

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

SEVENTY-SEVENTH
COMMENCEMENT
EXERCISES

2024
COMMENCEMENT



May 17, 2024

Germantown, Rockville, Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campuses
Workforce Development and Continuing Education

A MESSAGE TO THE CLASS OF 2024

DR. JERMAINE F. WILLIAMS
President of Montgomery College

Congratulations to the newest graduates of Montgomery College. My hope for you on this day is that you savor this moment. You have discovered your passions and unlocked your potential to transform lives. Whether you are transferring to a four-year institution, entering the working world, or accomplishing any goal in between, this is your time to celebrate.

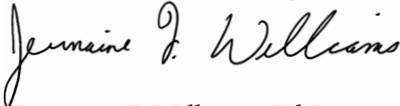


While we are celebrating your achievement today, I know that you will want to remember a parent or relative who encouraged you, a faculty or staff member who guided you, a special friend who supported you, or all of the above. Take a moment to thank and acknowledge the people who helped you make this day a reality.

Your degree or certificate will afford you many exciting opportunities. In turn, I encourage you to help change lives around you: mentor students, volunteer your time, and give back to the community. There are many ways you can make a big difference and many of you are already impactful in your community.

On behalf of the College's Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff, it is a privilege to serve you. As the world changes, and you continue to learn, please know that Montgomery College is here to support your professional journey as needed. I am confident that your work will go on to touch the lives of others with extraordinary impact, enriching the community and changing the world.

All my best,


Jermaine F. Williams, Ed.D.

Montgomery College

2024 Commencement

Friday, the seventeenth of May
Two thousand twenty-four
Ten thirty in the morning
Rockville Campus Athletic Field

PROCESSIONAL†

Pomp and Circumstance
Sir Edward Elgar

ACADEMIC PROCESSION

Ms. Shakenna Adams-Gormley
Chief Marshal

Professor Michael P. Carretta
Professor Tamesha S. Robinson
Professor Heather Bruce Satrom
Dr. Anestine Theophile-LaFond
Montgomery College Faculty Marshals

Dr. Michelle T. Scott
Montgomery College Central Services Marshal

Dr. Katya Salmi
Bearer of the Mace

PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS

Montgomery College Office of Public Safety Honor Guard

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Ms. Eleanor P. Smedberg, Soloist
Student, Montgomery College Department of Performing Arts

Ms. Timera Beckwith, Interpreter
Ms. Katherine Saavedra, Interpreter
Students, American Sign Language Program

WELCOME

Dr. Jermaine F. Williams
President, Montgomery College

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Dr. Michael A. Brintnall
Chair, Montgomery College Board of Trustees

VIDEO

Mr. Rico Newman
Elder, Choptico Band of Piscataway-Conoy Indians

†The audience will please stand during processional and recessional marches.

Montgomery College

2024 Commencement

Continued

PRESENTATION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Dr. Michael A. Brintnall

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD

*Applied Technologies, Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education,
and Workforce Development and Continuing Education*

Mr. Charles David Thompson

Presented by Mr. Omar A. Lazo, Trustee

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD

Arts, Business, Education, English, and Social Sciences

Ms. Jenifer Tatiana Navas Morales

Presented by Mr. Robert F. Levey, Trustee

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD

*Communications, Health Sciences,
Health and Physical Education, and Humanities*

Ms. Joanee Catalina Dias

Presented by The Honorable Maricé Morales, Trustee

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Ms. Monica Selene Escalante Escobar

Presented by Dr. Sheryl Brissett Chapman, Trustee

APPRENTICESHIP ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD

Workforce Development and Continuing Education Apprenticeship Program

Mr. Robert Donald Walsh

Presented by Mr. Rishi G. Nixon, Student Trustee

STUDENT REMARKS

Ms. Jenifer Tatiana Navas Morales

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Dr. Jermaine F. Williams

PRESENTATION OF GRADUATES

Dr. Deidre D. Price

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/College Provost

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

Dr. Jermaine F. Williams

AWARDING OF DEGREES*

Dr. Michael A. Brintnall

*Please withhold applause until all diplomas are awarded.

Montgomery College

2024 Commencement

Continued

RECEIVING OF DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES

Dr. Eric M. Benjamin

Interim Vice President and Provost for Rockville Campus

Dr. Muhammad H. Kehnemouyi

Interim Vice President and Provost for Germantown Campus

Mr. Steven R. Greenfield

*Interim Vice President and Provost for
Workforce Development & Continuing Education*

Dr. Brad J. Stewart

Vice President and Provost for Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus

Mr. Marcus E. Peanort

Interim Collegewide Dean of Student Access and Germantown Student Affairs

Dr. Tonya R. Mason

Collegewide Dean of Student Success and Rockville Student Affairs

Ms. Janeé K. McFadden

*Collegewide Dean of Student Engagement and
Takoma Park/Silver Spring Student Affairs*

Dr. Donna A. Kinerney

Instructional Dean of Adult ESOL and Literacy Programs

TURNING OF THE TASSEL

Dr. Jermaine F. Williams

Board of Trustees Academic Excellence Award Honorees

INDUCTION OF GRADUATES INTO ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Mr. Jon W. Pointer '89

President, Montgomery College Alumni Association

RECESSIONAL[†]

Pomp and Circumstance

Sir Edward Elgar

Please note that your attendance at commencement constitutes consent for Montgomery College taking photographs and video, and using those photographs and video for promotional and other purposes.

[†]The audience will please stand during processional and recessional marches.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Board of Trustees Academic Excellence Award

The 2024 Board of Trustees Academic Excellence Award is bestowed upon Mr. Charles David Thompson for Applied Technologies, Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education, and Workforce Development and Continuing Education; Ms. Jenifer Tatiana Navas Morales for Arts, Business, Education, English, and Social Sciences (ABEESS); Ms. Joanee Catalina Dias for Communications, Health Sciences, Health and Physical Education, and Humanities (CHSHPEH); Ms. Monica Selene Escalante Escobar for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); and Mr. Robert Donald Walsh for the Apprenticeship Academic Excellence Award for Workforce Development and Continuing Education Apprenticeship Program by Dr. Michael A. Brintnall, chair, Montgomery College Board of Trustees.

Candidates for nomination must be eligible for graduation. The nominee must have received an associate's degree (as a first undergraduate degree) in summer or fall terms, or have completed 45 credit hours and have in progress final requirements for an associate's degree (as a first undergraduate degree) in the spring term of the given academic year. At least 25 of the required credit hours must have been taken at Montgomery College. The nominee must have maintained a cumulative grade point average of 3.8 in all courses at the College.

The Board of Trustees also recognizes outstanding runners-up for the 2024 Board of Trustees Academic Excellence Award: Ms. Mariam Kora Bah for ABEESS; Ms. Sofia Hall-Levin for CHSHPEH; and Mr. Robsun Bacha Gina for STEM. Each runner-up will receive a cash award to be applied to future tuition or educational purposes.

Presidential Academic Excellence Award

The 2024 Presidential Academic Excellence Award is bestowed upon Mr. Brian K. Shaffer, Germantown Campus; Mr. Rasheevan Nair, Rockville Campus; and Ms. Maulika Masson, Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

Students nominated for the Presidential Academic Excellence Award must exhibit evidence of outstanding scholarship in the form of a 3.5 grade point average or above at the time of nomination. The nominee must also show evidence of outstanding leadership in the College and/or in the community, evidence of outstanding service to the College and/or in the community, and matriculation in a curriculum and completion of at least 28 semester hours of credit earned at Montgomery College. The scholars will receive cash awards to be applied to future tuition or educational purposes of their choice.

HONORS AND AWARDS

Honors Program

The honors program distinction is given to students who graduate in one of the Montgomery College honors programs—Macklin Scholars, Montgomery Scholars, Renaissance Scholars, or the Collegewide Honors Program—with at least 15 honors credits in at least three different disciplines and a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.4.

Graduating with Honors

Students earn the honors distinction by graduating with at least a 3.4 grade point average in any Montgomery College curriculum.

Phi Theta Kappa

Phi Theta Kappa is the national honor society for students at two-year colleges. To be considered for election to Phi Theta Kappa, a student must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.5 for at least 15 credit hours of course work at Montgomery College and be enrolled in a degree program or transfer curriculum. A cumulative grade point average of 3.4 must be maintained to retain membership. Election to Phi Theta Kappa represents one of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon a student at Montgomery College.

Gamma Theta Upsilon

Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU), the international honor society in geography, was founded in 1928 and became a national organization in 1931. The purpose of this organization is to encourage professional interest in geography; to strengthen student and professional training through academic experiences; to stimulate research; to award scholarships for students pursuing geography as a major at the undergraduate and graduate levels; and to advance the status of geography as a cultural, physical, and applied discipline. Members have met academic requirements and share a common interest in the geographic field of study. The majority of these members are applied geography, cartography, geographic information systems, and geographic education majors.

In 1993, the applied geography program at Montgomery College's Rockville Campus became the first two-year program to be awarded a chapter of GTU, Theta Eta. The members of Theta Eta volunteer throughout the academic year for various activities. Some of the activities include performing community service; participating at national and international conferences; engaging in city, county, state, and federal government projects, as well as private industry; conducting fundraisers; and hosting special events and activities. GTU is proud to be celebrating 31 years of scholarly achievements at Montgomery College.

2024 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD HONOREES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD

*Applied Technologies, Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education,
and Workforce Development and Continuing Education*

MR. CHARLES DAVID THOMPSON

MR. CHARLES DAVID THOMPSON, an environmental horticulture major, is graduating with a 3.9 grade point average. He received the David M. Rubenstein Economic Club of Washington, D.C. and the Charles and Estelle Feigenbaum Scholarships for academic achievement.

He interned at the Washington National Cathedral's historic Bishop's Garden last summer, where he was mentored by industry leaders, and designed and maintained intricate landscapes. He also was an apprentice at McKnight Gardens. He volunteered with environmental restoration projects around Washington, specifically at Soapstone Creek. He tutored children at Unique Learning Center, in Washington, D.C. He also earned the rank of Eagle Scout.

He transferred to York College, where he majors in environmental horticulture. He participates on Ultimate Frisbee team and in Young Life. He is also active in his church and community, leading service projects and mission trips. He will intern with the National Park Service this summer as a field leader. He is a native Washingtonian and member of the Permaculture Club. Ultimately, he hopes to have a career in horticulture.



2024 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD HONOREES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD *Arts, Business, Education, English, and Social Sciences*

MS. JENIFER TATIANA NAVAS MORALES STUDENT SPEAKER

MS. JENIFER TATIANA NAVAS MORALES, an early childhood education/special education major and member of Phi Theta Kappa, is graduating with a 4.0 grade point average.

Born in El Salvador, she came to the United States with her family at the age of four. A DACA recipient with limited funds, she entered the workforce after graduating from Magruder High School. Working at Bright Eyes Early Learning Center, she found her passion. She began taking certification courses—and wanted to pursue an associate’s degree. She has worked full time while attending classes. She made the Dean’s List every semester. In November 2023, she earned induction to Phi Theta Kappa.

Outside school and work, she directs her church’s food bank program, packing, transporting, and distributing essential goods to designated communities. She also directs the youth program and assists with teaching children.

She will transfer to Towson University’s early childhood education program at the Universities at Shady Grove. Her goal is to become a first grade teacher.



2024 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD HONOREES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD *Communications, Health Sciences, Health and Physical Education, and Humanities*

MS. JOANEE CATALINA DIAS

MS. JOANEE CATALINA DIAS, a criminal justice major and member of Phi Theta Kappa, is graduating with a 3.9 grade point average. She was a member of the Montgomery Scholars honors program. She served as a senator at large for one semester at the Rockville Campus. She received the Robert Gruenberg Memorial Endowed Scholarship and the Honors Scholar award.

While she attended school, she interned for Salvado Law, a defense firm. She helped minimize the language barrier many clients encountered when attempting to comprehend legal processes.

Last summer, she was an investigative intern at the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia. She worked on investigative tasks to provide the best defense for indigent community members.

She wants to be the voice for marginalized members of society. She hopes to obtain a juris doctorate and focus on public advocacy work. She believes equality and reform is an uphill battle, but if efforts are not persistent then progress will be stagnant.



2024 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD HONOREES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD *Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics*

MS. MONICA SELENE ESCALANTE ESCOBAR

MS. MONICA SELENA ESCALANTE ESCOBAR, an electrical engineering major and member of Phi Theta Kappa, is graduating with a 3.86 grade point average. Born and raised in El Salvador, she moved to the United States in 2012.

She is a member of Montgomery Scholars and the Southern Management Leadership Program. She was president of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Club and treasurer of the Academic Development Club. She earned the Honors Scholars Award, the Excellence in Engineering Physics Award, the Dr. Harry Harden Jr. Student Academic Excellence Award, and was a semifinalist for the Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship.



Last summer, she led her team in the Cyber-Physical Systems Engineering Summer Program. She also interned at Farias Electrical Contractors. She volunteers for the First Aid Team at the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad. She will pursue certification for an Emergency Medical Technician this summer.

She will transfer to University of Maryland for a bachelor's in electrical engineering. She hopes to inspire other first-generation students and be a leader in Engineers Without Borders.

2024 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD HONOREES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES APPRENTICESHIP ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD *Workforce Development and Continuing Education Apprenticeship Program*

MR. ROBERT DONALD WALSH

MR. ROBERT DONALD WALSH is completing a two-year apprenticeship program as an automotive technician. He is graduating with a 3.8 grade point average. He is enrolled in the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association apprentice-related instruction program. A two-year employee of Jim Coleman Cadillac, he will assume the role of automotive technician upon graduation.

A racing enthusiast, especially Formula Drift Car racing, he hopes to compete in the sport. He earned the rank of Black Belt in Budo Taijitsu martial arts and Eagle Scout from the Boy Scouts of America.



Having a sister with Down Syndrome, he regularly participates in charitable events and activities to raise awareness and social acceptance for people with disabilities. He currently volunteers as an assistant scoutmaster in his scout troop, helping younger scouts work toward the rank of Eagle Scout.

He wants to continue his education and become one of the youngest Automotive Service Excellence certified master technicians in the area. Ultimately, he would like to own his own business. He resides in New Market.

2024 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD HONOREES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD
Arts, Business, Education, English, and Social Sciences
OUTSTANDING RUNNER-UP

MS. MARIAM KORA BAH

MS. MARIAM KORA BAH, a business major, is graduating with a 3.85 grade point average. She grew up in Guinea, West Africa. After graduating high school, she moved to the United States to complete her higher education studies.

While she started her first year in college with limited language proficiency, she was determined to learn. She took several ESL courses. She also engaged in leadership opportunities that leveraged her experience as a first-generation college student to be a changemaker in her community. She started at Delaware Technical Community College (DTCC).



Thinking she would have more opportunities and experiences, she moved to Maryland and enrolled at the Rockville Campus. At DTCC, she was involved in the Presidential Student Leadership Academy. In high school she volunteered helping orphans.

She hopes to continue her education at University of Maryland as an accounting major and become a CPA. She would like to open an accounting firm in Guinea.

2024 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD HONOREES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD
*Communications, Health Sciences,
Health and Physical Education, and Humanities*
OUTSTANDING RUNNER-UP

MS. SOFIA HALL-LEVIN

MS. SOFIA HALL-LEVIN, a general studies major (social science, health, and administration) and member of Phi Theta Kappa, is graduating with a 4.0 grade point average. She is a dual enrollment student at Northwood High School, who will be graduating with her associate's degree and her high school diploma.



At her high school, she led and participated in many organizations, including the Minority Scholars Program and the Northwood Official Voice Association, where she was a founding member. At Montgomery College, she published a short story in the *Sligo Journal* and participated in the Renaissance Scholars honors program. She volunteers at Shepherd's Table and is an intern at Soleado Lavender Farm, where she is designing a native plant garden.

She will be attending University of Maryland as an environmental science and policy major in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

2024 ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD HONOREES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD *Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics* OUTSTANDING RUNNER-UP

MR. ROBSUN BACHA GINA

MR. ROBSUN BACHA GINA, a mechanical engineering major and member of Phi Theta Kappa, is graduating with a 4.0 grade point average. Originally from Ethiopia, he ventured to the United States after completing high school. He possesses a passion for innovation and education.

He serves as a student assistant at the College's Engineering Innovation Center, where he lends his expertise to fellow students, guiding them through intricate engineering designs. Additionally, he volunteers as a tutor and advisor, offering support to high school and college students.



He is currently working on research at NIST as an intern. Looking ahead, he plans to pursue a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering, with a specific focus on autonomous robotics and their applications in space exploration.

Despite his busy schedule, he finds time to play Rocket League, an esports game, where he has achieved an impressive rank of Diamond 2.

ACADEMIC TRADITIONS AND SYMBOLS

Academic Regalia

The academic procession in modern university life embodies a relic of medievalism. The somber gowns and colorful hoods are not unlike those worn by scholars and churchmen perhaps as early as the 12th century. The garb in those times had an element of utility. The robes were warm; the hoods could be drawn up to protect against drafts in unheated buildings.

Traditionally, the hood's silken lining has been in the color of the wearer's university. The color of the bordering velvet indicates the special area of study. White velvet represents arts, letters, and humanities; dark blue, philosophy; light blue, education; purple, law; dark green, medicine; apricot, nursing; lilac, dentistry; olive, pharmacy; pink, music; orange, engineering; citron, social work. Tassels on the "mortarboards," or caps, of the candidates for degrees correspond in color to the velvet borders of the hoods.

Gowns representing the master's and doctor's degrees vary in style. The master's gown has long, narrow closed sleeves, which extend below the knees. The doctor's gown has full bell-shaped sleeves with three bars of velvet and a front opening faced with wide velvet bands in either black or the color indicating the area of study.

There is no general rule for the position of the tassel on a mortarboard. However, it has become customary for candidates for degrees to wear the tassels on the right side before the degrees are conferred and to shift them to the left at the moment the degrees are awarded to them.

Montgomery College Mace

The mace is the official symbol of the College's power and authority. The bearer of the mace for the 2024 commencement procession is Dr. Katya Salmi, associate professor, and coordinator, sociology.

The fluted mahogany staff is adorned with antique silver-colored rings with engravings honoring past Montgomery College presidents. The base of the 42½-inch mace is fitted with antique silver to match the rings. The mace is capped by two black marble disks encasing antique silver panels that form an octagon. The panels are engraved with the names of the Montgomery College campuses. The finial is composed of a 3½-inch antique silver-plated medallion embossed with the College's seal, which is mounted on a diagonal mahogany surround.

The previous mace was designed by George Hatzenbuhler, an art student on the Rockville Campus in 1976. The original Montgomery College mace was designed and executed by professors emerita M. Gloria Monteiro and the late Dr. LaVerne W. Miller in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the College.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

The Induction Pledge

I am a graduate of Montgomery College.

I have achieved my goal of graduation through my own hard work and dedication, and with the support of my family, friends, and faculty.

As a graduate, I am now a member of the Montgomery College Alumni Association. In this capacity, I have earned the privilege of a mutually beneficial and lasting relationship with the College and its community.

Today, I move forward to embrace new opportunities and to meet the challenges that lie ahead. But as I do, I also recognize that my Montgomery College experience will remain forever an important part of my life.

The opportunity of a Montgomery College education confers upon me a responsibility to help ensure the continued strength of this great institution. I will not forget this responsibility.

I am a graduate of Montgomery College.



Montgomery College Board of Trustees
(as of May 17, 2024)

Dr. Michael A. Brintnall, *Chair*
Dr. Frieda K. Lacey, *First Vice Chair*
Ms. Gloria Aparicio Blackwell, *Second Vice Chair*
Dr. Sheryl Brissett Chapman
Ms. Annice Cody
Dr. Judith R. Docca
Mr. Omar A. Lazo
Mr. Robert F. Levey
The Honorable Maricé I. Morales
Mr. Rishi G. Nixon, *Student Trustee*
Dr. Jermaine F. Williams, *Secretary-Treasurer*
and Montgomery College President



MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Germantown, Rockville, and Takoma Park/Silver Spring, Maryland

Montgomery College is an academic institution committed to promoting equal opportunity and fostering diversity among its students, faculty, and staff.

Produced by the Office of Advancement and Community Engagement