







WILLIAM S.
PITTMAN
GRADUATION CEREMONY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 26, 2021 | 6 P.M. ET





WILLIAM S. PITTMAN

William Sidney Pittman was the first African American graduate from what was then called the Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry. Graduating with a diploma in architectural drawing in 1900, Pittman left behind a legacy not just on Drexel's campus but also for the entire nation.

Pittman, the son of an enslaved father, graduated in 1897 from the Tuskegee Institute, the country's preeminent historically Black architectural school. Booker T. Washington, the institute's principal, arranged for Tuskegee to financially support three years of studies for Pittman at the newly created Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry if he paid off his debt by teaching at the Tuskegee. Once at Drexel, Pittman worked with President James A. MacAlister and Arthur Truscott, architecture professor and department head, to finish his five-year program in three years through "a very different but more extraordinary and a more elaborate course than usual," as he wrote to Washington. Pittman earned top grades in architectural design, mechanical drawing, freehand drawing, water coloring, and history at Drexel. He then graduated in 1900, celebrated as one of the "honored" students of the class by MacAlister. Pittman returned to the Tuskegee Institute as head of the department of architectural drawing. He oversaw all campus construction, including the still-standing campus buildings — Rockefeller Hall and Carnegie Library. Pittman rose to national prominence as a high-profile African American architect and the first to obtain a federal commission.

Ultimately, Pittman designed over 50 buildings across the country, many of which were created for Black communities and were presented as examples for other African American architects to aspire to. Several buildings — including his family home and community buildings — are state or National Historical Landmarks.

Each year since 2016, in William S. Pittman's honor, Drexel University recognizes all graduates of the African diaspora whose legacy and contributions to their respective fields have paved the way for success of others in their educational, personal, and professional endeavors with our William S. Pittman Graduation Ceremony. It is our honor and privilege to name our ceremony after Mr. Pittman.

THE KENTE CLOTH STOLE

Originating in what is today known as Ghana, West Africa — the word “kente” translates to “handwoven cloth” in the native Twi language. Known for its rich, bold colors, kente cloth grew in popularity in the 12th century. Believed to be originally commissioned as a cloth spun for royal ritual attire, the kente cloth continues to be used as a ceremonial garment that carries a deep, personal significance for the wearer.

Today, wearing the garment as an academic stole at graduation is a moment of pride and carries both historic and personal significance for graduates at schools all around the world. One of the hallmarks of Drexel’s William S. Pittman ceremony is the donning of the Drexel kente cloth stole before the main commencement event by someone important to the graduate. The donning of the Drexel kente stole represents the excellence and contributions of students of the African diaspora at Drexel University. In our virtual ceremony, we encourage you to invite a special person to drape your stole when your name is read.



MOST OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARDS

The Stephen R. Cox and Jasmine Y. Wright Awards recognize one undergraduate and one graduate student who have excelled academically and either overcome tremendous odds to be successful or have consistently made contributions that benefit others. Any Drexel community member can nominate any deserving student. Decisions are based on the recipients' service, leadership, or other distinctive efforts made to improve the campus or local, national or international community.



THE MR. STEPHEN R. COX MOST OUTSTANDING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARD

Mr. Stephen R. Cox graduated from Drexel University in 1974 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics and Atmospheric Sciences and a Master of Science degree in Biophysics and Biomedical Engineering in 1976. He is the founder and developer of the Greater Philadelphia Region Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (Philadelphia AMP) funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Mr. Cox has helped the Alliance to substantially increase its capacity to recruit, develop, and support underrepresented minority STEM graduate students with full tuition and stipend assistance. With over 15 years of service, Mr. Cox has personally mentored Drexel students as undergraduates through their doctoral completion. Currently, he serves as the organization advisor for the Drexel Black Graduate Student Union, is a member of the Center for Black Culture advisory board, and was recognized with an Outstanding Staff Award for his dedication.



THE MS. JASMINE Y. WRIGHT MOST OUTSTANDING GRADUATE STUDENT AWARD

Ms. Jasmine Y. Wright graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Bio Behavioral Health in 2011. Jasmine traveled to Ghana, The Gambia, and Senegal to gain maternal and child health knowledge in an effort to increase her overall understanding of health care and treatment from a global perspective. In 2015, she completed her Master of Public Health degree in Environmental and Occupational Health at Drexel University's School of Public Health. A charismatic and caring friend who was passionate about social justice issues plaguing minority communities, Jasmine was taken from us only a few short weeks after graduation in 2015. While her physical presence is sorely missed, her contributions to the world will live on through her published research and her family and friends.

LIFT EV'RY VOICE AND SING



In 1900, “Lift Every Voice and Sing” was written and composed by the Johnson brothers — James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson. These talented artists and influential civil rights activists firmly believed that artistic and cultural excellence was a key to Black advancement in America. Since 1919, this powerful hymn has been recognized as the Black National Anthem.

*Lift ev'ry voice and sing,
'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'til victory is won.*

*Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
'Til now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.*

*God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land.*



ORDER OF CEREMONY



PROCESSIONAL

Master Jay Drummers

“LIFT EV’RY VOICE AND SING”

Kande Duncan, MS Biomedical Forensic Science ‘21, College of Medicine

OPENING REMARKS

John Fry, President

WELCOME

Subir Sahu, Senior Vice President for Student Success

DONNING OF THE KENTE

Names read by Evelyn Thimba, Senior Vice President
Enrollment Management

MOST OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARDS

Presented by Sharde Johnson, Director, Center for Black Culture and
Rae Coleman, Assistant Director, Center for Black Culture

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Kim Gholston, Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer

ALUMNI WELCOME

Shane Nelson, BS Psychology ‘16, College of Arts and Sciences

RECESSIONAL

Master Jay Drummers





KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Kim Gholston, MHA, SPHR, Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer

Kimberly (Kim) Gholston serves as vice president and chief diversity officer at Drexel University. As chief diversity officer, Kim manages a progressive diversity agenda informed by campus stakeholders to shape and lead Drexel's integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and practices to ensure excellence in education, research, and civic engagement. Her most recent efforts have included leading Drexel's Anti-Racism Task Force with a team of co-chairs for 11 committees that critically examined

a full range of University activities. The Task Force invited broad representation for these working committees from undergraduate and graduate students to faculty, professional staff, and alumni to inform the recommendation of the Task Force. Ms. Gholston is also responsible for managing the human resources business partner team at Drexel, integrating the core and strategic values of the organization into the culture through talent management, and assessing the need and establishing the delivery of effective leadership and staff training and development programs.

Ms. Gholston previously served as vice president of Human Resources for Thomas Jefferson University Hospital until 2012. She was also very instrumental in designing and implementing the HR business partner model at Jefferson. Prior to that, she was the vice president for Clinical and Support Services from 2005 until 2008. Her diversified responsibilities, programs, and labor experience set her up for success in her second career in Human Resources and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Ms. Gholston is a member of the Society of Human Resource Management. She is also a graduate of the Urban League Leadership Institute and a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.


Ms. Gholston earned a Bachelor's Degree in Finance from Towson State University and a Master's degree in Health Administration from the Medical College of Virginia at Virginia Commonwealth University. Ms. Gholston completed classes at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations, earning a certificate in Human Resources Studies and a subsequent certificate in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Ms. Gholston is also certified as a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR).



WILLIAM S. PITTMAN GRADUATION CEREMONY CLASS OF 2021



Taiwo Abioye	Princess Carter	Tamyka George
Caleb Acheampong	Ellende Chongolola	Raymond Gill
Aboubacar Sidiki Ademola	Natalie Clark	Kaya Gravesande
Korede Aderele	Rasheem Clark	Alexis Green
Eve Adkins	Alexis Coulibaly	Jahnieka Griffin
Blessing Adogame	Jocelyn Craighead	Peter Gyateng
Felix Agbavor	Shamala Criswell	Jeremiah Ham
Cassidy Alexander	Kaleb Curtis	Amber Hamilton Walker
Sturford Alfred	Heidi Daraz	Janear Hankerson
Kelli Alsop	Rachel DeLauder	Harlan Harrell, EdD
Moyenda Alston	Fatimah Diakite	Ashley Harris
Michael Amugo	Jessica Dixon	Patrice Harris
Sarah Andrieux	Sharefa Duhaney	Sierra Harris
Precious Anyadike	Shontae Duke	Tiffany Harris
Sarah Asante-Owusu	Janayjah Dunmore	Jalen Hayes
Crystal Attidore	Ainsley Wynn Eakins	Brianna Hector
Nicole Baird	Jacklyn Ebiasah	Edward Henderson II
Nicholas Banks	Thaya Edmond	Denise Herbert
Ololade Bello	Rickeisha Edmonds	Angel Hogan
Obinna Bethrand-Okechukwu	Brian Edmondson	Kerra Holden
Alyssa Bigbee	Uchenna Ekeabu	Gabriella Honeywell
Breonna Bingham	Houda El Mimouni	Gabrielle Elise Howard
Bridget Blake	Jane Ewuzie	Aaron Hudson
Fidel Boamah	Tobechukwu Ezeh	Tiffany Ingram
Dami Bolarin	Patrice Farquharson	LaVasha Jackson
Oluwadamilola Bolarin	Rosaline Sena Fiati	Francesca Johnson
Kandra Bolden	Shaelynn Fisher	Lauren Johnson
Martese Bowman	Patience Fitzhenry	Miranda Johnson
Gabrielle Brizzi	Ukida Forde	Samantha Johnson
Kadima Bukasa, PhD	Kennedy Fort-Foskey	LaVonne Jones
Keyanna Bynum	Olivia Foster	Lisa Jones
Francis Byrd	Alea Fuller	Rosbert Jones
Myles Campbell	Ayanna Gardner	Gilbert Kaddu
Raenah Campbell	Anastasia Gelin	Evelyn Kamuyu



WILLIAM S. PITTMAN GRADUATION CEREMONY CLASS OF 2021



Temadji Kantangar	Kendi Only	Abdelatif Thanon
Monique Kennedy	Kizzy Outlaw	Lubens Thermitus
Laura King	Elrod Owusu-Asumeng	Ascher Thomas
Annie Koku	Donna Oyella	Elikem Togo
Joshua Koku	Shantal Perez Vasquez	Alyssa Truxon
Cecilia Koomson	Mikaylah Perry	Tiffany Turrentine
Ebo Koomson	Jared Perry-Smith	Angela Vinson
Sara Latta	Cassey Philogene	Shatiana Wackens
Jones LaVonne	Tosha Phinisee	Myla Waller
Dontae Leaf	Elijah Pinckney	Shauna Walters
Kim Lee	Apollonia Quiros	Casey Warfel
Kaylin LeMelle-Thomas	Colbi Rainford	Jadelyn Watkins
Micaiah Levy	Danielle Reid	Bahiyah Watson
Simret Lulu	Chloe Richardson	Teyanie Watson-Harris
Imani Mack	Tonya Richardson	Madison Werts
Alexandra Nicole Maye	Ja'Net Roberson, EdD	Sharon Whaley
Tynesia McDowell	Leanne Roberts	Chyna Whitfield
Bianca Mitchell	Kristine Saah	Donquale Williams
Crystal Mitchell	Bethel Sebsebie	Kimberly Williams
Miles Mixon	Stephanie Shosanya	Lisa Williams
Mmetisa Mohohlo	La'Shanta Smith	Crislin Williams-Womack
Deja Moore	Soleil Smith	Andre Wilson Sr.
Melody Morgan	Emmanuel Sowah	Kelley Wooden-Stanley
Samuel Myers	Caitlyn Speller	Kahlil Wyche
Yayra N'danou	Alwayne Spencer	Earline Young-Robinson
Carole Ngalamulume	Maya Stallings	
Sary Nicolas	Ayana Stanton	
Marjorie Nightingale	Kamri Staples	
Oluwakemi Odumeru	Niaja Stringfield	
Rachael Ofili	Laneisha Sullivan	
Oluwatamilore Ogunranti	Danielle Taitt	
Oluwatosin Ogunsanwo	Tapehlyn Tapeh	
Ridwan Olawin	Ngwi Tayong	
Selena Oliver	Nicole Tena Figuereo	



