



WV SU

COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM

December 13, 2025

College of Arts and Humanities

College of Business and Social Sciences

College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

College of Professional Studies



Ericke S. Cage, J.D., LL.M.
President

D. Stephen & Diane H. Walker Convocation Center
Institute, West Virginia

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY



West Virginia State University was founded under the provisions of the Second Morrill Act of 1890 to provide education to black citizens in agriculture and the mechanical arts. Like many other states at that time, West Virginia maintained a segregated education system. On March 17, 1891, the West Virginia Legislature passed a bill creating the West Virginia Colored Institute to be located in the Kanawha Valley. Federal funds provided \$3,000 for faculty salaries and the West Virginia Legislature appropriated \$10,000 to purchase land and to construct a building. We now celebrate that as the official “Founders Day” of West Virginia State University.

In 1915, the school became known as West Virginia Collegiate Institute and began offering college degrees. Under the leadership of President John W. Davis, academic programs were expanded and new buildings were constructed. In 1927, the Institute received accreditation from the North Central Association and in 1929 it became West Virginia State College.

After the 1954 United States Supreme Court historic decision outlawing school segregation, West Virginia State College became an integrated institution serving a predominately white, adult, commuter student population. At that time, land-grant status was lost due to a decision of the West Virginia Board of Education; West Virginia State College was the only 1890 land-grant institution to lose that status. The College regained land-grant status in 2001, by an act of Congress.

With reinstatement of its 1890 land-grant status, and accompanying federal funding, West Virginia State College strengthened its mission of teaching, research and service to the community. The first graduate degree programs began in fall 2003. With the passage of Senate Bill 448 during the 2004 legislative session, the Institution became West Virginia State University.

From a modest beginning, West Virginia State University has emerged into a multipurpose institution serving a diverse student body. From a small tract of land and one building, the University has developed into a multimillion-dollar education system.

What is West Virginia State University?

It is all of us who believe in it – who absent or present, work in it and wish it well. It is an exponent of trust which sweeps aside the petty jealousies of men and all propagandic proposals which would minimize or depreciate personality. It is an institution containing faults and defects which challenge the constructive efforts of students, teachers, officers, and graduates. It is incomplete and desires to remain so, to be in an advantageous position for changing life situations.

It is spirit; it cannot be touched by hand; it is based upon communions between the living and those who though dead yet live in immortality made practical through enlistment in the college program, which of necessity requires eternity for completion. What is the university? You and those graduates ahead of you are the university.

paraphrased from John W. Davis
Fifth President, West Virginia State College, 1932





Commencement Ceremony

December 13, 2025 10:00 a.m.

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Closed captioning is available for those who need or want to follow along on their mobile device at <https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=2025WVSUFallCommencement>



WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT
ORDER OF EXERCISES



PRELUDE	Classical Selections
PROCESSIONAL	Pomp and Circumstance
MARCHING ORDER	
Grand Marshal	
President and Deans	
Platform Party	
College Flag Bearers	
Faculty and Administrators	
Candidates for Degrees	
POSTING OF THE COLORS	Yellow Jacket Battalion Color Guard United States Army ROTC
MUSICAL SELECTION	<i>The Star-Spangled Banner</i> WVSU Concert Choir
MUSICAL SELECTION	<i>Lift Every Voice and Sing</i> Kiana George
INVOCATION.....	Ben Edwards Senior Pastor, Cross Lanes Bible Church
GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS	Ian Flores Chair, West Virginia State University Board of Governors
INTRODUCTION OF COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER	Deborah Williams, M.P.A., C.P.A. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS	Allan L. McVey West Virginia Insurance Commissioner
CONFERRING OF HONORARY DEGREE	Erick S. Cage, J.D., LL.M. President



CONFERRING OF DEGREES AND PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES

Candidates for the Degree of Master of Arts, Education,
Public Administration and Sciences. Dr. Naveed Zaman
Dean, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Deborah Williams, M.P.A., C.P.A.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Ericke S. Cage, J.D., LL.M.
President

Candidates for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts and Sciences Dr. Robert M. Wallace
Dean, College of Arts and Humanities

Deborah Williams, M.P.A., C.P.A.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Ericke S. Cage, J.D., LL.M.
President

*The Interim Registrar, Marcus Tucker, announces the names of the graduates,
during the conferring of degrees by President Cage.*

REMARKS Ericke S. Cage, J.D., LL.M.
President

ALUMNI PLEDGE Dr. Lateef Saffore
President, WVSU National Alumni Association

ALMA MATER. WVSU Concert Choir

CLOSING REMARKS Deborah Williams, M.P.A., C.P.A.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

BENEDICTION Ben Edwards
Senior Pastor, Cross Lanes Bible Church

RECESSIONAL Grand March

Please remain seated while the graduates recess.

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER ALLAN L. MCVEY



Allan L. McVey currently serves as the West Virginia Insurance Commissioner, a position he has held since 2021. Prior to his current role, he served as Cabinet Secretary for the West Virginia Department of Administration.

In his role as Cabinet Secretary for Administration, McVey was responsible for the 17 administrative agencies in West Virginia. Prior to his appointment as West Virginia Insurance Commissioner and Cabinet Secretary, McVey was a licensed insurance agent who served in several capacities during his long tenure in the insurance industry in West Virginia, which has now spanned 55 years and counting.

His experience included a position as a Medical Claims Examiner with the West Virginia Workers' Compensation Fund and as an underwriter with a large national insurance company, which is now part of Travelers. In 1976, he became a licensed insurance agent and broker with several firms, both local and national, finishing his private sector career as the Agency Manager of BB&T Insurance Services.

McVey earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from West Virginia State University in 1973 and has several post-graduate insurance designations. He remains active on State's campus and has served on the University's Foundation Board for many years, including a stint as Chair.

He has also been the voice for West Virginia State's basketball teams for several years and also serves in that capacity at Saint Albans High School. He also does the announcing for their baseball team and has annually done so at the West Virginia State High School basketball and baseball tournaments. He has served and continues to serve on several local non-profit boards in his community, most recently as the current Chair of the Charleston Kanawha Housing Authority, and remains active in his church, Saint Mark's Episcopal Church in Saint Albans.

His hobbies include, among other activities, doing announcing at various sporting events, daily exercise, and concentrating on a healthy lifestyle. His family includes three children, five grandchildren and four great grandchildren, whom he is very proud of, including a granddaughter who will earn her degree from West Virginia State very soon.

WVSU ALUMNI PLEDGE

To join hands with other alumni in perpetuating the ideals of West Virginia State University, nurturing its growth and promoting its programs, to serve with honor in my chosen profession, and to make myself a symbol of the best traditions of West Virginia State University – this is my commission and my challenge.

THE ACADEMIC PROCESSION



The Academic Procession is composed of administrators, honored guests, faculty, graduates and the University Board of Governors. This procession is led by a marshal who seats the graduates, faculty and platform guests. Faculty members wear costumes that had their origin in the Medieval English University system. The costumes were devised to distinguish academic persons from lay persons, since everyone wore robes or gowns to ward off the cold. The recession is in reverse order, with the platform guests leaving the dais first, followed by the faculty and the graduates.

The colors of the academic dress have a significance deeply rooted in the tradition of academic life and are specified by a uniformed code maintained by the American Council on Education. Caps are black and are usually mortar boards with tassels. Doctors of Philosophy wear gold tassels, usually of metallic thread; other degrees wear black or discipline colors.

The bachelor's gown is simple and black with long, pointed sleeves. Master's gowns, also black, are longer than bachelors. Older gowns have sleeves that terminate at the elbow, while those since 1960 have sleeves extended to the wrist. Doctor's gowns are full, with bell-like sleeves. The front is marked by velvet panels, and the sleeves are marked by three velvet bars. While most gowns are black with black velvet, one variation is to replace black velvet with velvet in the discipline color. A second variation is a colored gown, usually of the university's colors.

All hoods specify the level of degree, the discipline studied, and the awarding institution. First, degree level is signified by the size of the hood with bachelor's smallest, master's larger and doctor's quite large and of a different shape. West Virginia State University does not award hoods for bachelors' degrees. The width of the velvet trim also conveys the degree. Secondly, the discipline is indicated by the color of the trim edging the hood to form the throat over the gown. Finally, the color of the hood's lining specifies the awarding institution. The colors are displayed in combinations that are drawn from heraldry.

The colors of the tassels worn by candidates for bachelor's degrees represent the fields of study in which the degrees will be conferred. At West Virginia State University, the following colors of tassels and hoods are used to designate the various degrees:

TASSELS

- Bachelor of Arts - White
- Bachelor of Fine Arts - Brown
- Bachelor of Science - Yellow
- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration - Drab
- Bachelor of Science in Communications - Yellow
- Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice - Royal Blue
- Bachelor of Science in Education - Light Blue
- Bachelor of Science in Nursing - Apricot
- Bachelor of Science in Social Work - Citron

HOODS

- Master of Arts in Media Studies - White
- Master of Arts/Science in Biotechnology - Yellow
- Master of Education in Instructional Leadership - Light Blue
- Master of Public Administration - Peacock Blue
- Master of Science in Computer Science - Yellow
- Master of Science in Criminal Justice Administration - Midnight Royal
- Master of Science in Sport Studies - Sage

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES AND CONFERRING OF DEGREES



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Master of Public Administration

Lois Alivia Capers §
David C. Dyer §
Marcellus Hughes-Brewster *
Adam Kenneth Pennington
Sydney Gabrielle Sims
Britany Michelle Starkey

COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES & MATHEMATICS

Master of Science in Biotechnology

Kushal Bhattarai *
Juan Gerardo Flores Iga
Lakshmi Meghana Nallagari
Neha *
Sailesh Phuyal
Sahithi Ramireddy
Badraldeen Rashrash
Jafet Rivera Hernandez
Manju Sharma
Autumn Elizabeth Southern §
Tochukwu Lucky Uwaezuoke

Master of Science in Computer Science

Rohith Reddy Battula
David Michael Coleman *
Jaya Chandra Gundeboina *
Sheetal Phuyal
Temesgen Alemayehu Tikure

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Master of Education in Instructional Leadership

Jacob Hunter Bradley *
Zachary Bryce Casto *
Melissa Sue Ennis
Hayley Brooke Hatfield
Megan Helmick *
Michael Andrew Hupp *
Baylee Nicole Kennedy *
Riley Harbour McGinnis *
Brooklyn Kate Queen *
James Warren Truman, II *

Master of Science in Criminal Justice Administration

Emma Lee Brown
Tausha Shanta Burton * §
Hameed Ahmand Farook
Connor Anthony Fizer *
Jilyan Paige Harris *
Kenneth Ronald Jordan *
Trevor James Lomax
Megan Marie Spelock
Christian L. Thompson

Master of Science in Sport Studies

Zoe Ree Aguirre
Ana Paula Alves Zandona *
Tyrus Anthony Baumgardner *
Emele Marie Clark *
Jaylin Renee Clayton *
Gillian RaeAnn Cooper *
Sophia Monee Del Bosque *
Isaiah Tyrell Farmer *
John Shamar Fitzpatrick
Abigail Sue-Jin Gerney
Paula Karoline Zoe Herold *
Tyler Alexander Overaitis *
Tamara Martins Queiroz
AdeAjani Livan Sanni *
Kevin M. Snyder *

COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

Mary Evans Castle §
Leanna Elizabeth Rose Tanzey

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music Performance

Michael Dakota Elkins *
Jeremiah Joseph Moore

Bachelor of Science in Communications

David Alphonso Dawson, III
Marquis Ke'sean Galloway
Daniel Lee Gibson
Benjamin Charles Grose
Hannah Grace McCune §
Van Allen Scott
Benjamin Frederick Shreve, III
William O Smith, II

Regents Bachelor of Arts

Cassidy Niccole Bailey
Shawnica Nicole Bailey
Druw Allyn Bowen
Adrian Sherri Burruss
Jaden Jamar Byers *
Christopher L. Davis *
Ethan Davis Gibson
Zacharias Troy William Howerton
Joshua Shane Hudson *
Jacia Monét Jeffries
Danielle Marie Knight
Ayana Lewis
Marshawn Mankins
Brittany Nashae Mills *
Tequilla Dawn Moles *
Careasa Michelle Nichols
Jerry Dale Rush
April Dawn Sigman
Jill Ann Smith
Travis N. Tichnell *
Lynda Annissa Tillman
Riddhi Mahendra Vyas
Victoria Waybright
Hannah Elizabeth White
James Ralph Winn, Jr. *

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Bachelor of Arts in Economics

Ryleigh Kyndle Clayborn §
Johan Leo Karlsson
Dalton Wyatt Lucas

Bachelor of Arts in History

Logan Dale Elliott
Peyton Matthew Frye
Joshua Parker Huddleston

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology

Madison Mackenzie Basham §
Meghann Elizabeth Brown
Emer Carrington
Michelle Christine Cooper
Christopher Evans King
Shayna Rose Lawhorn §
Kenneth James O'Brien
Amanda Faye Smith

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES AND CONFERRING OF DEGREES



Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

Brooke Nicole Ball *
Ryleigh Kyndle Clayborn §
Gabriel Cuellar Enciso
Nathan Paul Hersey
Indiyah Danae Hill
Scott Isaac Hill
Kaleb James Jackson
Caleb Peters LaFunor *
Maureen Michelle Mathews *
Jamison Ishmael McDaniels
Kel'Lese Shantel Simone Miller
Elijah Lee Poore *
Carlos Donnell Porter-Lumpkin *
Garrett Lee Price
Jessica Lauren Reese
Andrew Michael Rose
Rebecca Grace Samms
Isabelle Lauren Showalter
Elijah Reed Stowers
Eva Nevaeh Sullivan *
Eric Reese Sutherland
Alanna Paige Tomblin
Noah Patrick Toops
Kameron Andrew Vargas
Andrew Cole Vickers
Natalie Grace Williams
Donteako Earl'Ontay Wilson
Pobby Jean Young
Malachi Blayze Zackoski §

COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES & MATHEMATICS

Bachelor of Science in Biology

Brooklyn Jayde Baron *
Kaylee Sierra Brooks
Ameris Talia Chadband
Megan Elizabeth Shoemaker *

Bachelor of Science in Chemistry

William James Cooper *
Logan Corey Mallory
Brandi Ann Wade

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Jeremy Caleb Daves
Jeremy Caleb Siders
Jadius Ji Alijah Thomas
Devin Keith Washington
Gavin Wayne Woods

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice

Ashleigh Michele Bowles
Kaylee Sierra Brooks
Brandon Allen Clark §
Christopher Allen Crowder *
Kaleb Marvin Crowder *
Kaylee Marie Forzetting
Anthony Gonzales
Hailie Autumn Harper
Gracie Ysabella Hodge §
Cyrus Ryleigh Lewis §
Tracy Lynn Mann *
Katelyn Elizabeth McVicker
Tanner Joseph Perdue *
Ashley Maria Rowles
Taina Marie Ruiz *
Roger O'Dell Runion
Theaster Adeline Smith-Cheers *
William Joseph Thompson *
Zeniah Ahmani Kionnee Wallace §
Paula Athena Yount

Bachelor of Science in Education

Camryn Elizabeth Aldridge
Emma Jo Coberly
Tiambra Nicole Collins

Carys Faith Hunter §
Livvi Mya Miller
Hunter Eugene Murphy
Brooke Nicole Salmons

Bachelor of Science in Health Science

Meridith McKenzie Chambers
Chasity Lee Akers Clendenin
Latisha Nicole Dixon
Madelyn Grace Harrison
Mae Lyn Haynes *

Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Emmalee Brooke Alford

Bachelor of Science in Social Work

Oaklyn Carter Miller
Brittany Nicole Munson
Cydnie Danelle Null
Zoe Lamae Perdue

Bachelor of Science in Sport Studies

Nicholas Jayson Sterling Blake *
Kaylee Bri Bowling
Jeremiah Diante Covington-Griggs
Billie Jean Davies §
Kati Marie Franco §
Anaisia La'Naye Dawn Griffin *
Nazir Quali Jones
Omari Jamaal Lewis
Najee Nadame Richards
Carter Bryant Ruffner
Warren Dextor Wood, Jr.
Nicholas Delaing Workman * §

A name on the program does not assure that
final degree requirements have been met.

* Denotes summer graduate

§ Denotes Senior Class Gift Participant

SENIOR CLASS GIFT CAMPAIGN



The WVSU Philanthropy Cord is an old gold and black cord that graduates wear with their cap and gown during the commencement ceremony to represent their passion for philanthropy. Contributions will be directed to the Student Emergency Fund, which will assist WVSU students experiencing financial hardship.

ACADEMIC HONORS



Cum Laude

Candidates who have attained cumulative grade point averages between 3.25 and 3.49

Magna Cum Laude

Candidates who have attained cumulative grade point averages between 3.50 and 3.74

Summa Cum Laude

Candidates who have attained cumulative grade point averages of 3.75 and above

With Distinction

Candidates, who are graduating with a second bachelor's degree, who have completed at least 30 hours beyond the first degree and have attained a grade point average of 3.5 and above in these additional hours

Graduating Seniors in Honor Societies

To become a member in a University Honor Society, a student must have earned 30 hours toward his/her degree and must have met the society's specific requirements for eligibility.

Congratulations to the seniors listed for your commitment to academic excellence and thank you for the national and international recognition that you bring to West Virginia State University by your membership in these societies.

1890 Scholars

Dr. Barbara Liedl, advisor

Ameris Chadband
Ryleigh Clayborn
Eva Nevaeh Sullivan

Alpha Phi Sigma

National Criminal Justice Honor Society

Dr. Leighann Davidson, advisor

Dr. Cassandra Whyte, advisor

Brandon Clark
Kaylee Forzetting
Kenneth Jordan
Cyrus Lewis
Tanner Perdue
Paula Yount

Alpha Psi Omega

National Theatre Honor Society

M. Sue Woodward, advisor

David Alphonso Dawson, III
Marquis Ke'sean Galloway
Daniel Lee Gibson
Hannah Grace McCune

Delta Mu Delta

International Honor Society in Business

Dr. Alan R. Tillquist, advisor

Alanna Tomblin

Kappa Delta Pi

Lambda Zeta Chapter

International Honor Society in Education

Dr. Alonda Wylie, advisor

Camryn Aldridge
Emma Coberly
Tiambra Collins
Carys Hunter
Livvi Miller
Brooke Salmons

National Society of

Leadership and Success

Dr. Christopher Jackson, advisor

Ashliegh Bowles
Mary Evan Castle
Jadius Thomas

Phi Alpha

National Social Work Honor Society

Lena Lambert, advisor

Cydnie Null

WVSU Honors Program

Dr. Timothy Ruhnke, advisor

Ryleigh Clayborn

THE MACE

The Academic Mace precedes the entire procession and is carried by the Grand Marshal. The mace is a symbol of authority and its placement and removal from a place of honor signifies the opening and closing of ceremonial sessions. The mace had its origin in the Middle Ages, being used first as a weapon by royal bodyguards to protect their monarchs in processions. Today, the mace is primarily used in academic ceremonies including commencements.

The original mace used by West Virginia State University had historical significance in that it was created from a spindle used in the staircase of West Hall, the second building erected on the campus, in 1895. This mace was restored by James Huffman when he was the assistant director of Admissions at the University, and has since been retired from usage.

The mace being used today was created by Seth Davidson, class of 2005, and Mike Cunningham of Cardinal Creek. The mace was hand turned on a lathe and is made from solid walnut sourced in West Virginia. It is engraved with the names West Virginia State University has been known by since its founding in 1891. The mace is topped with a solid brass medallion that is the great seal of West Virginia State University and features the university's motto Veritas Lux Mundi, or "Truth is the Light of the World."

COLLEGE BANNERS

West Virginia State University students will proceed to their respective places behind gonfalons. Gonfalons are flags or banners hung from crosspieces on poles, used since medieval times in the republics of Italy as symbols of state or office. Universities and colleges around the world have adopted gonfalons to increase the ceremonial nature of commencement exercises.

This new tradition associated with commencement symbolizes the accomplishments of the graduates whom we honor on this occasion and the University's commitment to their success.

Four gonfalons of the old gold with black lettering will be carried by two faculty members from each College: the College of Arts and Humanities; the College of Business and Social Sciences; the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and the College of Professional Studies.

Banner Carriers

College of Arts and Humanities

Dr. Barbara Ladner
Dr. Anne McConnell

College of Business and Social Sciences

Dr. Clinton Arnold
Dr. Derek Taylor

College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Dr. Eyas Mahmoud
Dr. Eloisa Vendemiatti

College of Professional Studies

Dr. Jamie Brunetti
Jay Canterbury

Grand Marshal

Deborah Williams
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Faculty Marshal

Kemberly Pasley

Stage Marshals

Dr. Leighann Davidson
Dr. Walter Stroupe

Student Marshals

Katherine Bryant
Patricia King

Sign Language Interpreters

Jasmin Cannisi
Ashley Turley

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

Francis Scott Key

*Oh, say can you see by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we bailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thru the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*

LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING

J. Rosamand Johnson, composer, and James Weldon Johnson, lyrics

*Lift every voice and sing, till earth and Heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise, high as the listening 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 till victory is won.*

ALMA MATER

Ernest Wade '30, Martha Spencer '31

*There is a place we love so dear—
Its name we'll ever praise and revere
'Tis West Virginia State we love—
Just one more step from there is Heav'n above.*

REFRAIN

*West Virginia's praise we'll sing—
Lift our voices 'til heavens ring—
As we gaily march along—
We'll sing a song—
For Alma Mater
How we love her
Pride of all our loyal hearts—
From her we will never part—
Thoughts of thee will ne'er be few
Alma Mater we love you.*



WEST VIRGINIA STATE
UNIVERSITY