WILLIAM S.
PITTMAN
GRADUATION CEREMONY

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

PROCессIONAL

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
Caleb Acheampong
Aboubacar Sidiki Ademola
Korede Adele
Eve Adkins
Blessing Adogame
Felix Agbavor
Cassidy Alexander
Sturfford Alfred
Kelli Alsop
Moyenda Alston
Michael Amugo
Sarah Andrieux
Precious Anyadike
Sarah Asante-Owusu
Crystal Attidore
Nicole Baird
Nicholas Banks
Ololade Bello
Obinna Bethrand-Okechukwu
Alyssa Bigbee
Breonna Bingham
Bridget Blake
Fidel Boamah
Dami Bolarin
Oluwadamilola Bolarin
Kendra Bolden
Martese Bowman
Gabrielle Brizzi
Kadima Bukasa, PhD
Keyanna Bynum
Francis Byrd
Myles Campbell
Raenah Campbell
Princess Carter
Ellende Chongolola
Natalie Clark
Rasheem Clark
Alexis Coulibaly
Jocelyn Craighead
Shamala Criswell
Kaleb Curtis
Heidi Daraz
Rachel DeLauder
Fatimah Diakite
Jessica Dixon
Sharefa Duhaney
Shontae Duke
Janayjah Dunmore
Ainsley Wynn Eakins
Jacklyn Ebiasah
Thaya Edmond
Rickeisha Edmonds
Brian Edmondson
Uchenne Ekeabu
Houda El Mimouni
Jane Ewuzie
Tobechukwu Ezeh
Patrice Farquharson
Rosaline Sena Fiati
Shaelynn Fisher
Patience Fitzhenry
Ukida Forde
Kennedy Fort-Foskey
Olivia Foster
Aleea Fuller
Ayanna Gardner
Anastasia Gelin
Tamyka George
Raymond Gill
Kaya Gravesande
Alexis Green
Jahniejsa Griffin
Peter Gyeteng
Jeremiah Ham
Amber Hamilton Walker
Janear Hankerson
Harlan Harrell, EdD
Ashley Harris
Patrice Harris
Sierra Harris
Tiffany Harris
Jalen Hayes
Brianna Hector
Edward Henderson II
Denise Herbert
Angel Hogan
Kerra Holden
Gabriella Honeywell
Gabrielle Elise Howard
Aaron Hudson
Tiffany Ingram
LaVasha Jackson
Francesca Johnson
Lauren Johnson
Miranda Johnson
Samantha Johnson
LaVonne Jones
Lisa Jones
Rosbert Jones
Gilbert Kaddu
Evelyn Kamuyu
WILLIAM S. PITTMAN
GRADUATION CEREMONY
CLASS OF 2021

Temadji Kantangar  Kendi Only  Abdelatif Thanon
Monique Kennedy  Kizzy Outlaw  Labens 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  Tasha 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 Sebsebe  Kimberly Williams
Miles Mixon  Stephanie Shosanya  Lisa Williams
Mmetsa 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 Wyeche
Yayra N’danou  Alwayne Spencer  Earline Young-Robinson
Carole Ngalamulume  Maya Stallings  William S. Pittman
Sary Nicolas  Ayana Stanton  Graduation Ceremony
Marjorie Nightingale  Kamri Staples  Class of 2021
Oluwakemi Odumeru  Niaja Stringfield
Rachael Ofili  Laneisha Sullivan
Oluwatamilore Ogunranti  Danielle Taitt
Oluwatosin Ogunsanwo  Tapehlyn Taphe
Ridwan Olawin  Ngwi Tayong
Selena Oliver  Nicole Tena Figuereo