

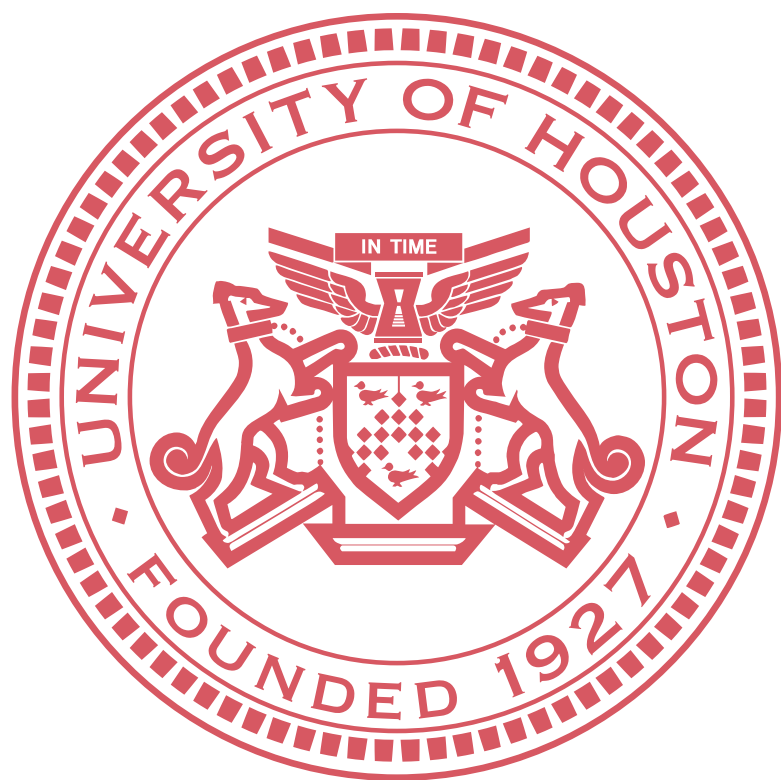


**UNIVERSITY OF
HOUSTON**

Spring 2026 Commencement

**GRADUATE COLLEGE
OF SOCIAL WORK**

*Friday, May 15, 2026
Fertitta Center*





University of Houston
Graduate College of Social Work

Commencement Ceremony
Friday, May 15, 2026, 7:00 p.m.
Fertitta Center

Message from Renu Khator, <i>President</i>	p. 3
Message from Diane Z. Chase, <i>Provost</i>	p. 5
University of Houston System Board of Regents	p. 6
President's Cabinet	p. 6
University of Houston Deans	p. 7
University of Houston History	p. 8
Commencement Traditions	p. 9
Ceremonial Symbols	p. 11
Honorary Degrees	p. 12
Graduate College of Social Work	
Message from Yarneccia Dyson, <i>Dean</i>	p. 15
Order of Program	p. 16
GCSW Spirit of Social Work Award	p. 17
Graduates	p. 18
Alumni Association	
Message from Sandy Lee, <i>Alumni Association President</i>	p. 25





Message from the President

Dear University of Houston Graduates,

It is my joy to congratulate you on reaching this remarkable milestone. Receiving your college degree is an incredible achievement, and today we all celebrate you.

This accomplishment not only reflects your intellect and knowledge, but also signifies your determination, drive and ingenuity. The character you've developed and invaluable life skills you've gained will propel you throughout your career and lifetime. Be confident knowing you are now equipped to reach your full potential.

As you leave this University and embark on a new path, thank your professors, advisors, family and friends who supported you throughout this journey. Moreover, stay connected to your University as a volunteer or student mentor. I know you'll continue to grow and have much to share.

You've earned your degree from a Tier One institution, world-renowned for its academic excellence, cutting-edge research and dynamic athleticism. Today, you join the ranks of thousands of alumni who have achieved incredible success — and I know you will too.

Once again, congratulations, Coogs. The world awaits you!

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Renu Khator'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Renu Khator
President, University of Houston





Message from the Provost

Dear Spring Graduates,

Congratulations! You have traveled a long and demanding road to arrive at this moment, and yet, here you are! It is an honor to congratulate you on earning your degree from the University of Houston.

Whether you are the very first in your family to cross this stage or are continuing a proud tradition as a multi-generational Cougar, today's ceremony marks a major milestone in your life. This day is equally significant for the University of Houston, as your growth and success have been our primary mission from the very first day you stepped onto our campus.

Look back at those who supported you. Reach out to the peers, professors, and staff who guided your path. Most importantly, share your gratitude with the family and friends here today—the spouses, parents, and siblings who provided the daily inspiration you needed to keep going.

While many contributed to your success, please take a moment to truly celebrate the person most responsible for this achievement: you. You balanced the heavy weight of classes, careers, and family obligations. It was a rigorous challenge, but you persevered. You are now ready to reap the lifelong rewards that come with being a UH graduate.

Though you may be leaving this campus, you will always be a vital part of the University of Houston family. You now carry forward the legacy of all the graduates who came before you. As you represent this institution in your future endeavors, carry your "Cougar Pride" with you and let the world know where you started.

Once again, congratulations on this incredible accomplishment!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Z. Chase', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Diane Z. Chase

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, University of Houston

University of Houston

Commencement Ceremony

University of Houston System

BOARD OF REGENTS

Jack B. Moore, *Chairman*
Ricky Raven, *Vice Chairman*
Gregory C. King, *Secretary*
Alonzo Cantu
Adrian Caraves
Bryan F. Clark
Patrick J. Fertitta
Thomas A. Lucas, Jr.
Beth Madison
Lynden B. Rose, Sr.

University of Houston

PRESIDENT

Renu Khator

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Raymond S. Bartlett
Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance

Diane Z. Chase
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Dona Hamilton Cornell
Vice President for Legal Affairs and General Counsel

Russell T. Dunlavy
Vice President for Advancement and Alumni

Micah Glenn
Chief of Staff

Paul R. Kittle
Vice President for Student Affairs

Ramanan Krishnamoorti
Vice President for Energy and Innovation

Shawn Lindsey
Interim Vice President for Marketing and Communications

Jonathan McCullers
*Vice President for Health Affairs and
Dean of the Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine*

Claudia Neuhauser
Vice President for Research

Eddie Nuñez
Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics

Jason Smith
Vice President for Government and Community Relations

University of Houston Deans

Heidi Appel
Dean
THE HONORS COLLEGE

Arash Bashirullah
Dean
Humana Endowed Dean's Chair in Pharmacy
COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

Leonard M. Baynes
Dean
Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen
Distinguished Chair, and Professor of Law
UH LAW CENTER

Andrew Davis
Founding Dean
Cullen Foundation Endowed Dean's Chair
KATHRINE G. MCGOVERN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Gregory B. Dudley
Dean
COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS

Yarneccia D. Dyson
Dean
GRADUATE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

Xianjun Geng
Dean
Cullen Distinguished Chair
C. T. BAUER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Christina H. Gola
Dean
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON LIBRARIES

Jim Granato
Dean
HOBBY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Catherine Horn
Dean
Elizabeth D. Rockwell Chair
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Teri Elkins Longacre
Dean
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

Jonathan McCullers
Dean
Humana Endowed Dean's Chair in Medicine
TILMAN J. FERTITTA FAMILY COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Daniel P. O'Connor
Dean
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Patricia Belton Oliver
Dean
ACSA Distinguished Professor
GERALD D. HINES COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

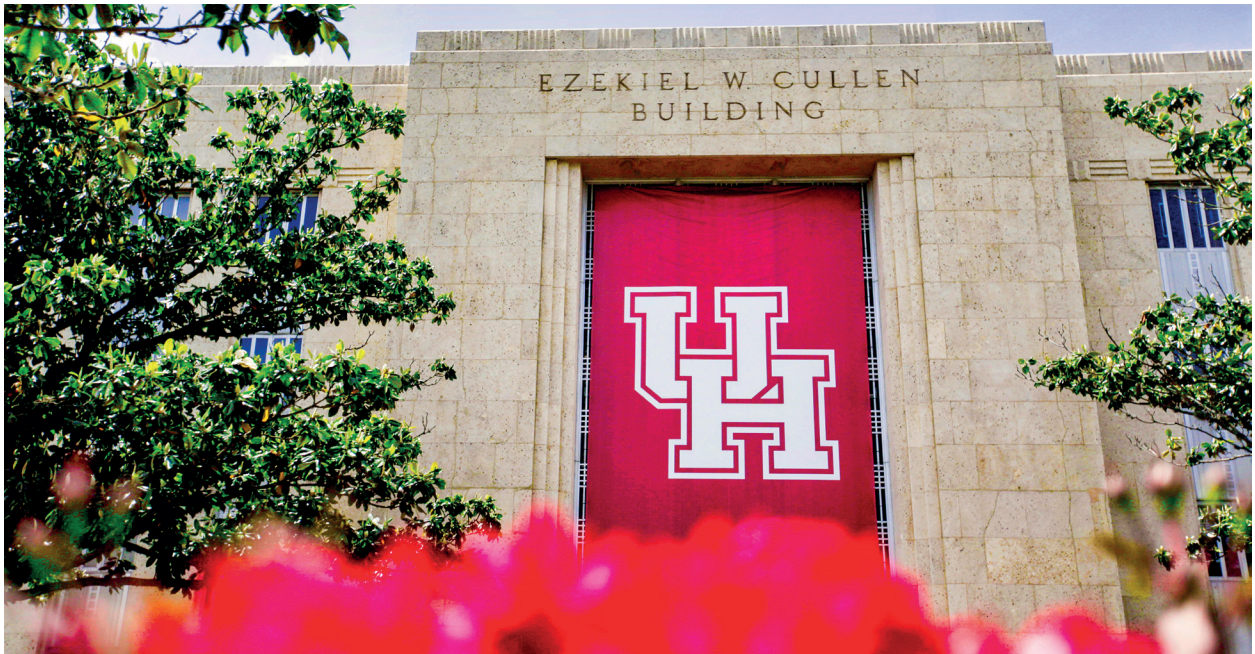
Dennis Reynolds
Dean
Barron Hilton Distinguished Chair
CONRAD N. HILTON COLLEGE OF
GLOBAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

Pradeep Sharma
Dean
Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen
Distinguished University Professor
CULLEN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Kathryn M. Tart
Founding Dean
Humana Endowed Dean's Chair in Nursing
ANDY AND BARBARA GESSNER COLLEGE OF NURSING

Michael Twa
Dean
Humana Endowed Dean's Chair in Optometry
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

University of Houston History



The University of Houston was established as the Houston Junior College in 1927. As the college grew, it prospered and officially became the four-year University of Houston in 1934. Two years later, the college attained land for a permanent campus, and in 1939 it constructed its first building, the Roy G. Cullen Building. The University became a state institution in 1963.

The University includes 14 academic colleges, one school and a multidisciplinary Honors College, collectively teaching a wide array of subjects – from math, arts and engineering to law, pharmacy and business. What started as a campus with a single building has grown into a world-class university, offering over 285 undergraduate and graduate programs to more than 48,000 students annually.

The Cougars consistently compete at the highest levels, earning conference championships, bowl game invitations and NCAA Final Four appearances. In 2023, UH joined the Big 12 Conference — a hard-fought mission to join a Power Four conference.

UH is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university, and its public service and

community activities, such as cultural offerings, clinical services, policy studies and small business initiatives, serve a diverse metropolitan population. Likewise, the resources of the Gulf Coast Region complement and enrich the University's academic programs, providing students with professional expertise, practical experience and career opportunities. This unprecedented success has been followed by a string of similar achievements, being awarded a Phi Beta Kappa honor society chapter, the opening of Houston's first medical school in nearly 50 years, more than tripling the number of National Academy members on the faculty and dramatically improving the graduation rates.

The University consistently earns accolades for its students' achievements, such as the top 50 of Forbes' list of America's Top Colleges and Princeton Review's "50 Best Value Public Colleges." It also ranks 36th in the nation on U.S. News & World Report's 2025 social mobility index ranking and among the top 100 universities in the world for utility patents. Moreover, President Renu Khator is boldly leading UH to become a U.S. News & World Report top 50 public university.

Commencement Traditions

Academic costumes of today have a history of nearly eight centuries. In medieval Europe, all townspeople wore long flowing robes and gowns. The materials and colors were governed by royal decree. Gradually, distinctive gowns were developed for the various professions, trades and guilds. Scholars wore robes and hoods to protect their shaved heads. Later, skullcaps were worn on the head, and the hoods became a cape that could be pulled over the head during unpleasant weather.

As additional universities were founded, distinctive forms of the gown and hood were adapted by their faculties for bachelor's (apprentices of the arts), master's (teachers) and doctoral (teachers who had completed postgraduate studies). When caps and hats came into fashion in the 15th century, the hoods became ornamental, draped over the shoulders and down the back.

The academic hat was first worn as a symbol of the master's degree and existed in various forms. The mortarboard style comes to us from Oxford University. When academic costumes came to America in 1754, styles were quite varied. In Europe, they still are; however, in our country, usage has been standardized by the Intercollegiate Code of Academic Costume.

GERALD D. HINES COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Bachelor's Degree	<i>Tassel:</i> Violet
Master's Degree	<i>Hood:</i> Violet <i>Tassel:</i> Black

KATHRINE G. MCGOVERN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Bachelor's Degree	<i>Tassel:</i> Brown
Master's Degree	<i>Hood:</i> Brown <i>Hood (Music):</i> Pink <i>Tassel:</i> Black
Doctoral Degree	<i>Hood:</i> Pink <i>Tassel:</i> Red

C. T. BAUER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Bachelor's Degree	<i>Tassel:</i> Dark Blue
Master's Degree	<i>Hood:</i> Drab <i>Tassel:</i> Black
Doctoral Degree	<i>Hood:</i> Dark Blue <i>Tassel:</i> Red

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Bachelor's Degree	<i>Tassel:</i> Light Blue
Master's Degree	<i>Hood:</i> Light Blue <i>Tassel:</i> Black
Doctoral Degree	<i>Hood (Ed.D.):</i> Light Blue <i>Hood (Ph.D.):</i> Dark Blue <i>Tassel:</i> Red

CULLEN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Bachelor's Degree	<i>Tassel:</i> Orange
Master's Degree	<i>Hood:</i> Orange <i>Tassel:</i> Black
Doctoral Degree	<i>Hood:</i> Dark Blue <i>Tassel:</i> Red

CONRAD N. HILTON COLLEGE OF GLOBAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

Bachelor's Degree	<i>Tassel:</i> Navy
Master's Degree	<i>Hood:</i> Navy, Red and White <i>Tassel:</i> Black
Doctoral Degree	<i>Hood:</i> Dark Blue <i>Tassel:</i> Red

UH LAW CENTER

Master's Degree *Hood: Purple*
 Tassel: Black

Doctoral Degree *Hood: Purple*
 Tassel: Red

**COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Bachelor's Degree *Tassel: Citron*

Master's Degree *Hood: Citron*
 Tassel: Black

Doctoral Degree *Hood: Dark Blue*
 Tassel: Red

**TILMAN J. FERTITTA FAMILY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**

Doctor of Medicine Degree
 Hood: Kelly Green
 Tassel: Red

**COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES
AND MATHEMATICS**

Bachelor's Degree *Tassel: Golden Yellow*

Master's Degree *Hood: Golden Yellow*
 Tassel: Black

Doctoral Degree *Hood: Dark Blue*
 Tassel: Red

**ANDY AND BARBARA GESSNER
COLLEGE OF NURSING**

Bachelor's Degree *Tassel: Apricot*

Master's Degree *Hood: Apricot*
 Tassel: Black

Doctoral Degree *Hood: Apricot*
 Tassel: Red

COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

Master's Degree *Hood: Gold*
 Tassel: Black

Doctor of Philosophy Degree
 Hood: Royal Blue
 Tassel: Red

Doctor of Optometry Degree
 Hood: Seafoam Green
 Tassel: Red

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

Bachelor's Degree *Tassel: Olive*

Master's Degree *Hood: Olive*
 Tassel: Black

Doctor of Philosophy Degree
 Hood: Royal Blue
 Tassel: Red

Doctor of Pharmacy Degree
 Hood: Olive
 Tassel: Red

**GRADUATE COLLEGE
OF SOCIAL WORK**

Master's Degree *Hood: Citron*
 Tassel: Black

Doctoral Degree *Hood: Citron*
 Tassel: Red

HOBBY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Bachelor's Degree *Tassel: Peacock Blue*

Master's Degree *Hood: Peacock Blue*
 Tassel: Black

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

Bachelor's Degree *Tassel: White*

Ceremonial Symbols



THE SEAL

Throughout history, seals have been used to authenticate official documents. The University of Houston and UH System seals both bear the Official Seal of Arms of General Sam Houston, as handed down to him from his noble ancestors. It includes the escutcheon in the center of the seal — consisting of checkered chevrons denoting nobility — and three martlets, gentle lowland birds that symbolize peace and deliverance. A winged hourglass is placed above the shield. Surmounting this is the motto “In Tempore,” meaning “In Time.” The greyhounds indicate speed of giving aid. The UH seal was first adopted in 1938 as the present campus was established. Although the look of the seal has evolved over the years, the first version was etched into the floor of the Roy G. Cullen Building.



UNIVERSITY MACE

The University Mace, which is carried in academic processions, is a staff symbolizing the University’s authority and unity. The tradition of the academic mace began in the late 14th century when two ancient instruments, the royal scepter and the battle mace, were combined to form a university president’s symbol of authority.

THE ALMA MATER

All hail to thee,
 Our Houston University.
 Our hearts fill with gladness
 When we think of thee.
 We'll always adore thee
 Dear old varsity.
 And to thy memory cherished,
 True we'll ever be.

Words and music by Harmony Class of 1942



Honorary Degree

JERICO BROWN, PH.D.

A Pulitzer-Prize-winning poet, Jericho Brown is one of the most celebrated authors of our time. An acclaimed writer, scholar and professor, Brown has received some of the most coveted honors in American literature.

Growing up in Shreveport, Louisiana, Brown found solace at his local library and in writing. As soon as he learned of the prestigious Pulitzer Prize, he dreamed of becoming a writer. In a full-circle moment in 2020, he won the high honor for his third poetry book, “The Tradition.” The work — described by the Pulitzer board as a collection of masterful lyrics that combine delicacy with historical urgency — was also a finalist for the National Book Award.

“The Tradition” is preceded by his first book, “Please,” which won the American Book Award. His second book, “The New Testament,” won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award. A prolific writer, Brown’s poems have appeared in *The New York Times*, BuzzFeed, *Fence*, *jubilat*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, *TIME* and several volumes of *The Best American Poetry*. He is also the editor of “How We Do It: Black Writers on Craft, Practice and Skill” and of “The Selected Shepherd.”

In 2024, Brown received the MacArthur Foundation’s “genius grant” and was described as a “poet reflecting on contemporary culture and identity in works that combine formal experimentation and intense self-examination.” He has also received distinguished fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard and the National Endowment for the Arts. In addition, he has won the Whiting Award.

An avid scholar, Brown earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Dillard University, his Master of Fine Arts from the University of New Orleans and his Ph.D. in creative writing and literature from the University of Houston. He is the Charles Howard Candler Professor of English and Creative Writing and director of the Creative Writing Program at Emory University in Atlanta.

The Doctor of Humane Letters degrees, honoris causa, given for exemplary service to the University of Houston or society at large, is the highest honor UH can bestow.



Honorary Degree

DONALD J. KESSLER

A pioneering leader in astrophysics, Donald J. Kessler is a former NASA scientist whose breakthrough research brought attention to an unrecognized risk to space safety. He is best known for the Kessler Syndrome, which describes how orbital debris could threaten space operations, while proposing strategies to manage and mitigate those risks.

Kessler joined NASA as a University of Houston cooperative education student and, after developing an interest in the risks to spacecraft from meteoroids, recognized the greater risk created by man-made orbital debris from spacecrafts. His 1978 paper, titled “The Collision Frequency of Artificial Satellites: The Creation of a Debris Belt,” predicted an exponential

increase in orbiting fragments and increasing risk to spacecraft. In addition, he pioneered mathematical models of collision probabilities.

Following his vital research and calculations, NASA established an orbital debris program with Kessler as lead scientist and a principal in the operation and its outreach. A prolific research scientist, Kessler built the analytical capabilities that remain central to NASA’s approach to debris monitoring, mitigation practices and disposal guidelines. Moreover, he and his colleagues met with leaders from European, Russian and Asian space communities to encourage an international focus on mitigating the increasing amount of debris in Earth’s orbits. This global outreach led to the creation of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee, a coalition of 13 national and international space agencies that develop consensus guidelines used worldwide.

A Texas native, Kessler spent three years in the U.S. Army’s Air Defense Command before enrolling at UH, where he graduated cum laude and with honors in physics in 1965. He retired from NASA in 1996 as chief scientist of the orbital debris program.

Kessler has received numerous awards for his transformational work, including NASA’s Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Losey Atmospheric Sciences Award, the International Association for the Advancement of Space Safety Jerome Lederer Space Safety Pioneer Award, and he has had an asteroid named in his honor. More than four decades after his transformative discovery, Kessler’s research continues to shape global policy and safeguard the long-term sustainability of space operations for the benefit of humanity.

The Doctor of Humane Letters degrees, honoris causa, given for exemplary service to the University of Houston or society at large, is the highest honor UH can bestow.





Graduate College of Social Work
UNIVERSITY OF **HOUSTON**

Message from the Dean:

Dear Graduates,

Congratulations on this significant milestone and on your graduation from the Graduate College of Social Work.

Today, we celebrate not only your academic accomplishments, but also your strength, dedication, and commitment to a profession grounded in service and impact. Your journey to this moment reflects perseverance, purpose, and a deep investment in creating meaningful change. We also recognize the community that has supported you along the way—your families, friends, mentors, and peers—as well as the faculty and staff whose guidance and expertise have helped shape your experience at the GCSW.

As you move forward, you enter the profession at a time when social work is more critical than ever. The challenges facing our communities are complex and evolving, and you are uniquely prepared to respond with skill, compassion, and leadership. As you take your next steps, I encourage you to carry forward the principle of “Lift As You Climb”—to use your knowledge, your voice, and your position to uplift others and create pathways for those who will follow.

On behalf of the Graduate College of Social Work, I extend my deepest congratulations. We are proud of you and look forward to your continued engagement as alumni and leaders in the field. As you embark on this next chapter, know that you will always remain a part of the GCSW community.

With pride and best wishes for your continued success,

Yarneccia D. Dyson, Ph.D., MSW
Dean and Professor
Maconda Brown O'Connor Endowed Dean's Chair
Graduate College of Social Work

University of Houston
Graduate College of Social Work

Commencement Ceremony
Friday, May 15, 2026, 7:00 p.m.
Fertitta Center

PROCESSIONAL	Moores School of Music Candidates for Graduation Platform Party
CALL TO ORDER	Yarneccia D. Dyson <i>Dean</i>
PRESENTATION OF COLORS	Houston Battalion ROTC Color Guard
NATIONAL ANTHEM	Moores School of Music
WELCOME INTRODUCTION	Dean Dyson
GREETINGS	Diane Z. Chase <i>Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost</i>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND AWARDS	Yvonne Mendoza <i>Clinical Assistant Professor</i>
SPIRIT OF SOCIAL WORK AWARD, HONORARY ALUMNA AWARD	Dean Dyson, <i>presenter</i> Sylvia K. Brooks, <i>recipient</i>
PRESENTATION OF PH.D. DEGREE CANDIDATES	Quenette Walton <i>Associate Dean for Doctoral Education</i>
PRESENTATION OF M.S.W. DEGREE CANDIDATES	McClain Sampson <i>Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development</i>
CONFERRAL OF DEGREES	Provost Chase
CLOSING REMARKS	Dean Dyson
ALMA MATER	Moores School of Music
RECESSIONAL	Moores School of Music



GCSW Spirit of Social Work Award
UH Alumni Association Foundation Honorary Alumna Award

SYLVIA K. BROOKS

Born in Houston, TX along with her brothers and twin sister, Sylvia K. Brooks (affectionately known as Ms. B) served as the first female President and CEO of the Houston Area Urban League (HAUL) from 1990 to 2007. Throughout her distinguished career, she demonstrated a

strong commitment to community service across multiple roles. She began as a caseworker for child welfare services, later serving as a professor in the Graduate School of Social Work at the UT Arlington. She also worked as a recruiter of minority women at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and served as Vice President of Community Problem-Solving and Fund Distribution for the United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast. Ms. B earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Texas Southern University in 1963 and a Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Southern California in 1969.

During her tenure at HAUL, Ms. B led the development and expansion of numerous impactful programs focused on education, workforce development, and community empowerment. Initiatives included literacy programs such as “Watch Me Read,” which supported early childhood reading development in daycare centers. In partnership with IBM, HAUL launched computer training programs to strengthen workforce readiness, alongside the establishment of a Business Systems Training Center to equip community members with in-demand employment skills. Annual job fairs held during Black History Month drew approximately 5,000 participants. Among her many accomplishments, the Housing Counseling Program stands out as a signature achievement, providing education and support to help individuals and families achieve homeownership.

Ms. B made significant contributions to the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW), where she served on the Dean’s Advisory Council, offering guidance, leadership, and ongoing partnership. Her commitment to community collaboration was further exemplified through her instrumental role in founding the Third Ward Community Cloth Cooperative (The Cloth), an “organization of organizations” dedicated to improving outcomes for children and families in Houston’s Third Ward. In addition to the Third Ward Community Cloth Cooperative/Third Ward Fund Management Corporation, Ms. B is a member of Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Houston Chapter of Links Inc., and Jack and Jill of America.

Over the years, Ms. B has remained a valued partner of GCSW, serving as an adjunct faculty member, practicum instructor, advisory council member, and dedicated community collaborator. Her legacy reflects a lifelong commitment to leadership and advancing opportunities for underserved communities. Ms. B and her husband, Errol Brooks (deceased), have three sons, Leland, Christopher, and Donald and five grandchildren. She and her twin sister, Sydna, are still residents of the Greater Third Ward.

Fall 2025 – Graduates

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

Emely E. Cardenas

Fatima Puente Estrada
Emily Jackson
Laura Lee Marentette

Jennifer Schirmer
Judith A. Schwartz
Taryn Shannon

Spring 2026 – Candidates for Graduation

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Arunima Bhattacharjee

Structural Risk Environments and
Migration Trajectories Among
Rural-Origin Afghan Migrants with
Irregular Status

COMMITTEE CHAIR:
Chiara Acquati, Ph.D.

Ying Ma

Connected Yet Lonely: Investigating
the Relationships Between Internet
Use, Social Capital, and Loneliness in
Chinese Adults

COMMITTEE CHAIR:
Patrick Leung, Ph.D.

Ayesha Tariq

Refugee Resettlement Intersecting
Identities and Well-being: A Narrative
Inquiry of South Asian Refugee
Mothers in the Greater Toronto Area

COMMITTEE CHAIR: Samira Ali, Ph.D.

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

Elisabeth Mae Adams

Carmen Aguero Mijares *

Yasmine Tatiyana Alba

Jamie Lee Albanese

Ashley Adanna Amadi

Judith Sena Anagbonu

Tae Ando

Morgan Elizabeth Ashmore

Meulen Bajo-Niebla

Tiani Zion Baker

Abimbola Atinuke Barango

Tania Barrios

Carol Margaret Batdorf

Chirsten Latrice Baylor

Samantha Michele Beaver

Carina Yvonne Bell

Clay Augustus Bell

Ashley Jasmine Benitez

Ashlyn Bimmerle

Kofi Boakye-Dankwa

Anne Elizabeth Stokes Bran

Mimi R. Brennan

Tieranni Ann Brim

Alexandra Brown

Charnae A. Brown

Stevie Turner Bubeck

Dawn Alexandria Burch

Sydney Burch

Jada S. Burrell

LaShae Nicole Cain

Bettina Camacho

Michael Elijah Campbell

Wenwen Cao

Jazymin K. Carter

Toyo O. Carter

Thunder Chen

Elizabeth Romanovna Chirko

Loren Allan Chorn

John B. Connally

Timothy Connolly

Lawrence F. Crawford

Nicole Ann-Shalom Curry-Clark

Thomas B. Davis

Michelle De Belen

Maya Elizabeth DeConge-Lamb

Danielle Leigh DeFreitas

Erin Marie Dickson

Yolanda Doucet

Chloe Elizabeth Espenan

Toi Angelica Ferrales

Maryssa Margaret Fritz

Jaleesa Orianna Fuller

Jasmine Garcia

Michael C. Garcia

Shelia Garcia

Celeste J. Gilliam

Alondra M. Gomez Bustos

Whalenniel Artemise Grant-Billy

Amani Nahje Gries

Madeline Paige Hamby

Sara A. Hana

Ray-Mya Yevette Hardeman

Katimah Harper

Gorejer Her

Alejandra Hernandez

Mara Adlemi Hernandez Medrano

Mia Celeste Hill

Phuong Lien Hoang

Janice N. Holness

Wanda Hudson

Destiny Samantha Hurtado

Myrissa Colleen Hutchison

Angel Marie Hutchison

Fantasy Afia Ifversen-Davis

Rifah Rafiqul Islam

Liah Elizabeth Jacob

Serena T. James

Abbie Ireanea Johnson

Chardunae Noel Jones

Lauryn Jones

Rebecca Jones

Toria Jae Jones

Dustin Lee Larsen

Dalia C. Lasky

Ana Nadia Lawhorn

Perla Julissa Licona Vazquez

Kristopher Ivy Livingston

Cassandra Livingston-Sampson

Andrea Alexandra Llerena

Gabriella Rene Lopez

Ana Ruth Lopez Juarez

Elizabeth Anne Low

Meri Lyons

Christine Mak

Katerin Yamilet Martinez Salinas

Shelby Mayo

Amari Danielle McAllister

Jasmine Shirae McCloud

Heaven Mignon McDonald

Jacqueline McDuffie-Mundine

Cierra Terren-Marie McNeill

* Posthumous Degree Recipient

University of Houston
Graduate College of Social Work

Commencement Ceremony

Elisa Rana Meadows
Sophia Hermina Medina
Sharla Meese
Jo Lynn Carter Meirovitz
Beverly Meliscar
Kayin F. Mitchell
Jasmine Judith Morales
Anne K. Mwika
Asim Nehal
David Dat Nguyen
Johanna G. Nimmons
Cheyenne Lynn Norr
Christian Sismone Ohonba
Emmanuel Adewunmi Owolabi
Tyheshia Parker
Eleanor Patton
Bryanna Rose Paul
Julia Kate Paulig
Carla Gisselle Perez
Natalie Perez
Jacqueline Diane Perez Rodriguez
Brooke Renee Peterson
Annie Thanh Pham
Thomas James Pierce
Mikell Luther Pipes, Jr.
Laken Ann Plaster
Maria Isabel Ramirez

Silvia Y. Razo
Christine Marie Rewerts
Joana Reyes
Alexandria Rhodes
Yesenia Robles
Sierra Rogers
Destinee Monique Rohelia
Maria Del Mar Rojas Cabrera
Michelle Anne Romero
Jacob T. Rosenberg
Ashley Rosendo
Keyah L. Ross
Ma'Kayla Antonia MeShell Roy
Jaianna Na'lani Nicole Rubalcava
Danielle Janae Ruiz
Jimmie Glynn Ryan
Melanie Salazar
Michelle Salinas
Tommy Lee Samuel, Jr.
Chantal Sanchez
Mason Sandefur
Anusha Sathyanarayanan
Tamia Amion Searcy Jack
Janiya Brielle Shelton
Kristen Shotts Elena Shotts
Samantha Anjolie Singh
Treisy Erimey Skidmore

Cristina Infante Smith
Elieser Noel Sorto
Caylah Spearman
Kenady Michelle Strutz
Jasmine Sherise Summerlin
Chloe Swan
Alina Firdous Syed
Rosalinda Taylor
Abiola Rose Tchala
Nhi Trinh
Minhchau "Jo" Quang Truong
Rabia Ucman
Celeste Jade Valdovinos
Makayla Annmarie Vaults
Rosa Perez Villa
Christine Vo
Kayla R. Walker
Salimah N. Walker
Garrett R. Watkins
Ra'Iysa Webster
Stephanie Leigh Wentworth
Sophie Isabelle Rose Williams
Monica Renea Witt
James Eric Young
Roberto Zacarias
Lilly Jo Zaunbrecher
Ian Joel Zela

Summer 2026 – Candidates for Graduation

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Anil Arora
Military Sexual Trauma (MST)
and the Impact of Moral Injury or
Institutional Betrayal on Mental
Health Service Utilization
COMMITTEE CHAIR: Samira Ali, Ph.D.

Marcus Dewayne Brown
Pathways to Mental Health Recovery
among Black Adults with Serious
Mental Illness
COMMITTEE CHAIR:
Sarah Narendorf, Ph.D. and
Quenette Walton, Ph.D.

Sean Burr
Financial Stress in Midlife: An
Examination within the Three-Step
Theory (3ST) of Suicide
COMMITTEE CHAIR:
Robin Gearing, Ph.D.

Helen Christine Clancy
The Climate of Community Resilience:
An Exploration of Well-Being in
Disaster-Prone Harris County
COMMITTEE CHAIR:
Sharon Borja, Ph.D.

**MASTER OF SOCIAL
WORK**

Devonna Allen
Adebusola Babalola
Leticia Marisol Barrios
Teffany Lynn Bell
Jaeden S. Bessellieu
Domini Michelle Bryant
Te'Niqua Yvonne Canty
Alejandra Brenda Carrillo
Alenny Yetzabe Castañeda
Allie Nicole Clark
Erin Ann Collins
Christopher Cruz
Devan Malcolm Davis
Cristina Marie de la Riva

Katie Donati
Dahlia Sophia Durón
Brenda Estrada
Melchezedek S. D. Green
Marilyn Guadalupe Guerrero
Crystal Henderson
Stephanie Herrera
Angel Jaleah Hodges
Katerin Celene Jaime
Shevante Danee Jenkins
Jamie Johnson
Alexa Hope Kendall
Kaitland Smith Kennedy
Alexis L. Kranzberg
Lindsey Alexis Lafleur
Ryah McKenna Landry
Tayler Landry
Jennifer A. Leal
Victoria Corina Levin
Ilona Lumpkin
Mae Marabella
Angelica Noemi Martinez

University of Houston
Graduate College of Social Work
Commencement Ceremony

Stephanie Elizabeth Mata
Andrew Raymond McCollum
Claudia Medrano
Ammishaddai Mia Menindez
Andrea Catherine Mollard
Rosalinda Morales
Julia Althena Nielsen
Kendra Michele Ouzenne
Amber Parker
Naomi Peña

Ashlyn R. Pena
Amber Necole Perez
Samantha M. C. Pueblos
Frida Maribel Quiroz
Shaliah Alise Ramsey
Danielle Nicole Redhead
Essie Teresa Richardson
Kaitlyn Rogers Rogers
Yamilet Roman
Natasha Schepps

Elizabeth Spruell
Bobby Steptoe
Rachel B. Thomas
Y'Skizja Thompson-Horton
Amiah Lashea Tyson
Katherine Vaughn
Jenna Brooke Warlick
Monique Larisse White
Tezrah LaSha Williams
Dieu Wu

Commencement Scholarships

ANN PARHAM SCHOLARSHIP

Maria Isabel Ramirez

BARBARA AND ERNEST HENLEY ENDOWMENT FOR FAMILY HEALTH SCHOLARSHIP

Gabriella Rene Lopez

BARBARA MCGINITY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Abiola Rose Tchalá

BRENDA K. NESBITT SCHOLARSHIP

Stevie Turner Bubeck

C.F. REIBENSTEIN ENDOWMENT FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

Gorejer Her

Stephanie Herrera

Lauryn Jones

Toria Jae Jones

Heaven Mignon McDonald

Monique Larisse White

CAROLINE M. GARCIA SCHOLARSHIP

Jamie Johnson

CATHERINE TUONG SO LAM MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Carina Yvonne Bell

CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL SCHOLARSHIP

Elisabeth Mae Adams

CHERI HEATHCOCK ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIP

Johanna G. Nimmons

CHERYL LYNN VETTER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Elizabeth Anne Low

CHILD & FAMILY CENTER FOR INNOVATIVE RESEARCH (CFCIR) DISSERTATION AWARD

Helen Christine Clancy

CHILD & FAMILY CENTER FOR INNOVATIVE RESEARCH (CFCIR) MSW AWARD

Loren Allan Chorn

Alejandra Hernandez

CHILD WELFARE EDUCATION PROJECT (CWEP) STIPEND

Ashley Adanna Amadi

Alexandra Brown

Lawrence F. Crawford

Yolanda Doucet

Whalenniel Artemise Grant-Billy

Myrissa Colleen Hutchison

Cassandra Livingston-Sampson

Tyheshia Parke

Yesenia Robles

DEAN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP

Essie Teresa Richardson

DR. BARBARA G. (BOBBI) AND MR. J. VICTOR (VIC) SAMUELS DAC ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Judith Sena Anagbonu

Tae Ando

Abimbola Atinuke Barango

Chirsten Latrice Baylor

Anne Elizabeth Stokes Bran

Stevie Turner Bubeck

Wenwen Cao

Jazymin K. Carter

Jasmine Garcia

Melchezedek S. D. Green

Sara A. Hana

Destiny Samantha Hurtado

Fantasy Afia Ifversen-Davis

Serena T. James

Dustin Lee Larsen

Dalia C. Lasky

Victoria Corina Levin

Perla Julissa Licona Vazquez

Elizabeth Anne Low

Laura Lee Marentette

Amari Danielle McAllister

Jasmine Shirae McCloud

Cierra Terren-Marie McNeill

Beverly Meliscar

Ammishaddai Mia Menindez

Kayin F. Mitchell

Emmanuel Adewunmi Owolabi

Bryanna Rose Paul

Natalie Perez

Jacqueline Diane Perez Rodriguez

Annie Thanh Pham

Shaliah Alise Ramsey

Christine Marie Rewerts

Ashley Rosendo

Keyah L. Ross

Michelle Salinas

Anusha Sathyanarayanan

Janiya Brielle Shelton

Jasmine Sherise Summerlin
Abiola Rose Tchala
Rabia Ucman
Celeste Jade Valdovinos
Salimah N. Walker
Jenna Brooke Warlick
Monique Larisse White
Lilly Jo Zaunbrecher

EXECUTIVE & PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOUSTON SCHOLARSHIP

Emmanuel Adewunmi Owolabi

FLORENCE CLEMENGER PRESIDENTIAL FELLOWSHIP

Arunima Bhattacharjee

GEORGE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Ashley Adanna Amadi
Adebusola Babalola
Maryssa Margaret Fritz
Whalenniel Artemise Grant-Billy
Asim Nehal
Brooke Renee Peterson
Melanie Salazar
Tamia Amion Searcy Jack
Chloe Swan

GEORGE W. MAGNER ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP IN SOCIAL WORK

Jennifer Schirmer

GERSON DAVID GERONTOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Katimah Harper
Y'Skizja Thompson-Horton

GRADUATE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT FUND

Essie Teresa Richardson

IMA HOGG SCHOLARSHIP

Essie Teresa Richardson

INTRACARE-GLOBE SCHOLARSHIP

Carina Yvonne Bell
Maryssa Margaret Fritz
Celeste J. Gilliam
Fantasy Afia Ifversen-Davis
Jasmine Shirae McCloud
David Dat Nguyen
Johanna G. Nimmons
Dalia C. Lasky
Christine Vo

IRA C. COLBY SCHOLARSHIP

Fantasy Afia Ifversen-Davis

JOSEPHINE STEWART SCHOLARSHIP

Sharla Meese

MAGAZINER SCHOLARSHIP

Arunima Bhattacharjee
Devan Malcolm Davis
Rosalinda Taylor

MARION T. COLEMAN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PATHWAYS SCHOLARSHIP

Toyo O. Carter
Ryah McKenna Landry
Jasmine Shirae McCloud
Anusha Sathyanarayanan
Rachel B. Thomas

MARJORIE L. AND ROBERT R. JENKINS SCHOLARSHIP

Phuong Lien Hoang

MICHAEL AND VICKEY DALEY SCHOLARSHIP

Essie Teresa Richardson

NASW VERNE LAMARR LYONS SCHOLARSHIP

Christian Sismone Ohonba

PHI ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP

Elisabeth Mae Adams
Ashlyn Bimmerle
Janiya Brielle Shelton

R. J. DEBOTTIS SCHOLARSHIP

Phuong Lien Hoang
Alexa Hope Kendall

RUTHMARY A. GOLDMAN SCHOLARSHIP

Marilyn Guadalupe Guerrero

SANDRA A. LOPEZ SCHOLARSHIP

Bryanna Rose Paul

STELLA L. ERHARDT SCHOLARSHIP

Alexis L. Kranzberg
Amber Necole Perez
Danielle Nicole Redhead

UH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION: LGBTQ ALUMNI NETWORK SCHOLARSHIP

Natalie Perez

UH GCSW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP

Abbie Ireanea Johnson
Rosa Perez Villa

University of Houston
Graduate College of Social Work

Commencement Ceremony

**UH INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
SCHOLARSHIP**

Morgan Elizabeth Ashmore
Katimah Harper
Makayla Annmarie Vaults

VICKI TIDWELL PALMER FELLOWSHIP

Judith Sena Anagbonu
Christine Mak
Christian Sismone Ohonba
Michelle Salinas

**WAYNE B. DUDDLESTEN, SR. ENDOWED
SCHOLARSHIP**

Essie Teresa Richardson

**WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST ENDOWMENT
IN GERONTOLOGY SOCIAL WORK**

Alondra M. Gomez Bustos
Katimah Harper
Phuong Lien Hoang
Elieser Noel Sorto





Message from the UH Alumni Foundation Board President

Let me be the first to welcome you to the UH Alumni Association. You are joining a global network of over 305,000 Cougars. With your participation, we can only grow stronger. As you embark on this next chapter, know that your Alumni Association is here to help you stay connected with your beloved alma mater. From volunteering at an event, joining an Association or Network, signing on to UH Link, to becoming a

Life Member, the opportunities to engage are endless.

Please scan the QR code below to enjoy all the activities that soon await you. In the meantime, savor this moment and continue to soar.

True we'll ever be and Go Coogs!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sandy G. Lee'.

Sandy Lee
UH Alumni Association Foundation Board President

Have You Completed Your Alumni Checklist?



<https://houstonalumni.com/recent-grads/>



