



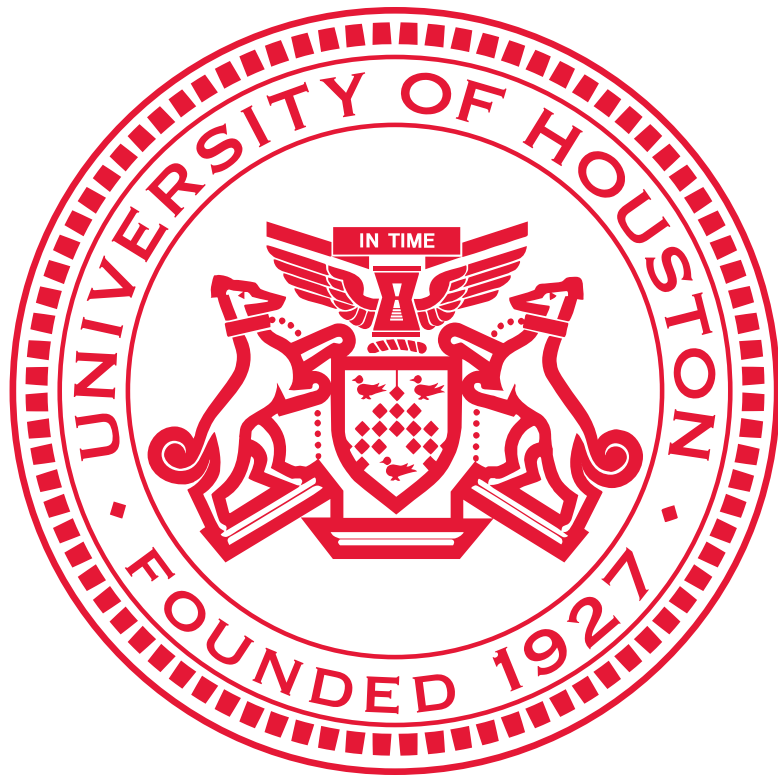
**UNIVERSITY OF  
HOUSTON**

*Spring 2026 Commencement*

**COLLEGE OF  
OPTOMETRY**

*Saturday, May 16, 2026  
Cullen Performance Hall*







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### 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

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### BOARD OF REGENTS

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Adrian Caraves  
Bryan F. Clark  
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## University of Houston

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### PRESIDENT

Renu Khator

### PRESIDENT'S CABINET

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*Vice President for Government and Community Relations*

## University of Houston Deans

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THE HONORS COLLEGE

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UH LAW CENTER

Andrew Davis  
Founding Dean  
Cullen Foundation Endowed Dean's Chair  
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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

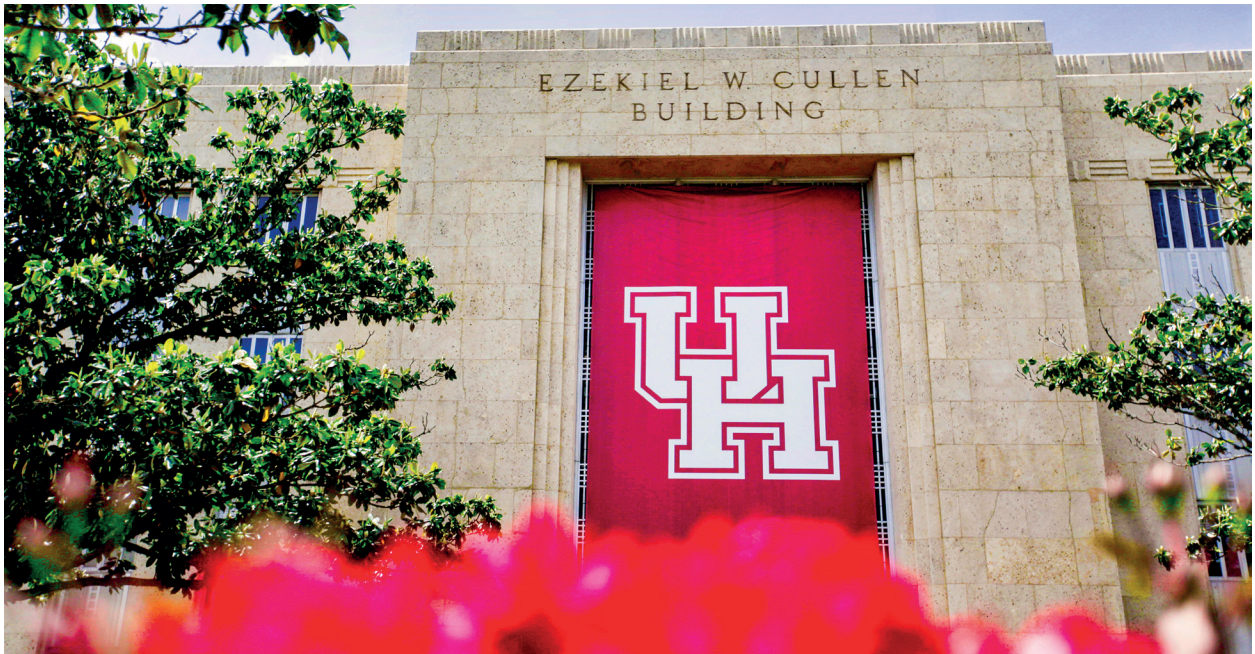
Michael Twa  
Dean  
Humana Endowed Dean's Chair in Optometry  
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

## University of Houston

### Commencement Ceremony

## University of Houston History

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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

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

### KATHRINE G. MCGOVERN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

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

### C. T. BAUER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

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

### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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

### CULLEN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

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

### CONRAD N. HILTON COLLEGE OF GLOBAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

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

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### 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.

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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

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### 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.

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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.





### Message from the Dean

Today we celebrate an important milestone in your professional journey and recognize the discipline, perseverance, and commitment that has brought you to this moment. It feels like only a short time ago that we welcomed you to the University of Houston College of Optometry with excitement about all that lay ahead. Now, we have the privilege of celebrating how far you have come and all that you have achieved. On behalf of the college, I offer my sincere congratulations as you complete your formal education and enter the profession as doctors of optometry.

You begin your careers at a time of significant change in health care. The systems in which care is delivered are increasingly complex, patient needs continue to grow, and advances in technology are reshaping clinical practice in foundational ways. Nevertheless, the human side of care has never been more important. The future will require clinicians who can combine innovation with humanity, technical expertise with empathy, and efficiency with a deep commitment to patient well-being. Your training has prepared you well for those challenges and opportunities.

Know that your degree represents more than the successful completion of an academic program. It reflects your persistence, your character, and your readiness to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. It also connects you to a distinguished community of alumni whose work continues to strengthen the profession and improve the health and well-being of the communities they serve.

Today is a time to celebrate your accomplishments and express gratitude to the family, friends, mentors, and faculty who helped you along the way. As you look to the future, I encourage you to do so with confidence, optimism, and a strong sense of purpose. We are proud of what you have achieved, confident in your readiness, and excited to see the difference you will make in the years ahead.

Congratulations, Class of 2026. We are honored to celebrate this achievement with you and proud to call you our graduates and colleagues!

Go Coogs!

Michael D. Twa, O.D., Ph.D., F.A.A.O.  
*Dean and Professor*  
*Humana Endowed Dean's Chair in Optometry*



### **Congratulatory message from FERV**

Congratulations to our 2026 graduates – our new optometric colleagues! Since 1955, the college of optometry’s foundation, Foundation for Education and Research in Vision (FERV), has been a part of your journey since the very first day of your optometric career by providing scholarships, emergency loans, educational events, student research support, awards, recognitions, and more.

The college’s foundation works with alumni, friends, and donors to establish and grow scholarships for our students while also enhancing research and innovation at the college through financial support. The foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life for the communities we serve by providing vital funds that support community health initiatives and other health programs that directly impact students and their education.

Our journey will continue together as you embark on life-long learning through UHCO’s continuing education and alumni social events. We know as you become successful practitioners you will help future students through your contributions to FERV.

We encourage you to support the optometric profession just as the profession has supported you.

Moes Nasser, O.D. '82  
*President*  
*Foundation for Education and Research in Vision*





**2026 Distinguished Alumnus**

**D. Rudolph "Rudy" Black Jr., O.D. ('75), FAAO**

DR. D. RUDOLPH "RUDY" BLACK received his Doctor of Optometry degree from the University of Houston College of Optometry. Following a few years in private practice, he returned to the college as a clinical attending and later retired as a Clinical Associate Professor.

Throughout his academic career, Dr. Black worked closely with optometry students in a wide range of clinical settings, providing hands-on instruction in patient care. His work extended across numerous external clinics, including San Jose Clinic, Good Neighbor Clinic (later known as Heights Clinic), Casa de Amigos Clinic, and an externship site at the Ramsey III Unit of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in Rosharon, Texas.

Dr. Black also played an integral role in the Home Care Program, where he led small groups of fourth-year students in delivering vision and eye health services to homebound patients. In addition, he participated in school and community vision screenings with second-year students throughout the Houston, Clear Lake, and Tomball areas.

Within the college's University Eye Institute, Dr. Black served as a clinical attending in several in-house clinics, including the Contact Lens Clinic and primarily the Adult and Pediatric Primary Care Clinics, which later combined into the Family Practice Clinic.

A dedicated educator, Dr. Black contributed extensively to the Clinical Practicum curriculum, teaching across multiple levels and serving as Course Master for Clinical Practicum I for several years. He also taught in the Clinical Integration Course and, during the COVID-19 pandemic, served as a grader for Grand Rounds.

Dr. Black is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and contributed to the profession through research activities, including poster presentations, a research publication, and participation in clinical data collection for collaborative studies.



### **Dean's Distinguished Service Award**

#### **Padhmalatha "Pat" Segu, O.D. ('92), FAAO**

DR. PADHMALATHA "PAT" SEGU is a retired clinical professor and distinguished optometric leader who has dedicated more than 30 years to advancing education, patient care, and community service. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Microbiology and Cell Science from the University of Florida and her Doctor of Optometry degree from the University of Houston College of Optometry (UHCO), followed by a hospital-based residency at the American Lake VA Hospital in Tacoma, Washington.

Dr. Segu is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and a Diplomate of the American Board of Optometry. Additional professional affiliations include active membership in the Texas Optometric Association, American Optometric Association, Texas Public Health Association, and American Public Health Association.

Throughout her career, Dr. Segu has held numerous leadership roles. She served as Chair of the Vision Care Section of the American Public Health Association and founding Chair for the Texas Public Health Association Vision Care Section. She also chaired the Vision and Aging Special Interest Group within the American Academy of Optometry, contributed to the Flom Leadership Program, served as Board Chair for Prevent Blindness Texas, and led the Faculty Liaison Committee for the American Optometric Association.

At UHCO, Dr. Segu directed the Clinical Teaching Fellowship Program and the Primary Care Residency Programs, mentoring future optometrists. She also played a pivotal role in leading the See to Succeed Houston Vision Collaboration Project, expanding access to vision care for children in underserved communities.

Her contributions have been widely recognized at the local, state and national levels. Honors include the 2023 Henry B. Peters Memorial Award, the 2020 Mollie Armstrong Leadership Award, the 2020 Texas Public Health Association Vision Care Section Distinguished Service Award, and the 2015 American Public Health Association Vision Care Section Distinguished Service Award. She also received the 2014 University of Houston Teaching Excellence Award in Community Engagement and was named the 2013 Texas Optometric Association Educator of the Year. In recognition of her leadership in advancing childhood vision care, Mayor Sylvester Turner proclaimed May 15, 2019, as Dr. Pat Segu Day in the City of Houston.

Dr. Segu has devoted her career to advancing access to vision care, mentoring future optometrists, and serving communities through innovative outreach initiatives and service.



**Commencement Speaker**

**Angela A. Shippy, M.D., MHA, FACP, FHM**

ANGELA A. SHIPPY, MD, MHA, FACP, FHM is Amazon Web Services' Senior Physician Executive and Clinical Innovation Lead for Healthcare and Life Sciences. A board-certified internist and respected healthcare executive, she brings over two decades of healthcare leadership experience, combining

clinical expertise with strategic vision to drive healthcare transformation by accelerating cloud technology adoption to support the healthcare and life sciences ecosystem.

Before joining AWS, Dr. Shippy served as Senior Vice President and Chief Medical & Quality Officer at Memorial Hermann Health System, one of Texas's largest not-for-profit health systems. There, she orchestrated system-wide initiatives spanning clinical quality, patient safety, laboratory services, pharmacy operations, accreditation, and regulatory compliance across 17 hospitals and 300+ care delivery sites.

Her executive healthcare experience includes leadership positions at HCA Healthcare's Gulf Coast Division Chief Medical Officer and at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in the Texas Medical Center as Vice President of Medical Affairs. At St. Luke's, she maintained an active practice as a hospitalist while driving operational excellence.

Dr. Shippy earned a B.S. in biology from Texas A&M University and an M.D. from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, where she also completed her residency in internal medicine. Her academic credentials are complemented by a Master's in Healthcare Administration and recognition as a Fellow of The American College of Physicians (FACP) and the Society of Hospital Medicine (FHM).

Dr. Shippy's influence extends beyond individual institutions through her service on healthcare councils and committees at local, state, and national levels and her inclusion on the inaugural list of CNBC Changemakers in 2024 and Fierce Healthcare's 2023 Women of Influence. Her commitment to medical education is reflected in her prior volunteer faculty appointments at Baylor College of Medicine, UTHHealth Houston, and The Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

## Golden Reunion Class of 1976

*The University of Houston College of Optometry's faculty, staff, and students salute the Class of 1976 on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of their Commencement.*

Robert Arick, O.D.	Gary Greenberg, O.D.	Laura Perdue, O.D. *
Lon Arneson, O.D.	James Hannigan, O.D.	Robert Polk, III, O.D.
Evelyn Bean, O.D.	Lorre Henderson, O.D.	Lawrence Polson, O.D. *
J. Jesse Benavides, O.D.	Nicky Holdeman, O.D.	Charles Prevatt, O.D. *
James Beson, O.D. *	William J. Hughes, O.D.	Randy Reichle, O.D.
Raymond Boone, O.D.	Henry Hull, O.D.	Linda Rhodes, O.D.
John Breiwa, O.D.	Joseph Janes, O.D.	Jerry Roberts, O.D.
Verlyn Broek, O.D.	Craig Johnson, O.D.	Carlos Rodriguez, O.D.
William Burges, O.D.	William Jones, O.D.	Richard Rowe, O.D.
James Busby, O.D.	Randy Keator, O.D.	Joe Roy, O.D.
James Courtney, O.D. *	W. Steve Kroeger, O.D.	Jorge San Martin, O.D.
Jerry Damme, O.D.	Harry Lawler, O.D. *	Robert Todd, O.D. *
James Darden, O.D. *	Jerry Leopold, O.D. *	Duane Ullman, O.D.
Ron Davidson, O.D.	John Lim, O.D.	Henry Valentine, O.D.
Michael Dellis, O.D.	Delfred Lofstrom, O.D.	L. C. Wakham, O.D.
Michael Dunn, O.D.	John Mah, O.D.	Steve Ward, O.D.
David Ebley, O.D.	Fred Meyer, O.D.	John David Weber, O.D.
Stephen Enochs, O.D.	Morio Miyamoto, O.D.	Mark West, O.D.
David Evans, O.D.	Barry Moores, O.D.	Paul Wiggins, O.D. *
John Fain, O.D. *	Mike Moser, O.D. *	Grady Williams, O.D.
Ronald Fiegel, O.D. *	Rhonda Fink Moser, O.D.	
Ronald Fisher, O.D.	James Murray, O.D.	<i>*Deceased</i>
Doris Forte, O.D.	Morris Neel, O.D.	
Michael Grace, O.D.	George Orm, III, O.D.	

Commencement Ceremony  
Saturday, May 16, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
Cullen Performance Hall

<b>PROCESSIONAL</b>	“Pomp and Circumstance” <i>By Sir Edward Elgar</i>
<b>HONORARY UNIVERSITY MACE BEARER</b>	Lucy Kehinde Darnell <i>Assistant Dean for Student Services</i> <i>Clinical Associate Professor</i>
<b>HONORARY COLLEGE MACE BEARER</b>	Jason Porter <i>Chair of the Faculty and Associate Professor</i>
<b>HONORARY UNIVERSITY BANNER BEARER</b>	Alan Burns <i>Professor</i> <i>Benedict-Pitts Professor</i>
<b>HONORARY COLLEGE BANNER BEARER</b>	Rachel Redfern <i>Associate Professor</i>
<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	Michael D. Twa <i>Dean and Professor</i> <i>Humana Endowed Dean’s Chair in Optometry</i>
<b>PRESENTATION OF COLORS</b>	Houston Battalion ROTC Color Guard
<b>NATIONAL ANTHEM</b>	Moore School of Music
<b>DEAN’S WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS</b>	Dean Twa
<b>GREETINGS FROM UH SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS</b>	The Honorable Thomas Lucas, Jr. <i>Member</i>
<b>GREETINGS</b>	Renu Khator <i>President</i>
<b>HONORS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION</b>	Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2026 Presented to D. Rudolph Black, Jr., O.D. ('75), FAAO  Dean’s Distinguished Service Award Presented to Padhmalatha Segu, O.D., ('92), FAAO
<b>COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS</b>	Angela A. Shippy, M.D., MHA, FACP, FHM <i>Senior Physician Executive and</i> <i>Clinical Innovation Lead</i> <i>Amazon Web Services - Healthcare &amp; Life Sciences</i>
<b>STUDENT ADDRESS</b>	Andrew Verghese
<b>ACADEMIC HONORS RECOGNITION</b>	Associate Professor Porter

**University of Houston**

**College of Optometry**

Commencement Ceremony

Saturday, May 16, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

Cullen Performance Hall

**PRESENTATION AND HOODING  
OF CANDIDATES FOR MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN PHYSIOLOGICAL OPTICS DEGREE**

Laura J. Frishman  
*Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research  
John and Rebecca Moores Professor*

**PRESENTATION AND HOODING OF CANDIDATES  
FOR DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN PHYSIOLOGICAL OPTICS DEGREE**

Associate Dean Frishman

**PRESENTATION AND HOODING  
OF CANDIDATES  
FOR DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY DEGREE**

Kimberly Lambregts  
*Associate Dean for Professional Programs  
Clinical Professor*

**HOODING OF CANDIDATES  
FOR DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY DEGREE**

Anita Ticak  
*Clinical Professor*

Nimesh Patel  
*Professor  
Earl L. Smith III, O.D., Ph.D. Professor*

Wendy Harrison  
*Associate Professor*

Han Cheng  
*Clinical Professor  
Janice M. Wensveen Clinical Professor*

**PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS**

Dean Twa

David Berntsen  
*Chair of Clinical Sciences and Professor  
Golden-Golden Professor*

**CONFERRAL OF DEGREES**

President Khator

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE OPTOMETRIC OATH**

Regent Lucas

**CLOSING REMARKS**

Dean Twa

**ALMA MATER**

Moores School of Music

**RECESSIONAL**

“War March of the Priests”  
*By Felix Mendelssohn*

**RECEPTION TO FOLLOW**

Health I Building  
*Doctors of Texas State Optical Alumni Education Center*

## Doctors of Optometry are:

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Doctors of optometry are the frontline healthcare profession in the defense against vision loss and blindness in the United States. Today, there are more than 40,000 licensed doctors of optometry nationwide and more than 4,000 in the state of Texas. Optometry's essential role in healthcare continues to grow. In 1987, doctors of optometry were recognized as physicians under Medicare. Since then, the optometric scope of practice has grown to include diagnosing and treating many of the most common health conditions affecting the eye, vision, and neurological system. Optometrists are licensed to prescribe medications to treat eye diseases including infections, glaucoma, dry eyes, and other conditions. In more than a dozen states, doctors of optometry are now licensed to perform surgical procedures for the eye and surrounding tissues. While optometrists continue to be the primary providers of vision care, including glasses and contact lenses, many also pursue post-graduate residency training to provide specialty services in low vision rehabilitation, vision therapy, pediatrics and more. Optometrists continue to be an essential part of our health care system and frequently work closely with family practitioners, internists, pediatricians, neurologists, diabetic care teams, and other health professionals to coordinate patient care across the health system.

## Optometry at the University of Houston:

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Our graduates have completed a four-year undergraduate degree prior to admission to the college of optometry. They are trained for an additional four years (3,216 hours of lectures and laboratories) in applied biomedical sciences, optics, social sciences, public health, advanced human anatomy, physiology, neurosciences, systemic and ocular pathology, general and ocular pharmacology, injections, suturing, ocular laser procedures, and clinical care.

Our students have completed more than 500 eye and health examinations in general eye and vision care clinics at the University of Houston Eye Institute and in specialty clinics including: perioperative services, pediatrics, low vision, contact lenses, and community health services.

Graduates complete approximately 1,200 additional eye and vision care experiences during two 16-week externship rotations at vision and health care centers nationwide. These external training centers include private practices, military hospitals, Indian Health Hospitals, community health centers, surgical centers, Veterans Administration Hospitals, and multidisciplinary vision care centers located around the country.

## Spring 2026 – Candidates for Graduation

### PHYSIOLOGICAL OPTICS

Candidates' names are followed by their hometowns, undergraduate institutions, and if applicable, graduate institutions.

#### MASTER OF SCIENCE

- Kristin Goertz Bergstrom**  
OMAHA, NE  
B.B.A., Creighton University  
**THESIS:** Quantifying Soft Contact Lens Stiffness Using Optical Coherence Elastography
- Liam J. Burhans**  
HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., Texas A&M University  
**THESIS:** Exploring the Relationship Between Health Biomarkers and Performance on a Novel Color Perimetry Device in Prediabetes and Type 2 Diabetes
- Evan Elam**  
SALINA, KS  
B.A., University of Kansas  
**THESIS:** Adding Personalized Wavefront Correction to a Scleral Lens After Lens Manufacture
- Madeline Fossitt**  
CHICAGO, IL  
B.S., University of Houston  
**THESIS:** Development and Validation of a Digital Pursuit Eye Movement Visual Acuity Test in an Adult Population Prior to Application in Preschoolers
- Alexis Prager Herstein**  
DALLAS, TX  
B.B.A., University of Texas at Austin  
**THESIS:** Preservative-Free Artificial Tears Reduce Midday Fogging in Scleral Lens Wear: An Objective Assessment
- Alexa Le**  
HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
**THESIS:** Comparing Scleral Lenses with Different Oxygen Permeabilities in a Keratoconus Population
- Brynn Monet Montgomery**  
WINDSOR, CO  
B.S., University of North Carolina Wilmington  
**THESIS:** Automatic Classification of Retinal Synapses Via Deep Learning
- Mays Salman**  
KATY, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
**THESIS:** Transient Ocular Effects of Printed and Electronic Near Work in Children
- Sage Smith**  
CALGARY, AB  
B.S., Brigham Young University  
**THESIS:** Advancing Myopia Research in Children: Evaluating Ocular Rigidity Measurement Repeatability and Optical Biometer Agreement
- Katlyn Sprague**  
HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
**THESIS:** Repeatability of SpotChecks Contrast Sensitivity Test in Macular Disease
- Rachel Christine Godoy**  
TOLAR, TEXAS  
B.S., Texas A&M University, College Station, TX  
O.D., University of Houston College of Optometry, Houston, TX  
M.S., University of Houston College of Optometry, Houston, TX  
**DISSERTATION:** Examining the Retina's Regulatory Control of Eye Growth in Human and Mouse Models
- Jacinth Priscilla Jacob Jayakumar**  
CHENNAI, INDIA  
B.Optom., Birla Institute of Technology and Science, India  
**DISSERTATION:** Ocular Transmission and Short-Term Responses to Narrowband Light - Implications for Myopia Control
- Anish Kharal**  
LALITPUR, NEPAL  
B.Optom., Tribhuvan University Institute of Medicine, Kathmandu, Nepal  
**DISSERTATION:** Retinal Nerve Fiber Layer Composition and Ganglion Cell Estimation in Experimental Glaucoma
- Nasim Maddah**  
MASHHAD, IRAN  
M.Sc., Optometry, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences  
**DISSERTATION:** A Novel Approach to Wavefront-guided Contact Lenses: Identifying Sources of Error in the Patch Cutting Method of Manufacture
- Ebenezer Owusu**  
JACOBUS, GHANA  
O.D., Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana  
**DISSERTATION:** Impact of Medicinal Maggot Excretions/Secretions on the Ocular Surface
- Suharsha Paidimarri**  
NALGONDA, INDIA  
M.Optom., University of Hyderabad, India  
**DISSERTATION:** Scleral Ultrastructure and Ocular Biomechanics in Experimental Myopia

#### DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

- Antoinette Antwi**  
KUMASI, GHANA  
O.D., Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana  
**DISSERTATION:** The Impact of Low-Level Light Therapy (Photobio-modulation) on The Ocular Surface and Adnexa in Dry Eye Disease
- Justina Raouf Assaad**  
HOUSTON, TX  
B.A., Hunter College City University of New York, New York, NY  
O.D., University of Houston College of Optometry, Houston, TX  
**DISSERTATION:** The Diurnal and Nocturnal Tear Film Inflammatory Environment in Keratoconus
- Surya Sai Chaitanya Duvvuri**  
HYDERABAD, TELANGANA, INDIA  
M.S. In Optometry and Vision Sciences, University of Hyderabad, India  
**DISSERTATION:** Clinical Translation of Dynamic OCE for Corneal Biomechanical Assessment

Commencement Ceremony

**DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY**

Candidates' names are followed by academic honors, if applicable, their hometowns, undergraduate institutions, graduate institutions, and fourth-year clinical externship locations.

Omar Aborahma

*Magna Cum Laude*

PLANO, TX

B.S., University of Texas at Dallas

Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas, Texas

Plano Eye Associates, Plano, Texas

Dane Agost

*Magna Cum Laude*

PORTLAND, OR

B.S., University of Portland

Bellaire Family Eye Care, Bellaire, Texas

Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas

Megan Micheli Ahern

LAKEWAY, TX

B.S., Auburn University

MyEyeDr., Spring Klein, Spring, Texas

Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth, Texas

Iman Mariam Ahmed

*Magna Cum Laude*

FORT WORTH, TX

B.S., University of Texas at Dallas

Neuro-Vision Associates of North Texas, Plano, Texas

Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas, Texas

Andrew Ahn

*Magna Cum Laude*

IRVING, TX

B.S., Texas A&M University

Plano Eye Associates, Plano, Texas

Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas, Texas

Zainab M. Asif

SUGAR LAND, TX

B.S., University of Houston

Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas

Diagnostic Eye Center, Houston, Texas

Pralay Atodaria

*Magna Cum Laude*

BAY CITY, TX

B.S.A., University of Texas at Austin

Texas State Optical, Beaumont, Texas

Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas, Texas

Kade Parker Averhoff

STEPHENVILLE, TX

B.S., Texas Tech University

Amarillo VA, Amarillo, Texas

NSU College of Optometry,

Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Abigail Basler

*Summa Cum Laude*

EAST GREENWICH, RI

B.S., University of Rhode Island

Northside Community Health Center, Fort Worth, Texas

West Texas Eyecare, Fort Stockton, Texas

Kristin Goertz Bergstrom

*Magna Cum Laude*

OMAHA, NE

B.B.A., Creighton University

Signature Eye Care, Cedar Park, Texas

Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas

Taiba Bilal

HOUSTON, TX

B.S., University of Houston

Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas

Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas, Texas

Texas

Lauren Dean Bowman

*Summa Cum Laude*

ATASCOCITA, TX

B.S., University of Texas at Austin

Mann Eye Institute, Houston, Texas

Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas

Elevia E.R. Bruce

WICHITA, KS

B.S., Oklahoma State University

Golden Eye Clinic, Center, Texas

Northside Community Health Center,

Fort Worth, Texas

Liam J. Burhans

*Summa Cum Laude*

HOUSTON, TX

B.S., Texas A&M University

Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth, Texas

Texas

Mann Eye Institute, Houston, Texas

Ryan Chang

*Summa Cum Laude*

PEARLAND, TX

B.S., University of Houston

Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas

Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas, Texas

Texas

Melinda Doan

*Summa Cum Laude*

NEW ORLEANS, LA

B.S., Xavier University of Louisiana

Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health

Care System, New Orleans, Louisiana

Bellaire Family Eye Care, Bellaire, Texas

Yareli Duran

HALTOM CITY, TX

B.S., University of Texas at Arlington

Altig Optical, Fort Worth, Texas

Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth, Texas

Texas

Evan Elam

*Summa Cum Laude*

SALINA, KS

B.A., University of Kansas

Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas, Texas

Texas

Altig Optical, Fort Worth, Texas

Wendy Isabel Esquivel

*Summa Cum Laude*

WALLER, TX

B.S., University of Texas at Austin

B.S., University of Texas at Austin

Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas

Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas, Texas

Texas

Serena L. Everett

*Magna Cum Laude*

PEARLAND, TX

B.S.A., University of Texas at Austin

Louisiana Eye & Laser Center,

Alexandria, Louisiana

McCormick Vision Center, Austin,

Texas

**RESIDENCY MATCH:**

Eye Center of Texas

Ocular Disease - Refractive and

Ocular Surgery

Dolores Daniel Facundo

DEER PARK, TX

B.S., University of Houston

Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas

Clear Lake Eye Center, Webster, Texas

Madeline Fossitt

*Magna Cum Laude*

CHICAGO, IL

B.S., University of Houston

Northside Community Health Center,

Fort Worth, Texas

Richmond VA Outpatient Clinic,

Richmond, Texas

Aisha Toniqua Freeman

PORT BARRE, LA

B.S., Louisiana State University

Bellaire Family Eye Care, Bellaire,

Texas

Dr. Robert Janot Vision Source,

Sulphur, Louisiana

Dilpreet Gill

**Commencement Ceremony**

*Magna Cum Laude*

STAFFORD, TX  
B.S.A., University of Texas at Austin  
Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas

Erina Diane Jesel Glenn

*Summa Cum Laude*

BURLESON, TX  
B.S., Texas A&M University  
Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth,  
Texas  
Northside Community Health Center,  
Fort Worth, Texas  
Residency Match:  
Doris Miller VA Medical Center  
Ocular Disease

Matthew Liam Alviento Gomes

*Magna Cum Laude*

PEARLAND, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at  
San Antonio  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
Milton, Edgewood Eye Clinic, Milton,  
Washington  
Residency Match:  
University of Houston College of  
Optometry  
Primary Care Optometry - University  
Eye Institute

Julia Groom

SAN ANTONIO, TX  
B.S., Washington State University  
Sharp Eye Consultants, San Antonio,  
Texas  
South Texas Veterans Health Care  
System, San Antonio, Texas

Sanjana Gupta

PLANO, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Dallas  
Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas

Uyen Phuong Ha

*Magna Cum Laude*

HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas  
Diagnostic Eye Center, Houston,  
Texas

Caleb Matthew Hall

VIDOR, TX  
B.S., Lamar University  
Dr. Robert Janot Vision Source,  
Sulphur, Louisiana  
Texas State Optical, Beaumont, Texas

Meghan Elizabeth Hall

PROSPER, TX  
B.S., Texas A&M University  
Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth,  
Texas  
Mann Eye Institute, Houston, Texas

Maxwell Kenneth Harden

TROPHY CLUB, TX  
B.B.A., University of North Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
Vision Source Mission Bend, Houston,  
Texas

Aliyah Nicole Hawkins

*Magna Cum Laude*

HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., Sam Houston State University  
Diagnostic Eye Center, Houston,  
Texas  
Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth,  
Texas

Alexis Prager Herstein

*Summa Cum Laude*

DALLAS, TX  
B.B.A., University of Texas at Austin  
Family Vision Solutions, Spring, Texas  
Diagnostic Eye Center, Houston,  
Texas  
Residency Match:  
The Ohio State University College of  
Optometry  
Cornea and Contact Lenses

Jenny T. Ho

*Magna Cum Laude*

SUGAR LAND, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Austin  
Northside Community Health Center,  
Fort Worth, Texas  
Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas

Merytran Quyen Hy

AMARILLO, TX  
B.S., West Texas A&M University  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas  
Today's Vision Meyerland, Bellaire,  
Texas

Kelsey Lynn Joe

*Summa Cum Laude*

FULSHEAR, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Austin  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
Walter Reed National Military  
Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland  
Residency Match:  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Ocular Disease - Cornea and Contact  
Lenses

Michelle Heeryung Joo

SAN ANTONIO, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Austin  
Mission Vision, San Antonio, Texas  
Sharp Eye Consultants, San Antonio,  
Texas

Joshua D. Joseph

*Magna Cum Laude*

FORT WORTH, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Arlington  
Northside Community Health Center,  
Fort Worth, Texas  
Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth,  
Texas

Christian G. Juarez

*Magna Cum Laude*

HOUSTON, TX  
B.A., Rice University  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas  
Clear Lake Eye Center, Webster, Texas

Gene Han Jung

HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas  
See to Succeed Houston Health  
Department, Houston, Texas

Varun Jyothi

*Magna Cum Laude*

PLANO, TX  
B.S., University of Oklahoma  
Plaza Vision Center, Dallas, Texas  
Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth,  
Texas

Caleb Aris Kelly

BOSSIER CITY, LA  
B.S., Louisiana State University in  
Shreveport  
Family Vision Center, Crosby, Texas  
Tomball VA Clinic, Tomball, Texas

Mina Kiani

FORT WORTH, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Arlington  
Northside Community Health Center,  
Fort Worth, Texas  
Signature Eye Care, Cedar Park, Texas

Alexa Le

*Summa Cum Laude*

HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Plaza Vision Center, Dallas, Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas

Bailey R. Lemoine

Commencement Ceremony

*Summa Cum Laude*

MONROE, LA  
B.S., Louisiana State University  
Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth,  
Texas  
Louisiana Eye and Laser Center,  
Alexandria, Louisiana

Guy William London

*Magna Cum Laude*  
STAMFORD, TX  
B.S., Hardin-Simmons University  
NSU College of Optometry,  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma  
Amarillo VA, Amarillo, Texas

Joanne Ashley Mai

*Summa Cum Laude*  
GRAND PRAIRIE, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Arlington  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
Plano Eye Associates, Plano, Texas

Louis T. Mai

ARLINGTON, TX  
B.S.A., University of Texas at Austin  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas

Lauren Cary Martinez

*Magna Cum Laude*  
MERCEDAS, TX  
B.S.A., University of Texas at Austin  
South Texas Veterans Health Care  
System, San Antonio, Texas  
Clear Lake Eye Center, Webster, Texas  
Residency Match:  
Audie Murphy Memorial VA Hospital  
Ocular Disease - Brain Injury  
Rehabilitation

Sneha Rani Mathew

DENTON, TX  
B.S., University of North Texas  
Louisiana Eye & Laser Center,  
Alexandria, Louisiana  
Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth,  
Texas

Kaylee G. McDonald

FORT WORTH, TX  
B.S., Tarleton State University  
Diagnostic Eye Center, Houston,  
Texas  
Family Vision Center, Crosby, Texas  
Residency Match:  
Eye Center of Texas  
Ocular Disease - Refractive and  
Ocular Surgery

Mark S. Mina

*Magna Cum Laude*

FORT WORTH, TX  
B.S., Texas A&M University  
Plano Eye Associates, Plano, Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas

Justin Molder

*Magna Cum Laude*  
GRANBURY, TX  
B.S., Abilene Christian University  
Northside Community Health Center,  
Fort Worth, Texas  
West Texas Eyecare, Fort Stockton,  
Texas

Brynn Monet Montgomery

*Summa Cum Laude*  
WINDSOR, CO  
B.S., University of North Carolina  
Wilmington  
Walter Reed National Military  
Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland  
Northside Community Health Center,  
Fort Worth, Texas  
Residency Match:  
Eye Center of Texas  
Ocular Disease - Refractive and  
Ocular Surgery

Rhea Nathaniel

GILBERT, AZ  
B.S., Arizona State University  
Tomball VA Clinic, Tomball, Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas

Anne Nguyen

HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas  
Clear Lake Eye Center, Webster, Texas

Caitlin Thuy Tien Nguyen

KATY, TX  
B.S., Texas A&M University  
Bellaire Family Eye Care, Bellaire,  
Texas  
See to Succeed Houston Health  
Department, Houston, Texas  
Residency Match:  
Illinois College of Optometry - IL Eye  
Institute  
Pediatric - Vision Therapy and Vision  
Rehabilitation

Danielle Emma Nguyen

HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., Texas A&M University  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
MyEyeDr. Spring Klein, Spring, Texas

Ethan Hong Long Nguyen

HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas  
Vision Source Mission Bend, Houston,  
Texas

Hai My N. Nguyen

*Summa Cum Laude*  
DALLAS, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Dallas  
Diagnostic Eye Center, Houston,  
Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas

Jasmine Nguyen

*Summa Cum Laude*  
BATON ROUGE, LA  
B.S., Louisiana State University  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas  
Bellaire Family Eye Care, Bellaire,  
Texas

Jennifer Nguyen

*Summa Cum Laude*  
SUGAR LAND, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
Family Vision Solutions, Spring, Texas

Karen Nguyen

*Magna Cum Laude*  
GAUTIER, MS  
B.S., Mississippi State University  
Altig Optical, Fort Worth, Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas

Kevin Nguyen

*Summa Cum Laude*  
SACHSE, TX  
B.S.A., University of Texas at Austin  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas  
Vision Source Mission Bend, Houston,  
Texas

Lauren Nguyen

SUGAR LAND, TX  
B.S., Houston Christian University  
Clear Lake Eye Center, Webster, Texas  
Northside Community Health Center,  
Fort Worth, Texas

Nhi Yen Nguyen

*Summa Cum Laude*  
ORLANDO, FL  
B.S., University of Florida  
Albuquerque VA Medical Center,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas

**Commencement Ceremony**

Isabelle Park

HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Austin  
Plano Eye Associates, Plano, Texas  
Sharp Eye Consultants, San Antonio,  
Texas

Naga Arpitha Pavuluri

*Magna Cum Laude*  
MORRISVILLE, NC  
B.S., University of North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill  
Richmond VA Outpatient Clinic,  
Richmond, Texas  
Walter Reed National Military  
Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland  
Residency Match:  
W. G. Hefner VA Medical Center  
Ocular Disease

Maria Pham

*Magna Cum Laude*  
AUSTIN, TX  
B.S.A., University of Texas at Austin  
Louisiana Eye & Laser Center,  
Alexandria, Louisiana  
Today's Vision Meyerland, Bellaire,  
Texas

Ethan Layne Price

*Magna Cum Laude*  
HOUMA, LA  
B.S., Nicholls State University  
Clear Lake Eye Center, Webster, Texas  
Houston Eye Associates, Houston,  
Texas

Martin Reyes

HOUSTON, TX  
B.Eng., University of Houston  
Vision Source Mission Bend, Houston,  
Texas  
NSU College of Optometry,  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Adriana Latryce Robinson

*Magna Cum Laude*  
FLOWER MOUND, TX  
B.S., Lamar University  
Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas  
Northside Community Health Center,  
Fort Worth, Texas

Cassandra Rodriguez

EDINBURG, TX  
B.S., University of Texas Rio Grande  
Valley  
Valley Coastal Bend VA, Harlingen,  
Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas

Iliana Marie Rodriguez

WESLACO, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at San  
Antonio  
Houston Eye Associates, Houston,  
Texas  
Valley Coastal Bend VA, Harlingen,  
Texas

Rida Zohra Sajid

MANSFIELD, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Arlington  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas  
Houston Eye Associates, Houston,  
Texas

Mays Salman

*Magna Cum Laude*  
KATY, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Richmond VA Outpatient Clinic,  
Richmond, Texas  
Katy VA Outpatient Clinic, Katy,  
Texas

Madeline Paige Sauer

*Magna Cum Laude*  
HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., Baylor University  
Community Eye Clinic, Fort Worth,  
Texas  
Louisiana Eye and Laser Center,  
Alexandria, Louisiana

Sage Smith

*Summa Cum Laude*  
CALGARY, AB  
B.S., Brigham Young University  
Family Vision Solutions, Spring, Texas  
Mann Eye Institute, Houston, Texas

Katlyn Sprague

*Magna Cum Laude*  
HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Diagnostic Eye Center, Houston,  
Texas  
Family Vision Center, Crosby, Texas

Courtney Mai-Nhi Ta

HOUSTON, TX  
B.A., University of Texas at Austin  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas  
Residency Match:  
Audie Murphy Memorial VA Hospital  
Ocular Disease - Brain Injury  
Rehabilitation

Candelario Tapia

HARLINGEN, TX  
B.A., University of Texas at San  
Antonio  
Diagnostic Eye Center, Houston,  
Texas  
South Texas Veterans Health Care  
System, San Antonio, Texas  
Residency Match:  
Eye Center of Texas  
Ocular Disease - Refractive and  
Ocular Surgery

Marissa Nicole Taylor

*Summa Cum Laude*  
HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Bellaire Family Eye Care, Bellaire,  
Texas  
Diagnostic Eye Center, Houston,  
Texas

Long Hai Tran

HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., Texas A&M University  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
Milton, Edgewood Eye Clinic, Milton,  
Washington

Julie Trinh

*Summa Cum Laude*  
ARLINGTON, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Arlington  
Neuro-Vision Associates of North  
Texas, Plano, Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
Residency Match:  
University of Houston College of  
Optometry  
Pediatric Optometry

Kaileemarie Lien Trinh

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Northside Community Health Center,  
Fort Worth, Texas  
Neuro-Vision Associates of North  
Texas, Plano, Texas

Elizabeth A. Trossen

*Summa Cum Laude*  
WHITE BEAR LAKE, MN  
B.A., University of Minnesota -  
Twin Cities  
Albuquerque VA Medical Center,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Naval Medical Center San Diego,  
San Diego, California

Kacee Truong

Commencement Ceremony

*Summa Cum Laude*

LAWRENCE, KS  
B.S., University of Kansas  
Walter Reed National Military  
Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland  
Family Vision Solutions, Spring, Texas  
Residency Match:  
Kansas City VA Medical Center  
Ocular Disease - Glaucoma and Vision  
Rehabilitation

Andrew Jacob Verghese

DALLAS, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at San  
Antonio  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas  
MyEyeDr. Spring Klein, Spring, Texas

Aedann J. Villanueva

LEANDER, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Dallas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas  
Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas

Kim Loi Hong Vo

REDWOOD CITY, CA  
B.S., California State University,  
East Bay  
B.S., California State University,  
East Bay  
B.S., California State University,  
East Bay  
Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas,  
Texas

Ashton Claire Westbrook

NACOGDOCHES, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Bellaire Family Eye Care, Bellaire,  
Texas  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas

Kaylee White

*Summa Cum Laude*  
AUSTIN, TX  
B.S., University of Texas at Austin  
Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas  
Oak Hill Eye Care, Austin, Texas

Jeffrey I. Wilson

CHICAGO, IL  
B.S., University of Texas at Dallas  
Mann Eye Institute, Houston, Texas  
Vision Source Mission Bend, Houston,  
Texas

Hailey Victoria Young

*Summa Cum Laude*  
SANTA FE, TX  
B.S., Texas A&M University  
Hellerstein & Brenner Vision Center,  
Greenwood, Colorado  
Louisiana Eye and Laser Center,  
Alexandria, Louisiana

Wilfred Moe Khaing Zaw

*Magna Cum Laude*  
HOUSTON, TX  
B.S., University of Houston  
Today's Vision Meyerland, Bellaire,  
Texas  
Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas

**RESIDENTS**

Candidates' names are followed by their graduate institutions and University of Houston College of Optometry residency program information.

Caroleen Bejimi, O.D.

O.D., Nova Southeastern University  
College of Optometry  
**RESIDENCY:** Primary Care/Ocular  
Disease at the Michael E. DeBakey VA  
Medical Center

Eileen Cheng, O.D.

O.D., Marshall B. Ketchum University  
Southern California College of  
Optometry  
**RESIDENCY:** Primary Care Optometry  
at the New Mexico VA Healthcare  
System

Randa Ibrahim, O.D.

O.D., University of Houston College  
of Optometry  
**RESIDENCY:** Primary Care/Ocular  
Disease at the Michael E. DeBakey VA  
Medical Center

Marilyn Johnson, O.D.

O.D., Michigan College of Optometry  
at Ferris State University  
**RESIDENCY:** Low Vision  
Rehabilitation at the University of  
Houston College of Optometry

Joanna Lopez, O.D.

O.D., University of California  
Berkeley Herbert Wertheim School of  
Optometry and Vision Science  
**RESIDENCY:** Primary Care Optometry  
at the University of Houston College  
of Optometry

Lilly Phan, O.D.

O.D., Massachusetts College of  
Pharmacy and Health Sciences  
**RESIDENCY:** Primary Care/Ocular  
Disease at the Michael E. DeBakey VA  
Medical Center

Luis Ramirez, O.D., M.S.

O.D., University of Houston College  
of Optometry  
M.S., University of Houston College  
of Optometry  
**RESIDENCY:** Cornea and Contact  
Lenses at the University of Houston  
College of Optometry

Mallory Rickett, O.D.

O.D., University of the Incarnate  
Word Rosenberg School of Optometry  
**RESIDENCY:** Ocular Disease at the  
Community Eye Clinic Fort Worth

Katherine Tran, O.D.

O.D., University of Houston College  
of Optometry  
**RESIDENCY:** Ocular Disease at the  
Cedar Springs Eye Clinic

**POSTDOCTORAL CLINICAL FELLOWS**

Candidates' names are followed by their graduate institutions and fellowship information.

Yesenia Aguilar, O.D.

O.D., University of Houston College  
of Optometry  
**FELLOWSHIP:** Community-Based  
Fellowship at the University of  
Houston College of Optometry

Matthew Marinus Keyzer, O.D., M.S.

O.D., University of Houston College  
of Optometry  
M.S., University of Houston College  
of Optometry  
**FELLOWSHIP:** Corneal and Contact  
Lens Fellowship at the University of  
Houston College of Optometry

## The Optometric Oath

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With full deliberation, I freely and solemnly pledge that:

- I **affirm** that the health of my patient will be my first consideration.
- I **will** practice the art and science of optometry faithfully and conscientiously, and to the fullest scope of my competence.
- I **will** uphold and honorably promote by example and action the highest standards, ethics and ideals of my chosen profession and the honor of the degree, Doctor of Optometry, which has been granted me.
- I **will** provide professional care for the diverse populations who seek my services, with concern, with compassion and with due regard for their human rights and dignity.
- I **will** work to expand access to quality care and improve health equity for all communities.
- I **will** place the treatment of those who seek my care above personal gain and strive to see that none shall lack for proper care.
- I **will** hold as privileged and inviolable all information entrusted to me in confidence by my patients.
- I **will** advise my patients fully and honestly of all which may serve to restore, maintain or enhance their vision and general health.
- I **will** strive continuously to broaden my knowledge and skills so that my patients may benefit from all new and efficacious means to enhance the care of human vision.
- I **will** share information cordially and unselfishly with my fellow doctors of optometry and other professionals for the benefit of patients and the advancement of human knowledge and welfare.
- I **will** do my utmost to serve my community, my country and humankind as a citizen as well as a doctor of optometry.
- I **hereby** commit myself to be steadfast in the performance of this my solemn oath and obligation.

## Recognition and Awards

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### ACADEMIC HONORS

Doctoral students in the Doctor of Optometry program at the University of Houston who meet all degree requirements will graduate with academic honors based on their final grade point averages.

#### Summa Cum Laude – 3.75 to 4.0

Abigail Basler  
Lauren Dean Bowman  
Liam J. Burhans  
Ryan Chang  
Melinda Doan  
Evan Elam  
Wendy Isabel Esquivel  
Erina Diane Jesel Glenn  
Alexis Prager Herstein

Kelsey Lynn Joe  
Alexa Le  
Bailey R. Lemoine  
Joanne Ashley Mai  
Brynn Monet Montgomery  
Hai My N. Nguyen  
Jasmine Nguyen  
Jennifer Nguyen  
Kevin Nguyen

Nhi Yen Nguyen  
Sage Smith  
Marissa Nicole Taylor  
Julie Trinh  
Elizabeth A. Trossen  
Kacee Truong  
Kaylee White  
Hailey Victoria Young

#### Magna Cum Laude – 3.50 to 3.74

Omar Aborahma  
Dane Agost  
Iman Mariam Ahmed  
Andrew Ahn  
Pralay Atodaria  
Kristin Goertz Bergstrom  
Serena L. Everett  
Madeline Fossitt  
Dilpreet Gill  
Matthew Liam Alviento Gomes

Uyen Phuong Ha  
Aliyah Nicole Hawkins  
Jenny T. Ho  
Joshua D. Joseph  
Christian G. Juarez  
Varun Jyothi  
Guy William London  
Lauren Cary Martinez  
Mark S. Mina  
Justin Molder

Karen Nguyen  
Naga Arpitha Pavuluri  
Maria Pham  
Ethan Layne Price  
Adriana Latryce Robinson  
Mays Salman  
Madeline Paige Sauer  
Katlyn Sprague  
Wilfred Moe Khaing Zaw

### 2026 GOLD KEY INTERNATIONAL OPTOMETRIC HONOR SOCIETY

Gold Key International Optometric Honor Society recognizes graduating students who have demonstrated outstanding professional and ethical attitudes through leadership and service to their class, college, and profession. Membership is limited to no more than 10 percent of the graduating class. The University of Houston College of Optometry chapter of Gold Key was created in 1974.

Zainab M. Asif  
Liam J. Burhans  
Serena L. Everett  
Erina Diane Jesel Glenn

Alexis Prager Herstein  
Kelsey Lynn Joe  
Varun Jyothi  
Guy William London

Andrew Jacob Verghese  
Jeffrey I. Wilson

## BETA SIGMA KAPPA HONOR GRADUATES

Beta Sigma Kappa recognizes students who stimulate scientific attainment, academic excellence, and the ethical practice of optometry. Membership is awarded based on scholastic excellence and is calculated per semester. The asterisk denotes membership since Fall 2023.

Omar Aborahma \*  
Iman Mariam Ahmed \*  
Andrew Ahn \*  
Abigail Basler \*  
Kristin Goertz Bergstrom \*  
Lauren Dean Bowman \*  
Liam J. Burhans \*  
Melinda Doan \*  
Wendy Isabel Esquivel \*  
Serena L. Everett  
Madeline Fossitt \*  
Dilpreet Gill \*  
Erina Diane Jesel Glenn \*

Matthew Liam Alviento Gomes  
Uyen Phuong Ha \*  
Aliyah Nicole Hawkins \*  
Alexis Prager Herstein \*  
Jenny T. Ho  
Kelsey Lynn Joe \*  
Joshua D. Joseph  
Varun Jyothi \*  
Bailey R. Lemoinev  
Joanne Ashley Mai \*  
Lauren Cary Martinez \*  
Mark S. Mina \*  
Justin Molder

Brynn Monet Montgomery \*  
Hai My N. Nguyen \*  
Karen Nguyen \*  
Kevin Nguyen \*  
Nhi Yen Nguyen \*  
Adriana Latryce Robinson  
Madeline Paige Sauer \*  
Katlyn Sprague \*  
Julie Trinh \*  
Elizabeth A. Trossen \*  
Kacee Truong \*  
Kaylee White \*

## CLINICAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

**AAOF Award of Excellence in  
Contact Lens Patient Care**

Uyen Phuong Ha

**Cornea and Contact Lens**

Alexa Le

**Dry Eye Center**

Kelsey Lynn Joe

**Pediatric Optometry**

Zainab M. Asif

**Low Vision**

Abigail Basler

**Medical Eye Service**

Madeline Fossitt

**Surgical Care Award**

Alexis Prager Herstein

**William Feinbloom**

**Low Vision Award**

Martin Reyes

## FOURTH YEAR PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

**College of Optometrists in  
Vision Development Excellence  
in Vision Therapy Award**

Joanne Ashley Mai

**Excellence in Community  
Service Award**

Serena Everett

**Excellence in Optics Award**

Elizabeth A. Trossen

## LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

Doctoral students who demonstrated leadership skills by holding office in one or more college- or state-level optometric student organizations:

Iman Mariam Ahmed

SOPMA Event Coordinator 2023-2024  
MCOA President 2023-2024 & 2024-2025  
BSK President 2024-2025

Zainab M. Asif

SVOSH Secretary 2022-2023  
SVOSH President 2023-2024 & 2024-2025

Abigail Basler

BSK Treasurer 2024-2025

Taiba Bilal

SOPMA Vice President 2023-2024 & 2024-2025

Elevia E.R. Bruce

NOSA Public Relations Chair 2023-2024  
MCOA President-Elect 2023-2024 & 2024-2025

Liam J. Burhans

SOFA Secretary 2023-2024  
SOFA President 2024-2025

Serena L. Everett

AOSA OPT I Liaison 2022-2023  
AOSA Trustee-Elect 2023-2024  
AOSA Trustee 2024-2025

Aisha Toniqua Freeman

NOSA Community Service & Event Chair 2022-2023  
NOSA Vice President 2023-2024  
NOSA President 2024-2025

Erina Diane Jesel Glenn

AOSA AOA PAC Rep-Elect 2023-2024  
AOSA AOA PAC Rep 2024-2025  
SAAO President 2024-2025

Aliyah Nicole Hawkins

MCOA Community Outreach Chair 2023-2024 & 2024-2025  
SAAO Vice President 2024-2025  
BSK Mock Comp Co-Chair 2024-2025  
NOSA Public Relations Chair 2024-2025

Alexis Prager Herstein

Contact Lens Club President 2024-2025 & 2025-2026

Kelsey Lynn Joe

Contact Lens Club Vice President 2024-2025 & 2025-2026

Gene Han Jung

AOSA Trustee-Elect 2021-2022  
AOSA Trustee 2022-2023  
MCOA Secretary 2022-2023

Varun Jyothi

SVOSH Treasurer 2022-2023  
STOA Secretary-Elect & Treasurer-Elect 2023-2024  
STOA Secretary & Treasurer 2024-2025

Guy William London

STOA President-Elect 2023-2024  
STOA President 2024-2025

Lauren Cary Martinez

Contact Lens Club Corporate Liaison 2024-2025 & 2025-2026

Mark S. Mina

SOPMA OPT II Rep 2023-2024

Anne Nguyen

SOPMA OPT I Rep 2021-2022

Adriana Latryce Robinson

STOA Vice President 2023-2024  
SVOSH Vice President 2023-2024 & 2024-2025  
BSK Mock Comp Co-Chair 2024-2025  
SOPMA OPT III Rep 2024-2025

Mays Salman

SVOSH Vision Screening Coordinator 2022-2023  
STOA Secretary 2023-2024  
SVOSH Secretary 2023-2024 & 2024-2025

Madeline Paige Sauer

BSK Mock Comp Co-Chair 2024-2025

Katlyn Sprague

OSA Secretary 2023-2024 & 2024-2025

Candelario Tapia

OSA President-Elect 2023-2024  
OSA President 2024-2025

Andrew Jacob Verghese

Contact Lens Club Treasurer 2024-2025 & 2025-2026

Kaylee White

BSK Vice President 2024-2025

Jeffrey I. Wilson

NOSA National Events & News Coordinator 2022-2023  
AOSA Trustee-Elect 2022-2023  
NOSA Treasurer 2023-2024  
AOSA Trustee 2023-2024  
SOPMA President 2024-2025

Hailey Victoria Young

OSA Social Media Chair 2023-2024

## College Administration

---

Michael D. Twa, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Dean and Professor*

Andrew M. Archila, O.D., M.B.A.  
*Associate Dean for Clinical Operations*

Laura J. Frishman, Ph.D.  
*Associate Dean for Graduate Studies  
and Research*

Kimberly Lambreghts, R.N., O.D.  
*Associate Dean  
for Professional Programs*

Ralph Herring, O.D., M.H.A.  
*Assistant Dean for Professional Studies*

Lucy Kehinde Darnell, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Assistant Dean for Student Services*

Danica Marrelli, O.D.  
*Assistant Dean for Clinical Education*

David Berntsen, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Department Chair of Clinical Sciences*

Vallabh Das, Ph.D.  
*Department Chair of Vision Science*

Jason Porter, Ph.D.  
*Chair of the College Faculty*

LaSaundra Cotright, M.B.A.  
*Executive Director of College  
Business Operations*

Beth Harper, O.D.  
*Director of Residency Programs*

Pearl Cajoles, B.A.  
*Executive Director of Communications*

Amanda Johnson, B.A.  
*Executive Director of  
Professional Relations*

Long Nguyen  
*Interim Director of College IT Support*

Lyle Tate, M.S.  
*Director of Student Services*

## College of Optometry Faculty

---

Andrew M. Archila, O.D., M.B.A.  
*Clinical Professor*

Julia Benoit, Ph.D.  
*Research Associate Professor*

Jan Bergmanson, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Professor*

David Berntsen, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Professor  
Golden-Golden Professor*

D. Rudolph Black, Jr., O.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Alan Burns, Ph.D.  
*Professor  
Benedict-Pitts Professor*

Moriah Chandler, O.D.  
*Clinical Professor*

Han Cheng, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Clinical Professor  
Janice M. Wensveen Clinical Professor*

Daniel Coates, Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

Vivien Coulson-Thomas, Ph.D.  
*Associate Professor*

Vallabh Das, Ph.D.  
*Professor  
John and Rebecca Moores Professor*

Lucy Kehinde Darnell, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Arthur G. Fernandes, MPH, Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

Jennifer Deakins, O.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Tarsis Ferreira, M.Sc., Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

Meron Fitta, O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Laura J. Frishman, Ph.D.  
*Professor  
John and Rebecca Moores Professor*

Janet Garza, O.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Amber Gaume Giannoni, O.D.  
*Clinical Professor  
Kevin McDaid-Vision Source Professor*

Marcus Gonzales, O.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Viviana Gonzalez, O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Cassandra Greene, O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Beth Harper, O.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Wendy Harrison, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Associate Professor*

Ralph Herring, O.D., M.H.A.  
*Clinical Professor*

David Hildebrand, Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

Hong Dieu Ho, O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Munenori Ishibashi, Ph.D.  
*Research Assistant Professor*

Nange Jin, M.D., Ph.D.  
*Research Assistant Professor*

Michael Kalloniatis, B.Sc.(Optom),  
M.Sc.(Optom), Ph.D.  
*Professor*

Andrew Kemp, O.D.  
*Clinical Professor*

Tonya Ketcham, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Kathryn T. Keyzer, O.D.  
*Professor of Practice*

Jung-Sun Kim, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Kimberly Lambreghts, R.N., O.D.  
*Clinical Professor*

Anna-Kaye Logan, O.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Ruth Manny, O.D., Ph.D. \*  
*Professor  
Charles R. Stewart Professor*

Commencement Ceremony

Danica Marrelli, O.D.  
*Clinical Professor*  
*North Texas Study Group Professor*

Jason Marsack, Ph.D.  
*Associate Professor*

Muriel Martinez, O.D.  
*Clinical Professor*

Anna Matynia, Ph.D.  
*Associate Professor*

Kimberly Meier, Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

Swati Modi, O.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Courtney F. Morrow, O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Lan Chi Nguyen, M.B.A., Ed.D.  
*Instructional Assistant Professor*

Amber Nichols, O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Lauri Nurminen, Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

John O'Brien, Ph.D.  
*Professor*  
*Benedict-McFadden Professor*

Lisa Ostrin, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Professor*

Lloyd Pate, O.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Nimesh Patel, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Professor*  
*Earl L. Smith III, O.D., Ph.D. Professor*

Maureen Plaumann, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

Jason Porter, Ph.D.  
*Associate Professor*

Guoting Qin, Ph.D.  
*Research Assistant Professor*

Rachel Redfern, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Associate Professor*

Christophe P. Ribelayga, M.S., Ph.D.  
*Professor*  
*FERV Professor*

Eric Ritchey, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Associate Professor*

Luca Della Santina, Ph.D., Pharm.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

Kaitlyn Sapoznik, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

Diane Sayah, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

Pat Segu, O.D.  
*Clinical Professor*

Hamza Shah, O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Justin Simbulan, O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Jennifer Tasca, O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Jean Marie Thomson, R.N., O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Anita Ticak, O.D., M.S.  
*Clinical Professor*

Michael D. Twa, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Professor*  
*Humana Endowed Dean's  
Chair in Optometry*

Anuradha Veerappan, O.D., M.S.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Maria Walker, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Assistant Professor*

Samantha Wang, O.D.  
*Clinical Assistant Professor*

Joe Wheat, O.D., Ph.D.  
*Clinical Associate Professor*

Geunyoung Yoon, Ph.D.  
*Professor*  
*Irvin M. Borish Chair in Optometry*

Zhijing Zhang, Ph.D.  
*Research Assistant Professor*

*\*Deceased*

## Emeritus Faculty

---

Raymond A. Applegate, O.D., Ph.D.  
Harold Bedell, Ph.D.  
Roger L. Boltz, O.D., Ph.D.  
Yuzo Chino, Ph.D.  
Karen Fern, O.D.  
Suzanne Ferimer  
Troy Fannin, O.D.\*  
Merton Flom, O.D., Ph.D.\*

Ronald S. Harwerth, O.D., Ph.D.  
Nicky Holdeman, O.D., M.D.  
Randy Jose, O.D.  
Penelope Kegel-Flom, Ph.D.  
James Koetting, O.D.\*  
Paul Pease, O.D., Ph.D.  
Marcus G. Piccolo, O.D.  
Don Pitts, O.D.\*

Nelson Reber, O.D.\*  
Jerome Rosner, O.D.\*  
Earl L. Smith, III, O.D., Ph.D.  
Charles Stewart, O.D., Ph.D.\*  
Jerald W. Strickland, O.D., Ph.D.\*

*\*Deceased*

## 2025-2026 Academic Year Externship Sites Include:

---

Brett Bennett, O.D.  
*Louisiana Eye and Laser Center,  
Alexandria, Louisiana*

Jacqueline Brending, O.D.  
*Clear Lake Eye Center, Webster, Texas*

Phillip Brunson, O.D.  
*Mann Eye Institute, Houston, Texas*

Randy Charrier, O.D.  
*Family Vision Solutions, Spring, Texas*

Brian Cherry, O.D.  
*West Texas Eyecare,  
Fort Stockton, Texas*

Jennifer Deakins, O.D.  
*Community Eye Clinic,  
Fort Worth, Texas*

Daniel Detwiler, O.D.  
*Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical  
Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico*

Leann Douglas, O.D.  
*Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health  
Care System, New Orleans,  
Louisiana*

Teresa Erickson, O.D.  
*Milton- Edgewood Eye Clinic,  
Milton, Washington*

Geeta Girdher, O.D.  
*Walter Reed National Military Medical  
Center, Bethesda, Maryland*

Marcus Gonzales, O.D.  
*Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas, Texas*

Charity Grannis, M.D.,  
*Houston Eye Associates, Houston, Texas*

Heather Ihlo, O.D.  
*Golden Eye Clinic, Center Texas*

Robert Janot, O.D.  
*Dr. Robert Janot Vision Source,  
Sulphur, Louisiana*

Andrew Kemp, O.D.  
*Cedar Springs Eye Clinic, Dallas, Texas*

Thanh Le, O.D.  
*South Texas Veterans Health Care  
System, San Antonio, Texas*

Stephanie Lechlitner, O.D.  
*Oak Hill Eye Care, Austin, Texas*

Michael Leung, O.D.  
*Richmond VA Outpatient  
Clinic, Richmond, Texas*

J. Ricky Lopez, O.D.  
*Katy Outpatient Clinic, Katy, Texas*

Oliver Lou, O.D.  
*Signature Eye Care, Cedar Park, Texas*

Stephanie Lozano, O.D.  
*Diagnostic Eye Center, Houston, Texas*

Michael McCormick, O.D.  
*McCormick Vision Center,  
Austin, Texas*

Earlena McKee, O.D.  
*NSU College of Optometry,  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma*

Veronica Mendez, O.D.  
*See to Succeed Houston Health,  
City of Houston Health  
Department, Houston, Texas*

Clarke D. Newman, O.D.  
*Plaza Vision Center, Dallas, Texas*

Angeline Nguyen, O.D.  
*Plano Eye Associates, Plano, Texas*

Vu Nguyen, O.D.  
*Today's Vision Meyerland,  
Bellaire, Texas*

Amita Patel, O.D.  
*Hope Clinic, Houston, Texas*

Samir Patel, O.D.  
*Texas State Optical, Beaumont, Texas*

LCDRT Victoria Piamonte, O.D.  
*Naval Medical Center San Diego,  
San Diego, California*

Kristi Ramirez, O.D.  
*Sharp Eye Consultants,  
San Antonio, Texas*

Samantha Reynolds, O.D.  
*Altig Optical, Fort Worth, Texas*

Shelby Riley, O.D.  
*Hellerstein & Brenner Vision  
Center, Greenwood, Colorado*

Jackson Robison, O.D.  
*Mission Vision, San Antonio, Texas*

Charles Shidlofsky, O.D.  
*Neuro-Vision Associates of  
North Texas, Plano, Texas*

Laurie Sorrenson, O.D.  
*Lakeline Vision Source, Austin, Texas*

Ellie Stivala, O.D.  
*Northside Community Health  
Center, Fort Worth, Texas*

Megan Stubinski, O.D.  
*Vision Source Mission Bend,  
Houston, Texas*

Robin Szabo, O.D.  
*Family Vision Center, Crosby, Texas*

David Trout, O.D.  
*Amarillo VA, Amarillo, Texas*

Ashley Wallace-Tucker, O.D.  
*Bellaire Family Eye Care,  
Bellaire, Texas*

Brooke Vegas, O.D.  
*Tomball VA Clinic, Tomball, Texas*

Ann Voss, O.D.  
*Bellaire Family Eye Care,  
Bellaire, Texas*

David Way, O.D.  
*MyEyeDr., Spring Klein, Spring, Texas*

Caroline Wells, O.D.  
*Carousel Eyecare, Houston, Texas*

Michael Wingard, O.D.  
*Valley Coastal Bend VAMC,  
Harlingen, Texas*

## College Timeline

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### 1950s

- In 1952, the University of Houston College of Optometry officially opens. Charles R. Stewart, O.D., Ph.D., is named first dean of the college.
- In 1955, the Foundation for Education and Research in Vision is established to increase and promote awareness of vision and its care.
- The College graduates the first class with 11 O.D.s, entering the optometric profession in 1955.
- Mildred Carlisle, O.D., is the college's first female graduate.

### 1960s

- Faculty member Chester H. Pheiffer, O.D., Ph.D., assumes duties as the second dean of the college.
- The Texas Commission on Higher Education confirms the offering of optometry at the University of Houston, making the college eligible for state support.
- Charles M. Stephens, O.D., becomes the college's 100th graduate.

### 1970s

- The graduate program in physiological optics is established with the Master's degree in 1970 and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1974. The first Master of Science degree is awarded to Norman E. Leach, O.D., a former University of Houston College of Optometry faculty member. The first Doctor of Philosophy degree is awarded to Pierrette Dahaw-Barker, a former faculty member at Salus University's College of Optometry.
- James K. Donovan, O.D., becomes the 500th graduate.
- The J. Davis Armistead Building is completed with both state and federal assistance. The state-of-the-art \$9.6 million building is home to the college's expanding clinical training facilities, vision research laboratories, and classrooms.
- The college of optometry establishes a formal partnership with the Good Neighbor Healthcare Center and on-site optometric services begin.
- William R. Baldwin, O.D., Ph.D., becomes the third dean of the University of Houston College of Optometry.
- The University of Houston College of Optometry's Reading Room becomes an official library recognized by the University of Houston.
- The Nelson Reber, O.D., Eye Open Golf Tournament is established to raise funds for student scholarships and emergency loans.

### 1980s

- Dan Patterson, O.D., becomes the College of Optometry's 1,000th graduate.

- The University of Houston formally names the vision clinic the Herbert H. Moore Vision Care Clinic, in honor of the popular UHCO professor.
- The Texas Optometry Career Opportunities Program (TEXOCOP) is created with grant funds contributed from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service Administration.

### 1990s

- Karen M. Conway, O.D., becomes the college's 2,000th graduate.
- The Weston A. Pettey Library is dedicated to honor Dr. Pettey's tireless efforts on behalf of the University of Houston College of Optometry and the profession. The Reading Room is named to honor Dr. Irvin M. Borish for his achievements in the profession.
- The college building is formally named the J. Davis Armistead Building in recognition of Dr. Armistead's enduring efforts benefiting the college, university, and the profession. Dr. Armistead is known for being the optometrist to singer Buddy Holly and having a hand in selecting the famous black frames.
- Jerald W. Strickland, O.D., Ph.D., is named the University of Houston College of Optometry's fourth dean in 1991.

### 2000s

- Seren D. Ngin, O.D., becomes the college's 3,000th graduate in 2001.
- The University of Houston College of Optometry celebrates its 50th Anniversary.
- Earl L. Smith III, O.D., Ph.D., is named the fifth dean of the University of Houston College of Optometry in 2003.
- The University of Houston College of Optometry debuts its Mobile Eye Institute, designed to provide eye care throughout the Houston area in support of community care and disaster relief.

### 2010s

- The Molly and Doug Barnes Vision Institute within the new Health and Biomedical Sciences Building breaks ground in 2010 and officially opens in 2012.
- In 2012, the college opens the first ambulatory surgical center affiliated with a college of optometry providing state of the art surgical care and training on site.
- Bridget Ducote, O.D., becomes the 4,000th UHCO graduate in 2012.
- In 2013, Earl L. Smith III, O.D., Ph.D., is appointed to serve as the Interim Chief Health Officer for the university, and Roger L. Boltz, O.D., Ph.D., is appointed to serve as the college's Interim Dean.

## Commencement Ceremony

- J. Davis Armistead, O.D., passes away in 2014. He was the first O.D. to serve on the UH Board of Regents and completed two terms, the longest of any optometrist. He served as an advocate for the college, university, and profession until his death.
- The college establishes the Simulation Lab in 2014 giving students state-of-the-art virtual simulators to help students learn patient examination skills. Later, the college acquires Anatomage Virtual 4D Anatomy Tables designated exclusively for optometry students. Advanced technology allows students to visualize structures in four dimensions.
- In 2015, UHCO establishes eye and vision care services at the Hope Clinic in Houston, a Federally Qualified Health Center where students provide healthcare services in 14 languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean, Burmese, Arabic, and Spanish.
- The college establishes the Hall of Visionaries, naming Bill C. Benedict as the first inductee in 2015.
- In 2016, James H. Dienst, O.D., '89, is promoted to Brigadier General and is the first optometrist to achieve the rank of general in the Air Force. He received the prestigious Air Force Optometrist of the Year Award in 2001.
- Suzanne Ferimer, Librarian for UHCO's Weston A. Pettey Library, is presented with the Medical Library Association President's Award in 2017. This is one of MLA's highest honors and recognizes those that have made outstanding contributions in the field of health sciences librarianship.
- Ronald S. Harwerth, O.D., Ph.D., becomes the second inductee into the Hall of Visionaries.
- The college's 100th scholarship endowment is established in 2018 providing merit-based awards for optometry students.
- Roger Boltz, O.D., '72, Ph.D., '78, is recognized for his 40 years of service to the college. He joined the college's faculty in 1978 as an assistant professor, retiring in 2018 after 40 years of service. In addition to teaching and working in the cornea and contact lens clinic, he served in a variety of roles including chief financial officer, interim dean, associate dean for finance and administration, and associate dean for professional studies.
- In 2019, following an international search, Michael Twa, O.D., Ph.D., is selected as the University of Houston College of Optometry's sixth dean.
- health and student training progress. Online education and telehealth have become urgent priorities.
- In 2023, Danica Marrelli, O.D., and Amber Gaume, O.D., become the first non-tenured faculty to hold endowed chairs.
- Between 2020 and 2024 the college hires 40 new faculty.
- The University of Houston launches 50 in 5, an initiative to increase research funding in five years. The college of optometry increases research funding by more than 100% in less than three years.
- Amy Mistry, O.D., becomes the 5,000th UHCO graduate in 2022.
- In 2023, the College of Optometry is ranked 27th nationally in National Eye Institute research funding, surpassing UC Berkeley and all other public universities in Texas.
- The college awards more than \$1 million in student scholarships, annually.
- In 2024, Dean Emeritus, Earl L. Smith, III, O.D., Ph.D., becomes the third inductee into the Hall of Visionaries.
- In 2026, Ruth Manny, O.D., Ph.D., becomes the fourth inductee into the Hall of Visionaries.

### 2020s

- In 2020, the world responds to the COVID global pandemic. Teaching activities and patient services are quickly and drastically modified to maintain public

## **College of Optometry Commencement Committee**

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Karina Acuna  
Renee Armacost  
Lauren Brown  
Pearl Cajoles  
Lee Dempsey  
Wendy Evans  
Clarissa Garcia  
Elissa Guerra

Victoria Hackney  
Amanda Johnson  
Cristian Loayza  
Chaminga Lorensuhewa  
Michele Luman  
Lorellye Macomber  
Daniel Miller  
Lyle Tate

## **Invitation**

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At the conclusion of the ceremony, the College of Optometry and our foundation will support a reception celebrating our newest alumni.

We invite all our graduates and guests to join us for light refreshments as we honor the Class of 2026.

**University of Houston Health 1 Building**  
**The Doctors of Texas State Optical Alumni Education Center**

***ENHANCING HEALTH AND VISION FOR LIFE***





**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/>





