capability of achieving higher education so their sacrifice was not for nothing. They have encouraged me to be a better role model for my younger brothers and leading an example of being the first in my family to graduate."

Azaria C. Boyd

"Forever thanking God and my support system for my amazing experience here at UT! So grateful for the wonderful professors, mentors, and Volunteers I've met along the way!"

Shamatanni Chowdhury

"Thank you to my husband, Rupam and my parents who always inspired me to pursue higher education. Also, thank you to all the professors of my Public Health Department and specially Drs. Sunil, Zottarelli, Jones, Shelton who made this journey much easier for me. This experience has truly changed my life."

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION GIVING THANKS: A WORD FROM OUR GRADUATES

Kevonna Cook

"I would like to thank the MSL staff and faculty for all of the support and help throughout my journey at UT. I am very appreciative of the love and community that I have experienced over this time and would love to continue making connections and staying in touch with everyone who has inspired or played apart in my success."

Ricardo Valentine Crescencio

"Thank you."

Ariel Denson

"It has taken me a while to get to the place where I am today and plan to be in the future. I want to thank those who have helped me, pushed me, motivated me to be the woman I am today and that is my mom, dad and brother. I love you guys, I am blessed and happy to be able to have a higher education and really want to make you guys proud."

Sarah Mohamed Mokhtar Desouki

"I would like to thank my family, friends, and the faculty of UTK for their constant support. A special acknowledgment to my friend Elizabeth who always pushes me to do my best. Thank you all."

Kendall Flores

"Without the support of my family, boyfriend, NSBE community, AKA, MSL, and God's strength I would not have made it. "

Darin Franklin

Thank you to everyone who has helped me get to this point! I would not be here without my friends, professors, mentors, and family who have encouraged and supported me along the way.

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION GIVING THANKS: A WORD FROM OUR GRADUATES

Riona Grant

"I would like my family and all the UT staff who have supported me on my college journey. I am very thankful for y'all's help!!"

Victoria Hall

"I extend my gratitude to my family, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, my NSBE-UTK family, and the administration of the Dwight Hutchison Engineering Diversity programming for their invaluable contributions to my educational journey."

Mark Hancock

"Thank you to God, my family, roommates, friends, faculty, staff and mentors for supporting me throughout college. "

Dr. Kimberly R. Hill

"I am an atypical PhD student who took longer than most. Despite enduring multiple battles with cancer and the heartbreaking loss of my daughter, my committee never wavered in their support for me for over 12 years. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Norma Mertz, Dr. Karen Boyd, Dr. Steven Waller, Dr. Gary Skolits, and Dr. Robert Kelchen for their unwavering encouragement and belief in me. I could not have finished without your support!"

Jalah Johnson

"I would like thank all of my family and friends that have supported me through this journey."

Ruhama Kebede

"I would like to thank Dr. Yates she has been a pivotal part of my college experience. She has made my passion and love for psychology grow and I could not thank her more for her support. I would not be the person I was today so, Thank You Dr. Yates!"

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION GIVING THANKS: A WORD FROM OUR GRADUATES

Keondra Kirkendoll

"I would like to thank God, my family, friends, and loved ones for supporting me through college. "

Jessie Li

"I would like to thank my friends, family, professors, and mentors for supporting me throughout my time at the University of Tennessee. I am grateful to everyone I met here and everyone who has helped me along my journey!"

Jing Li

"I want to thank all of the faculty and my peers in the Department of Child and Family Studies for contributing tremendously to my personal and professional growth. I have learned so much from them, and I am so incredibly lucky that I got to grow as a scholar in such a nurturing and supportive environment. Thank you to everyone who supported me and inspired me throughout this journey."

John-Michael Joseph Lyons

"I would like to thank my parents, Leah and Marcus Lyons, for their overwhelming amounts of support. I would also like to thank my two sisters, many friends, and all the staff members who have supported, recognized, and encouraged me along the way. I could not have accomplished anything without the amazing people who are in my life."

KJ Malone

"Thank you to Anthony Prewitt, Aaron Dixon, and Carmanette Rawls for your mentorship and guidance. Thank you to Clarence Vaughn, Lakietha Jackson, Nayasha Farior, Pamela Sanchez, and Donna Collier for providing me with a safe space in Haslam."

Elizabeth Martinez

"A huge thank you to my partner, Ahmad Abu-Issa, who has supported me throughout my academic and professional career. My parents, Robert Martinez and Rebecca Rivas, and my brothers Robert and Richard Martinez. My friends in the NE department, Emily, Rida, Thomas and Donald and my advisor Dr. Brown."

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION GIVING THANKS: A WORD FROM OUR GRADUATES

Hailey McGonigal

"I am so grateful to have been apart of the Diversity Educators program and to have been able to contribute to the amazing work this program does! Thank you Allie and Destiny for being such great leaders!!"

Kaiya Simone Moore

"I want to thank everyone in the Haslam COB Office of Access & Community Connections, Tyvi Small, Lamar Bryant, Marshall Steward, Jerry Caplan, Amelia Hart, my friends, and family for traveling along this journey with me. I also want to thank the MS in Marketing faculty/career advisors, my Strange Fruit family, & ME4UT for the continuous love, community, & support. My professors, mentors, friends, & family have kept me grounded throughout this whole process and I cannot be more grateful. I am so thankful to have learned so much & be able to pour into my community because of my experiences. "

Autumn Murphy

"I am so grateful for a program that uplifts the voices of people of color at a PWI where it is easy to be looked over. This program has made me feel seen, accepted, and empowered."

Grace Nystrom

"Thank you Allie for being the best DE advisor! You are amazing!"

Teneria Orange

"I would like to thank my advisor, Alexis Anderson, for all of her support and guidance throughout grad school. To my loving husband, Chris, thank you for being my rock and standing beside me every step of the way. And to the amazing SDC faculty, your dedication to our education has shaped my journey in profound ways. Thank you all."

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION GIVING THANKS: A WORD FROM OUR GRADUATES

Himani Patel

"I am so thankful to my family for their constant support throughout my academic journey. They have stood by me during challenging moments, offering encouragement, and celebrating my notable achievements. I am also grateful for the amazing people, friends, and professors I have met throughout my time in undergraduate school. Thank you for believing in me!"

Manan Utpalkumar Patel

"Thank you to my family, God, and amazing friends for their unwavering support, guidance, and belief in me throughout my educational journey. Your love and encouragement helped me break out of my shell and discover my true potential."

Siddhi Jay Patel

"Thank you to my family and friends for supporting me and being alongside me through my educational journey! Thank you to my mentors Dr. Gladys Alexandre, Dr. Elena Ganusova, Natalie Stepanov, Karmen Stephenson, and Dr. Rania Rizk for their mentorship and guidance so that I could achieve my academic goals! I couldn't have made it here without you all!"

Mary Kate C. Placencia

"I would like to thank my family for doing all they can to get me to where I am today, right here, 4 years later, about to walk the big stage. I would also like to shoutout the amazing people I have met over my time here at UTK that have made college so memorable and hard to leave. I love you guys!"

Manu Rathore

"Bhaskar, this achievement is as much yours as it is mine. Thank you for walking alongside me through every step and stride, and for being the unwavering and steadfast anchor that supported me through the ebbs and flows of this journey. Your presence has been like a beacon of strength."

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION GIVING THANKS: A WORD FROM OUR GRADUATES

Alvin Robertson

"Thank you to all my mentors and people that poured into me. It made me grow as a leader and a person."

Jaylyn Rodgers

"I would like to Thank GOD, my family, friends, my mentors, academic coach, advisors, and last but not least UT. it was not easy but with all these people behind me I was able to perservere through it all. Thank you for the Journey. I MADE IT!"

Adrianna Smith

"I would like to thank the people that came along the way both good and bad. They have molded and shaped me into the person I am today and provided me with the strength and wisdom to continue to grow and succeed."

Abby Solano

"Thanks Julia."

Arketa VanArsdale

"I would like to thank my friends and family for supporting me through college, because I experienced some of the roughest hardships and only got through with their help. I would also like to thank the amazing professors and staff I had the pleasure of meeting and working with here at UT. They gave me invaluable knowledge and helped me realize what I truly want to do."

Abish Faith Villanueva Mendoza

"Dr. Shirinian and Dr. Swamy of the DDHR program were both influential in my studies as a social anthropology major. I want to thank them for encouraging me to expand my critical thinking skills in how we live and organize ourselves to the world around us. I am thankful for my parents and siblings in always believing in my hopes and reassuring me of my self-worth."

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION GIVING THANKS: A WORD FROM OUR GRADUATES

Mariah Wakefield

"I would like to thank Prof. Takeshi Egami for creating an environment of intellectual growth and inclusivity. I would also like to thank my mother for being there for me. Last, thank you Father for the opportunity."

Stephen Walker Jr.

"I would like to thank Mr. Griffin, NSBE, the whole entire MSL staff, and God for guiding and allowing me to have a successful college career!"

Mengjun Wang

"A huge shoutout to my amazing family, incredible friends, and inspiring advisors. Thanks everyone who ever showed up in my life."

JaMeshia Watkins

"I first want to thank God for being the head of my life! If it weren't for Him, I wouldn't have the opportunity to be here today achieving such a great milestone. I would also to extend my greatest appreciation to my family for supporting me along the way and remaining the solid foundation for my success. I love you all so much and this is for YOU!"

Lahai Wicks

"I would like to thank my wife, son, family, and tribe for their love and support."

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION RESOURCES FOR GRADUATES

Find a Special Interest and Diversity Alumni Council

The UT Office of Alumni Relations strives to enrich the lives of students and alumni and advance the university through service to the Volunteer family.

In recognition of our dynamic and diverse alumni populations, we're proud to support several special interest and diversity alumni councils. If you're passionate about building a welcoming community for all Vols and dedicated to UT's traditions of service and leadership, please consider volunteering for a council.

More information about available Alumni Councils can be found at alumni.utk.edu. Councils include:

- [Pride of the Southland Marching Band Alumni Council](#)
- [Latino Alumni Council](#)
- [Army ROTC Alumni Council](#)
- [Air Force ROTC Alumni Council](#)
- [LGBTQIA+ Alumni Council](#)
- [UT Retirees Council](#)
- [Black Alumni Council](#)
- [Young Alumni Council](#)

Graduates interested in joining the Latino Alumni Council or the Black Alumni Council are encouraged to contact Phyllis Moore, Director of Alumni Affairs, at phyllismoore@tennessee.edu.

MULTICULTURAL GRADUATION VENUE MAP

