



*One Hundred Fifty Seventh*

# **COMMENCEMENT**

The Sixteenth Day of May  
Two Thousand and Twenty Six  
at Half Past Ten O'Clock in the Morning

Blackburn College Campus

***WHERE LEADERS RISE***

# BLACKBURN COLLEGE

## TRUSTEES OF BLACKBURN COLLEGE

Dan Anderson '74

Lisa Black-Gomez '81

Salina Brown '03

Kenneth R. Deihl '78

David Dorris '69

James Faust '64

Jennifer Hamilton '70

Thomas Heinz '70

Raymond R. Kennelly '82

Michael Kokal

Cynthia LaMar '73

George Preckwinkle

Sarah Robison '84

James D. Sandfort

Jennifer Shelby

Don Taylor

Paul Tepikian '77

## EMERITI TRUSTEES OF BLACKBURN COLLEGE

Charles J. Beetz '62

Lois Byerly '51

Lois DeFleur '58

Paul DeLano '92

William Jewell '57

Lonnie Lee

Cress Maddox

Robert Marovich

Bryan Meyers

David Olsen '77

Stanley M. Pillman

Richard Wier '61

Steven V. Wilkinson

Edward Young '62

## PRESIDENT

Larry K. Lee, B.A., M.S.

## MARSHALS

James Bray, B.A., Ph.D., College Marshal

Darius Duff '26, B.A., Student Marshal

## SPEAKERS/PRESENTERS/CONDUCTOR

Kahindo Mateene '99, B.A., M.S., Keynote Speaker

Laura Wiedlocher, Ph.D., Provost

Noah Daum '18, B.A., Alumni Board President

Logan Elliott '19, B.A., M.A., Dean of Students

Marcella Cloud '16, B.A., Chaplain, Spiritual Life

Joseph Welch, B.A., Ph.D., Professor of Music

## BEGINNINGS

Blackburn College was founded in 1837 by the Reverend Gideon Blackburn, D.D. (1772-1838), a Presbyterian minister. Chartered in 1857 as Blackburn Theological Seminary, the institution was incorporated in 1869 as The Blackburn University. Blackburn College enjoys covenant relationships with the Presbytery of Great Rivers, the Synod of Lincoln Trails of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Carlinville Federated Church. The first commencement was held in June 1870 for a class of one woman and six men.

# COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

## ORDER OF PROCESSION

The Mace  
The Colors  
The Banner  
The Student Marshal  
The Candidates for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts  
The Choir  
The Faculty  
Administrative Officers and Dignitaries  
The Trustees  
The President

## THE STANDARDS

The chief device of the Banner is the College Seal, hand embroidered. The seven squares that pierce the strap band of the fanon recall the Liberal Arts of university education in the Middle Ages—The Trivium: Grammar, Rhetoric, and Dialectic, and the more advanced Quadrivium: Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music—broad studies that are the piers for much of what is taught in universities and colleges today. The three bands that complete the Banner stand for the fundamental virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity.

## THE MACE

In keeping with the general custom, the authority of the President of Blackburn College, the service of former Presidents, Acting Presidents, and Principals, and the allegiance of the College to the cause of liberty in scholarship and learning are represented by a Mace. Here the Emblem is a shaft of black walnut wood fitted with bronze cast in the College Foundry. The head of the Mace carries engraved on its facets the Seal, and the names and the tenures of those who have governed the College since 1859, the first year of instruction. The foot bears the names and familiar badge of the College, The Beaver, *Castor canadensis*. The Mace is borne by the College Marshal at the head of College processions.

## ABOUT OUR SPECIAL GUEST



Kahindo Mateene is an award-winning fashion designer and entrepreneur based in New York. Born in Uganda to Congolese parents and raised across several African countries, her multicultural upbringing deeply influences her use of color, textile exploration, and storytelling through fashion. She is the founder of KAHINDO, a fashion brand known for bold statement occasion wear that blends African heritage with modern design.

A proud alumna of Blackburn College, Kahindo earned her Bachelor of Arts before pursuing fashion design studies at the Illinois Institute of Art in Chicago. Through KAHINDO, she champions ethical production and economic empowerment by producing collections in Africa and creating sustainable employment opportunities for women.

Her brand has been carried by major retailers including Nordstrom, Bloomingdale's, Anthropologie, Shopbop, Rent the Runway, Nuuly, and Wolf & Badger. Kahindo gained national recognition as a designer on Season 12 of Project Runway and has since been named a Tory Burch Fellow and a graduate of the Workshop at Macy's. Her work has been featured in Vogue, WWD, The New York Times, Elle, Essence, and Marie Claire.

*The 157th Commencement of Blackburn College*  
**ORDER OF COMMENCEMENT**

Mr. Larry K. Lee  
President of the College  
Presiding

Dr. James Bray  
College Marshal

**\*PROCESSIONAL MARCH**

*Pomp and Circumstance*  
The Metropolitan Brass Quintet

arr. Sir Edward Elgar

**\*NATIONAL ANTHEM**

*Star Spangled Banner*  
Blackburn College Choir  
(audience participation)

Francis Scott Key

**INVOCATION**

Ms. Marcella Cloud '16

**\*HYMN**

*The Blackburn College Hymn*  
(words on back page)

Lowe-Forbes

**WELCOME**

Mr. Larry K. Lee

**STUDENT MARSHAL ADDRESS**

Mr. Darius Duff '26

**THE COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS**

Ms. Kahindo Mateene '99

# COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

## PRESENTATIONS

## PRESENTER

### ACADEMIC AWARDS

Dr. Laura Wiedlocher

Academic Departmental Awards

Senators Vince and Deanna Demuzio Education and Leadership Awards

Hudson Prize for Scholarly or Creative Accomplishment

Hudson Prize for Contributions to College Community

### ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Mr. Noah Daum '18  
Alumni Board President

Outstanding Graduate Award

### SENIOR STUDENT LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION

Mr. Logan Elliott '19

### COLLEGE CHOIR

"Ready to Soar"  
Blackburn College Choir

Mr. Tim Osiek

### CONFERRING OF BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREES

Mr. Larry K. Lee  
Dr. Laura Wiedlocher

### MOVING OF TASSELS AND CHARGE TO THE CLASS OF 2026

Mr. Larry K. Lee

### \*RETIRING PROCESSION

The Metropolitan Brass Quintet

\* Members of the audience standing

# BLACKBURN COLLEGE

## BACHELOR OF ARTS

<b>Rachael Karen Albert</b> <i>Early Childhood Education</i>	<b>Kanyon D. Garrison</b> <i>History</i>	<b>Olivia Rose Leemon</b> † ^ <i>Art</i>
<b>Breana Kay Allen</b> <i>Biology-Pre-Med and Other Health Professions Track</i>	<b>Blake Goodman</b> <i>Sport Management</i>	<b>Elise Anne Lehmann</b> <i>History</i>
<b>Lexi Bates</b> <i>Early Childhood Education</i>	<b>Kevin P. Hall</b> <i>Justice Administration</i>	<b>Patrick J. Leonard III</b> • <i>Sport Management</i>
<b>Luke O. Bell</b> • <i>Biology - General Track</i>	<b>Jacob E. Hamel</b> <i>Psychology</i>	<b>Jazmin Nicole Lewis</b> <i>Educational Studies - Education Paraprofessional Track</i>
<b>Claudia Bennett</b> <i>Justice Administration</i>	<b>Ashley Nicole Hickerson</b> • <i>Computer Science - Cybersecurity Track</i>	<b>Thomas Lieber</b> <i>Biology - Environmental Track</i>
<b>Rebecca Rae Benoit</b> <i>Psychology</i>	<b>Michelle BrieAnn Hollon</b> ^ <i>Elementary Education</i>	<b>Kara Ann Mantia</b> † ^ <i>Biology - General Track</i>
<b>James Dylan Best</b> <i>Physical Education with K-12 Certification</i>	<b>Madelynn Rose Hulett</b> <i>Early Childhood Education</i>	<b>Kayla Marie Mantia</b> † ^ <i>Biology - General Track</i>
<b>Beth Elise Brill</b> † ◊ <i>Psychology/Music-Voice Performance</i>	<b>Henry Ibarguen Londono</b> <i>Business Marketing</i>	<b>Tyler Briggs Marconi</b> <i>Sport Management</i>
<b>Clayton Joshua Brunaugh</b> <i>Elementary Education</i>	<b>Lucas Jon Jennings</b> <i>British and American Literature</i>	<b>John William Mason</b> • <i>Sport Management</i>
<b>Nicholas Russell Cook</b> <i>Business Marketing</i>	<b>Gracie Madelynn Jent</b> ◊ <i>Psychology</i>	<b>Charlie Michael McDonough</b> ◊ <i>Justice Administration/Psychology</i>
<b>Peyton Dahler</b> » <i>Elementary Education</i>	<b>Trent M. Jilg</b> <i>Early Childhood Education</i>	<b>Delaney Jo McEvers</b> <i>Early Childhood Education</i>
<b>Abigail Rose Droege</b> <i>Physical Education with K-12 Certification</i>	<b>Cameron Antonio Johnson</b> • <i>Computer Science - General Track</i>	<b>Brianna Melchor</b> • ^ <i>Business Management</i>
<b>Darius Dequon Duff</b> • † ^ <i>Accounting</i>	<b>Tyson Johnson</b> <i>Business Administration</i>	<b>Kate Merriman</b> • <i>Elementary Education</i>
<b>Catherine Rose Embry</b> <i>Early Childhood Education</i>	<b>David Kane</b> <i>Biology - Environmental Track</i>	<b>Zoe B. Mitchell</b> • ^ <i>Physical Education with K-12 Certification</i>
<b>Storm MargieMae-Alice England</b> <i>Computer Science - Cybersecurity Track</i>	<b>Kelton Keran</b> <i>Sport Management</i>	<b>Joshua Lee Moreno</b> † ^ <i>Physical Education with K-12 Certification</i>
<b>Cassidy S. Eyman</b> <i>Business Administration</i>	<b>Shelby Ann Koenig</b> † ^ <i>Business Management/Accounting</i>	<b>Michaela Marie Moulton</b> <i>Sport Management</i>
<b>Allison Paige Fancil</b> <i>Elementary Education</i>	<b>Kailynn J. Kruep</b> <i>Sport Management</i>	<b>Brooke Annette Naumann</b> <i>Art</i>
<b>Ryan Russell Farris</b> • <i>Business Management</i>	<b>Damien Kulash</b> <i>Computer Science - General Track</i>	<b>Gregory Eugene Naumann</b> • <i>Business Administration</i>
<b>Margaret Kelly Felish</b> <i>Early Childhood Education</i>	<b>Brett Michael Lander</b> <i>Sport Management</i>	<b>Janelle L. Naumann</b> ◊ <i>Art</i>
<b>Amber Nicole Gardner</b> † <i>Early Childhood Education</i>	<b>Isabelle G. Lansaw</b> <i>Graphic Design</i>	<b>Marco Antonio Nova</b> <i>Special Education</i>

*Inclusion of name in this program does not constitute evidence of graduation.  
Degree conferral and honors are verified by an official transcript.*

• Manager in the Work Program  
» Lincoln Academy of Illinois -- Student Laureate

† Members of Alpha Chi National College Honor Society  
◊ Members of Psi Chi International Honor Society  
^ Members of Chi Alpha Sigma National Scholar-Athlete Society

*\*Graduates wearing Blackburn College hoods have been inducted into Alpha Chi,  
the national academic honor society open to students ranked in the top 10 percent of their class.*

# CLASS OF 2026

**Kimberly Ann Nunnally**

*Early Childhood Education*

**Cayden Christopher Paquette**

*Marketing*

**Connor Scot Partin** •

*Justice Administration*

**Kobe Wesley Patton**

*Sport Management*

**Cara Marie Pence** ^

*Elementary Education*

**Sage Pratt**

*Elementary Education*

**Nicholas A. Rosborough**

*Computer Science - Cybersecurity Track*

**Francisco Aaron Ruiz**

*Physical Education with K-12 Certification*

**Jacob Thomas Sauvage** ^

*Physical Education with K-12 Certification*

**Caleb Joseph Schaab** • ^

*Biology - General Track*

**Abygail L. Sobczak**

*Psychology*

**Gabriela M. Solís Montalvo**

*Justice Administration/Psychology*

**Ian Patrick Sullivan**

*Physical Education with K-12 Certification*

**Julianna Marie Ortiz Tabian**

*Biology - General Track*

**Josiah Emmanuel Talmadge**

*Sport Management*

**Anderson Tavares Garcia**

*Communication and Media Studies*

**Kameron Michael Tharp**

*Creative Writing*

**Lucy Noelle Thompson** †

*Graphic Design*

**Landan Tribble** •

*Business Administration*

**Caidy Lynn Tuetken**

*Sport Management*

**Danielle Elizabeth Vogel**

*Business Management*

**A. R. Ward** † ◊

*Graphic Design*

**Jordan Marie Watts** •

*Biology - General Track*

**Michayne Karenna Weber** †

*Secondary English Education/Theatre*

**Hunter Michael White**

*History*

**Grace Wilton**

*Elementary Education*

**Allison Mae Woolard**

*Justice Administration*

**Mason Donald Wyatt**

*Physical Education with K-12 Certification*

## CERTIFICATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

Kylie Ann Kim

*Education*

## TEACHER LICENSURE PROGRAM

Afza Akhil

Dominique Annis

Breann Bailey

Garrett Baker

Sara Balster

Taylor Baretz

Amanda Bass

Brittany Bejabeng

Beatriz Blomgren

Colten Boehm

Jordan Bowman

Sarah Bowman-Steffes

Laurie Brace

Jacara Brisco

Keegan Brown

Lydia Brown

Brooke Buffington

Alicia Carlisle

Elysa Chambers

Desiree Clark

Jonathan Clark

Elizabeth Curtis

Mackenzie David

Kevin Davis

James Dambacher

Jacob Donaubauer

Jason Edwards

Katherine Esquivel

Nafeesa Farrakhan

Kaitlin Fenton

Keiniee Fines

Nicole Force

Jacqueline Ford

Zack Hanlon

Ariel Henry

America Hernandez Burgos

Jessica Hill

Darryl Matthew Humphrey

Maranda Jackson

Alexis James

Leah Kaminski

Randi Krehbiel

Stephanie Lazar

Michelle Leaks

Natalie Lefkowitz

Lydia Lewis

Marie Linden

Kaylah Lopez

Amber Lozzi

Sydney March

Dorothy Mars

Linda McBride

Sharon Moore

Quinn McConnell

Lashay Murdock

Alexis O'Dell

Sergio Parks

Chad Parsons

Anahi Perez

Charne Rainey

Kaylah Rainey

Stephanie Reese

Camila Rico

Lexi Riemann

Linda Schuman

Mackenzie Smith

Emily Spalding

Andrew Springer

Kacey Swisher

Rebecca Tarrant

Ryan Tepperman

Seema Tewari

Tammy Threatt

DaJuan Tolbert

Danielle Weber

Kamren Williams

Kier Williams-Thomas

Charles Witt

Megan Wright

# BLACKBURN COLLEGE CLASS OF 2026

## LATIN HONORS

### SUMMA CUM LAUDE

Storm MargieMae-Alice England - Valedictorian  
A. R. Ward - Valedictorian  
Beth Elise Brill - Salutatorian

Rachael Karen Albert	Darius Dequon Duff	Kailynn J. Kruep	Kate Merriman
Lexi Bates	Catherine Rose Embry	Olivia Rose Leemon	Joshua Lee Moreno
Clayton Joshua Brunaugh	Margaret Kelly Felish	Patrick J. Leonard III	Lucy Noelle Thompson
Nicholas Russell Cook	Amber Nicole Gardner	Kara Ann Mantia	Michayne Karena Weber
Peyton Dahler	Jacob E. Hamel	Kayla Marie Mantia	Grace Wilton
Abigail Rose Droege	Shelby Ann Koenig	Delaney Jo McEvers	

### MAGNA CUM LAUDE

Allison Paige Fancil	Gracie Madelynn Jent	Brianna Melchor	Jacob Thomas Sauvage
Kanyon D. Garrison	Brett Michael Lander	Zoe B. Mitchell	Caleb Joseph Schaab
Ashley Nicole Hickerson	Isabelle G. Lansaw	Cara Marie Pence	
Madelynn Rose Hulett	Charlie Michael McDonough	Sage Pratt	

### CUM LAUDE

Claudia Bennett	Henry Ibarquen Londono	Janelle L. Naumann	Allison Mae Woolard
Michelle BrieAnn Hollon	Thomas Lieber	Kameron Michael Tharp	

### DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

Rachael Karen Albert	Kanyon D. Garrison	Patrick J. Leonard III	Joshua Lee Moreno
Beth Elise Brill	Jacob E. Hamel	Kara Ann Mantia	Janelle L. Naumann
Clayton Joshua Brunaugh	Michelle BrieAnn Hollon	Kayla Marie Mantia	Cara Marie Pence
Peyton Dahler	Gracie Madelynn Jent	Charlie Michael McDonough	Sage Pratt
Abigail Rose Droege	Shelby Ann Koenig	Delaney Jo McEvers	Jacob Thomas Sauvage
Darius Dequon Duff	Kailynn J. Kruep	Brianna Melchor	Lucy Noelle Thompson
Storm MargieMae-Alice England	Isabelle G. Lansaw	Kate Merriman	A. R. Ward
Amber Nicole Gardner	Olivia Rose Leemon	Zoe B. Mitchell	Michayne Karena Weber
			Grace Wilton

COLLEGE  
**Blackburn**

**WHERE LEADERS RISE**

*Departmental Honors—Awarded to students who have earned a grade point average of 3.8 or above on a 4.0 scale in their major field of study and 3.5 in all courses.*

*Eligibility for Latin honors is based solely on the grade point average earned in Blackburn coursework and a minimum of 61 Blackburn credit hours.*

# THE BLACKBURN COLLEGE HYMN

*Lowe-Forbes*

*Blackburn, Blackburn, Alma Mater*

*Unify these years of youth:*

*Fix on us thy three-fold blessing –  
Friendship, work, and will to Truth.*

*Blackburn, now thy sons and daughters,*

*Pledging heart and hand and mind,*

*Join themselves to thy first calling,  
One For Christ and all Mankind.*

## ACADEMIC DRESS

Academic dress is the formal dress of the brotherhood of learning, a community begun a thousand years ago. The attire makes known a degree held by the wearer, the field of that degree, and the institution which granted the degree. These particulars are simply stated by the shape of the sleeve of the gown and by the colors of the hood.

The Bachelor sleeve is pointed. The Master sleeve is oblong. The Doctor sleeve, sometimes gathered at the wrist, is bell-shaped, and is barred. Another badge of the Doctorate is the cap with the tassel of gold.

The field of the degree is stated by the color of the neck cloth of the hood. In every land the neck cloth that is scarlet signifies Theology, the premier study, but the color signs of other fields vary from one academic jurisdiction to another.

Throughout the United States a degree in Agriculture is always represented by a neck cloth of the color maize, Architecture or Fine Arts by the color brown, Business or Commerce or Accountancy drab, Dentistry lilac, Economics copper, Education light blue, Engineering orange, Forestry russet, Home Economics maroon, Journalism crimson, Law purple, Liberal Arts white, Music pink, Pharmacy olive green, Philosophy and any field it embraces blue, Physical Education sage green, Public Administration or Foreign Service peacock blue, Public Health salmon pink, Science golden yellow, Social Work citron, Speech or Oratory silver gray, Veterinary Science gray.

In America the most frequently awarded honorary doctorates are Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) – Doctor of Fine Arts (D.F.A.) – Doctor of Humane Letters (L.H.D.) – Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) – Doctor of Letters (Litt.D.) – Doctor of Music (D.Mus.) – and Doctor of Science (D.Sc.).

The degree of Master of Arts (M.A.), commonly an earned one, is given as an honor occasionally.

The institution which granted the degree, earned or *honoris causa*, is made known by the hue or hues of the lining of the hood; and in academic processions it is this heraldry which is the major brightness against the medieval black still used for the gown by most institutions in this country.

Abroad, much of the academic dress abides by earlier, more diverse and vivid forms.

## PRESIDENTIAL GARB

The responsibility of the President is represented by a collar of office. The collar links are silver discs in silver oblongs and the pendant is an image of the College seal. The gown of scarlet is worn by the President on ceremonial occasions. The color, emblematic of theology, reminds us that the College had its beginning as a Theological Seminary.

COLLEGE  
**Blackburn**

**WHERE LEADERS RISE**