



Peabody College

COMMENCEMENT AWARDS CEREMONY

May 9, 2024

WYATT CENTER ROTUNDA

Graduate & Professional Student Awards Ceremony

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Welcome and Opening Remarks

DEAN CAMILLA BENBOW

&

SENIOR ASSOCIATE DEAN CATHERINE LOSS

The Peabody Faculty Council: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Award

PRESENTED BY HASINA MOHYUDDIN AND NICOLE JOSEPH

Established in 2016 to recognize a Peabody undergraduate, professional, and graduate student or student organization that has demonstrated leadership in improving the culture of Peabody through efforts in the area(s) of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

RECIPIENT: **Bryant O'Keith Best (Wilson, NC)**

Bryant Best's exceptional commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion manifests in his scholarship, teaching, and work with others. Bryant works assiduously to shift the culture on how society addresses the needs of underserved communities, strengthening equitable practices across the educational landscape and widening the reach of institutional support for underrepresented students.

RECIPIENT: **Ain Ealey (Denver, CO)**

As the President of the Peabody Coalition for Black Graduates (PCBG), Ain Ealey has used her intellectual talent and infectious energy to create community among students of color, diversified Vanderbilt's supplier list to include more local Black women-owned businesses, been a working group member for the Black Peabody Museum and created the Coping Consciously wellness space.

HUMAN AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS

Newbrough Graduate Award

PRESENTED BY BETH SHINN

Presented annually to a CRA, CDA, or HDC student with the best completed dissertation, thesis, or empirical paper, as judged by a faculty-student award committee.

RECIPIENT: Molly K Richard (Waltham, MA)

Molly Richard's (Ph.D., Community Research and Action) 2023 dissertation centered on racial inequities in homelessness and measuring hidden homelessness. Currently, Molly is a Postdoctoral Scholar at Boston University's Center for Innovation in Social Science, with prior experience in human services as an applied researcher and provider.

Roger F. Aubrey "North Star" Award

PRESENTED BY JESSICA TYLER

Established in 1998 in memory of Roger F. Aubrey, a professor of psychology from 1977 to 1997 at Peabody College, to honor a member of the graduating class in human development counseling each year who demonstrates the greatest potential for facilitating human development through counseling.

RECIPIENT: Alexandra Ione Clarke (Thame, England)

Ione Clarke received a BA in Psychology from Washington College. She attended Vanderbilt University to pursue her M.Ed. in Human Development Counseling, and will work for The SEED Collective as a resident in counseling after graduation, providing individual and group therapy to children, young adults, and families.

Outstanding Community Development and Action Student Award

PRESENTED BY DAVID CARLONE

The Outstanding Community Development and Action Student Award is given to one graduating CDA student each year who demonstrates excellence in academic achievement, community engagement, and service to the program, department, and/or university.

RECIPIENT: Amar Latif Qazi (Tando Allahyar, Pakistan)

Amar works tirelessly to foster inclusive, moral, and empowering community among CDA, Peabody, and Vanderbilt students through roles as an iMAP mentor for international students, a Peabody Admissions Liaison for incoming students, a Next Steps Graduate Assistant, and a Cal Turner Fellow.

The Speer Award: Outstanding Human Development Studies Student Award

PRESENTED BY NICOLE COBB

The Speer Award, named for HOD Chair Emeritus and HDS pioneer Paul Speer, recognizes an HDS graduate known to have humane instincts, a passion for developing themselves and their colleagues, and a demonstrated capacity for promoting human flourishing.

RECIPIENT: Ana Claudia Mazzini e Drigo (Porto Alegre, Brazil)

Ana Claudia Mazzini e Drigo will graduate from the Human Development Studies Program this May. Throughout her time in the HDS program, she was a galvanizing presence in her classes and went above and beyond in all of her coursework. She drew from her extensive experience in HR, strategic planning, and career coaching throughout her internship at the Tennessee Office for Refugees. During her internship, she developed a full curriculum for career development for refugee women. After graduation, she will continue her work at the Tennessee Office for Refugees as the Refugee Career Pathways Program Coordinator. In addition, Ana runs a private practice tailored to guiding immigrant women through career transitions.

LEADERSHIP, POLICY, AND ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS

The Arville V. Wheeler Prize

PRESENTED BY MARISA CANNATA

Endowed by Raymond Murov (Ed.D. '63) in 1992 to honor Arville V. Wheeler, professor of education and member of the Department of Education at Peabody College from 1947 through 1965. Awarded to a graduating student who has excelled in the Peabody doctoral program, with preference given to a student in the area of education administration.

RECIPIENT: Ishani Ajit Mehta (Chicago, IL)

Ishani Mehta is a first-generation Indian American woman who has always been a fierce advocate for equity in education. She has served as a teacher, instructional coach, special education coordinator, and principal. She currently serves as the Middle School Superintendent for ReGeneration Schools, overseeing schools in both Chicago and Cincinnati. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and a master's degree from Hunter College.

Dave Jones Award for Excellence in Institutional Advancement

PRESENTED BY BRENT EVANS

Established in 1997 by alumni and friends to honor David R. Jones as the founder of the specialization in institutional advancement at Peabody College. The award is presented annually to a Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations graduate who has excelled in academics and service.

RECIPIENT: Byongho Lee (Seoul, South Korea)

After earning his political science degree from the University of Richmond, Byongho worked in IT and Human Resources before joining the HEA cohort. He has been immensely successful academically and deeply involved at Vanderbilt having worked in the Career Center, as a Peabody Admission Liaison, and as a graduate assistant at Owen.

Outstanding Achievement and Professional Promise Awards

PRESENTED BY CATHERINE LOSS, CARRIE GRIMES, XIU CRAVENS, KIM DAVENPORT
AND EVE RIFKIN

Presented annually to a professional student in the Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations who demonstrates outstanding academic achievement and exceptional promise.

Education Policy

RECIPIENT: **Rebecca Caroline Murdoch (Montgomery, AL)**

Becca Murdoch is graduating with her Master of Public Policy and concentration in K-12 education. While at Vanderbilt, she served as the Chair of the Peabody Honor Council, a Peabody peer-career mentor, and the program assistant for the MPP program. When Becca was not in class or completing her schoolwork, she worked as a graduate research assistant for the Fuchs Research Group during her first year. She completed her summer practicum placement with the Tennessee Grow Your Own Center where she developed policy materials on teacher apprenticeship models and competency-based education. During Becca's second year, she divided her time between working as a graduate assistant for the policy team at the Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center and as a graduate intern for the Family and Community Partnerships team at Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Independent School Leadership

RECIPIENT: **Margaret Claire Cassady Vaughn (Birmingham, AL)**

Claire is a Head of School at Advent Episcopal School in Birmingham. Her academic dedication to the ISL learning experience was stellar from start to finish. In addition, Claire served as an interpersonal force for good across the cohort, promoting community, connection, and camaraderie.

International Education Policy and Management

RECIPIENT: **Hajra Fayyaz (Lahore, Pakistan)**

Hajra came to Peabody's International Education Policy and Management (IEPM) program with a stellar profile. As a Teacher for Pakistan fellow, she has a strong academic background and is genuinely compassionate about making a difference in the access, quality, and equity of education through her pursuit of scholarly work. Very early on, Hajra demonstrated a keen interest in connecting her scholarly pursuit with purposes that can impact practice, especially for linguistically diverse students with disabilities. Hajra has been serving as the graduate assistant for IEPM, and participated in community-building activities with her cohort peers and engaged in campus academic events to channel her passion for promoting diversity and equity.

Leadership and Learning in Organizations

RECIPIENT: **Kennietha Rashell Jones (Cleveland, OH)**

Kennietha Jones is the founder and CEO of Strategic Leadership Consulting & Coaching, a consulting firm that supports school leaders in districts nationwide to achieve their goals to manifest equitable outcomes for students. Kennietha has worked nationally with school leaders in a wide range of settings.

Leadership and Organizational Performance

RECIPIENT: **Michelle Belgi Augustine (Dallas, TX)**

Through her lived experience and scholarship, Michelle has become an advocate for people with disabilities. In an article in the Vanderbilt student paper, proposals to campus administration, and her capstone whitepaper, she has provided a poignant picture of the accessibility challenges people with disabilities face along with thoughtful solutions.

PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS

Outstanding Professional Promise Award in Child Studies

PRESENTED BY NINA MARTIN AND VICKI HARRIS

Presented to a graduating master's student in the Child Studies Program for excellence in academics and professional contributions.

Clinical and Developmental Research Track

RECIPIENT: **Ashley Samantha Boyne (Kingston, Jamaica)**

Ashley completed her undergraduate education at the University of the West Indies. Her research at Peabody was with the Music Cognition and Emotion and Anxiety labs. She will be continuing her work in creating anxiety interventions for youth in the clinical psychology doctoral program at the University of Denver.

Applied Track

RECIPIENT: **Emma Brandes Kassan (New York, NY)**

Emma Kassan is recognized as the 2024 Applied Child Studies masters graduate demonstrating Outstanding Professional Promise. Emma's academic and professional focus has been on developing and using her research expertise to set young children up for improved outcomes. Through opportunities as a Research Assistant at the Toronto Metropolitan University's Children's Media Lab, as a Human Services Graduate Research Assistant with Mathematica, and as an intern with Vanderbilt's Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center, Emma has developed expertise in applied research. She is well-positioned to take her place among leaders in the field invested in making a meaningful impact on the lives of young children and their families as a policy analyst with the RAND Corporation in their Behavioral and Policy Sciences department.

Outstanding Achievement and Professional Promise in Quantitative Methods

PRESENTED BY SHANE HUTTON

Presented to a graduating Quantitative Methods master's student who demonstrates outstanding achievement and professional promise.

RECIPIENT: **Emma Kathleen Walker (Johnstown, PA)**

Emma Walker is being presented with the 2024 Outstanding Achievement and Professional Promise in Quantitative Methods Award. Emma has an impressive record of research experience using quantitative analyses, including research experiences outside of our master's program requirements. Emma has successfully gained and applied valuable quantitative research skills while in her program and plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Social and Behavioral Sciences.

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS

Distinguished Teacher of Excellence in Special Education Awards

PRESENTED BY KIERSTEN KINDER, ALEXANDRA DA FONTE AND RACHEL SCHLES

Established in 1999, these awards are presented annually to graduating students who exemplify outstanding teaching in special education. The recipients have demonstrated knowledge and skills through field-based experiences and, more specifically, during student teaching. These students have demonstrated knowledge and skills in assessment, planning, data collection, instruction, collaboration, and professionalism.

Early Childhood Education Track

RECIPIENT: **Brooke Sabrina Edelstein (Manchester by the Sea, MA)**

Brooke has shown outstanding teaching skills and professionalism. She makes genuine connections with children and applies ECSE strategies with excellence. Brooke remains positive, reflective, and solutions-oriented when faced with challenges. She is eager to learn from her mentor teachers, supervisors, and other professionals. She values all team members and seeks collaboration. She will be an asset to the field.

Severe Disabilities Track

RECIPIENT: **Gillian Claire Neff (Temecula, CA)**

Gillian has displayed an exceptional level of dedication, skill, and passion in her role as a teacher. She has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to her students. As a future educator, Gillian's goal is delivering meticulously planned and thoughtful lessons while customizing them to meet the diverse needs of her students.

Visual Disabilities Track

RECIPIENT: **Gabrielle Renee Gosnell (Knoxville, TN)**

Gabrielle is a skilled teacher, drawing on her prior experiences during her practicum in the Visual Disabilities Program. She effortlessly builds connections with her students and their families, including students with visual impairments and complex disabilities or English language learners. Without hesitation she embraces what makes each student unique.

Distinguished Service in Special Education Award

PRESENTED BY JOHANNA STAUBITZ, ALEXANDRA DA FONTE AND RACHEL SCHLES

This award is presented annually to the graduating master's student who exemplifies the highest commitment to professional service in special education. The recipient exemplifies a student who has gone beyond the expectations with their commitment to support, guide, or advocate in the field.

Severe Disabilities Track

RECIPIENT: **Gabriela Herrera-Espinosa (Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico)**

Gaby embodies a strong commitment to make education accessible and enriching to all students. She values diverse perspectives and considers various approaches while serving the community through camps, supporting parents of children with disabilities, and has a passion to provide the Hispanic population with equal educational opportunities.

Visual Disabilities Track

RECIPIENT: **Caroline McKenzie Deheck (Winston-Salem, NC)**

Caroline was an exemplar teacher/scholar while in the Visual Disabilities Program. She consistently advocated for and implemented high-quality braille instruction for students with VI and multiple disabilities. Caroline led the development of research protocols to identify and mitigate fraudulent online survey responses, also writing her thesis on the topic.

Applied Behavior Analysis Specialization Track

RECIPIENT: **Jordan Elliot Brooks (Los Angeles, CA)**

Jordan began his career as a licensed special education teacher and Registered Behavior Technician. As he expanded his teaching skillset during his master's program at Vanderbilt, he developed expertise and unwavering commitment to informing clinical and educational practice using the neurodiversity paradigm. Jordan is eager to continue this work post-graduation.

Distinguished Service in Applied Behavior Analysis Award

PRESENTED BY JOHANNA STAUBITZ

This award is presented annually to the graduating student who exemplifies the highest commitment to professional service in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis. The recipient of this award exemplifies a student who has gone beyond the expectations with their commitment to support, guide, or advocate in the field.

RECIPIENT: **Caitlin Price (Orlando, FL)**

Caitlin was a master's-level special education teacher and an in-home caregiver before pursuing training in applied behavior analysis at Vanderbilt University. Since completing her training in behavior analysis, Caitlin is more eager and better equipped than ever to aid her adolescent and young-adult clients in attaining their own life goals.

Dick Shores Award For Excellence in Teacher Education

PRESENTED BY ROBERT HODDAP

Presented to a graduating doctoral student who demonstrates excellence and innovation in the area of teacher education.

RECIPIENT: Paige Bennett Eycler (Greenville, SC)

Paige Bennett Eycler is earning her doctorate in Special Education at Vanderbilt University. Paige's research interests include improving the utilization of single case design methodology, increasing the understanding and use of evidence-based instructional practices for young children, and improving student engagement in inclusive classrooms to promote more efficient instruction.

TEACHING AND LEARNING DEPARTMENTAL AWARDS

Otto Bassler Award

PRESENTED BY KEVIN LEANDER

Presented annually to a professional/graduate student in the Department of Teaching and Learning who submits the most significant research study.

RECIPIENT: Laura Carter-Stone (Lexington, KY)

Laura's dissertation explores how the art of dramatic improvisation might inspire more just, democratic, and vital forms of teaching. After working this past year as a post-doc in Vanderbilt's former Center for Teaching, she is excited to continue to explore these questions with faculty instructors in her home state at the University of Kentucky.

Outstanding Professional Promise Awards

PRESENTED BY BRIAN KISSEL, HUILI HONG, ANDY HOSTETLER, CHRIS DA SILVA, EMILY PENDERGRASS, HEATHER JOHNSON AND BECKY PETERSON

Presented annually to a professional student in the Department of Teaching and Learning who shows exceptional promise.

Elementary Education

RECIPIENT: **Bailey Nicole McCraner (San Marcos, CA)**

During her time as an M.Ed. Elementary Education student at Vanderbilt, Bailey was the heart and soul of her cohort group. As a cohort leader, Bailey worked to create cohesiveness amongst her peers. Communicating weekly through an informational newsletter, Bailey served as the Elementary Education program assistant where she kept her cohort members informed and created opportunities for her cohort members to bond through social events. As a student, Bailey displayed curiosity in her classes and a strong work ethic in her clinical placements. Bailey is currently an elementary school teacher at Julia Green Elementary School in Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Multilingual Learner Education

RECIPIENT: **Thalia Hurt (Waianae, HI)**

Having come to the M.Ed. program with years of experience as a Peace Corps member in Gambia, as well as an elementary teacher and a family engagement coordinator for multilingual learners in Hawaii, Thalia joined the Multilingual Learner M.Ed. with a focus on expanding her research and grant-writing skills while also expanding her expertise as an educator. Throughout her program, Thalia contributed to her cohort's learning while balancing work and school responsibilities. Thalia is now teaching in East Nashville. Thalia's resilience, passion, and creativity focused on improving the education of multilingual learners in elementary schools is admirable, and we know she'll continue to have a tremendous, positive impact on multilingual education throughout her career.

Learning and Design

RECIPIENT: **Olivia La'nai Francois (Gonzales, LA)**

Olivia has balanced a demanding schedule and leveraged opportunities between her job at the VU rec center and her academic work. In her capstone she brings an important critical and humanizing lens to understand who is in the learning space, for what purposes, and how individuals experience their own identities in the space. Her methods of data collection map seamlessly to her research questions and problem of practice. For her outstanding work and leadership in her cohort, we are pleased to present this award to Olivia Francois.

Learning and Diversity in Urban Studies

RECIPIENT: Jordyn Keyonce Cambridge (Nashville, TN)

Jordyn is determined, passionate, and extraordinarily talented. As the captain of the Vanderbilt Women's Basketball Team, she not only excelled academically, but also led her team to the NCAA Tournament after 10 years. She is an example to us all.

Reading Education

RECIPIENT: Perry Christian Hicks (Greensboro, NC)

In her time at Vanderbilt, Christian was an engaged and reflective educator, who is deeply committed to equity for all students. Since graduation she has been teaching at Bozeman High School in a Literacy Class with students with special needs. Additionally, she has taught entry level courses at a local community college in Montana.

Research in the Practice of Teaching and Learning

RECIPIENT: Haley Morgan Mitchell (Lynchburg, VA)

Haley Mitchell is an educator, conductor, and bassoonist from Lynchburg, Virginia. Haley completed her Bachelor of Music degree in May 2023, where she studied bassoon with Peter Kolkay. She looks forward to working with middle and high school bands and operating a private bassoon studio upon completing her M.Ed.

RECIPIENT: Piersen Elise Briggs (Nashville, TN)

Piersen graduated in December 2023 with her M.Ed in Learning, Diversity, and Urban Studies. Her study titled, "Black Women's Experiences and the Private Schools that Shape Them" seeks to center the voices and experiences of Black women in predominantly white private schools and makes recommendations to promote a culture of belonging for students of color in these environments. She presented her preliminary findings at the inaugural Race and Research Fair in conjunction with the Initiative for Race Research and Justice at Peabody College.

Secondary Education

RECIPIENT: **Zoe Kendall (Franklin, TN)**

Zoe Kendall took a full-time high school mathematics teaching position at her alma mater while finishing her degree. In addition to engaging her students in new ways of learning, she has created a welcoming environment by creating channels of communication through which students can express their individual needs.

World Language Education

RECIPIENT: **Caroline Blythe Lancaster (Lexington, KY)**

While at Peabody, Caroline has served as a graduate assistant for Peabody Marketing and Communications, has spoken to many incoming students as a Peabody Admissions Liaison, and was chosen as the Peabody College representative for Vanderbilt's Cal Turner Program for Moral Leadership. Beyond these roles, Caroline's authentic enthusiasm and commitment to language learning and its use in a variety of settings motivates her students and colleagues to recognize their own potential.

RECIPIENT: **Michael Simpson Giblin (Atlanta, GA)**

In the classroom, Michael's stance is one of inclusive, equitable engagement. Students respond to the way that he shares his love of language while also embarking on their own language learning journeys. At Peabody, he also worked as a research assistant with the Fuchs project, affording him a unique approach to the classroom as a practitioner-researcher. This award recognizes the promise he holds as he goes into the classroom.

OFFICE OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING AWARDS

Compass Leadership Award

PRESENTED BY MEAGHAN MUNDY

Presented to a professional or graduate student who has provided exemplary leadership, vision, and coordination for a Peabody student organization.

RECIPIENT: Jordan Elliott Brooks (Los Angeles, CA)

During his time at Vanderbilt, Jordan worked to connect Peabody's neurodiverse community and raise awareness to ways that education can continue to improve efforts of inclusion and belonging for people of all abilities. Jordan co-launched the Peabody Neurodiversity Club that has generated significant support and interest among Peabody undergraduate, master's and doctoral students.

Iris Student Voice Award

PRESENTED BY YU (WENDY) WU

Presented annually to a professional or graduate student who has effectively advocated for student needs and given voice to relevant issues affecting professional and graduate students.

RECIPIENT: Khalid Omer Khan Sherwani (Karachi, Pakistan)

Over the course of his two years at Vanderbilt, Khalid has made significant contributions to both the Peabody community and Vanderbilt at large. In his first semester, when Pakistan was hit by massive floods, Khalid took the initiative to raise awareness about the crisis and to collaborate with The Citizens Foundation USA (TCF-USA) to raise \$15,000 from the Vanderbilt and broader Nashville community for flood-affected schools across Pakistan. In his second year, Khalid became a mentor and Vice-President of the International Mentorship at Peabody (iMAP) student organization, guiding incoming international students as they adapted to life at Vanderbilt and in the US.

PATH Community Building Award

PRESENTED BY MEAGHAN MUNDY

Presented to a professional or graduate student who has made a significant contribution to the Peabody community by sharing their PATH (purpose, authenticity, transformation, head/heart alignment) and welcoming and fostering others' engagement.

RECIPIENT: Isaac H Rosenthal (Los Angeles, CA)

Dedicated to community building, Isaac created opportunities for students to connect and support one another through the Peabody Professional & Graduate Student Association (PPGSA). In his final year, he launched the Grief & Growth initiative in collaboration with the University Counseling Center and Project Safe to promote self-reflection and normalize loss and new beginnings in our personal and professional lives.

Cairn Advising Award

PRESENTED BY ELIZA BLADES

Presented to a student organization advisor who has provided valuable guidance and support while promoting student leadership and voice.

RECIPIENT: Johanna Staubitz (Nashville, TN)

Johanna was an integral part in the founding of the Peabody College Neurodiversity Club (PCNC) and serves as its faculty advisor. She is a champion for student voice and a dedicated collaborator across departments and offices. Her support is a testament to the power that can be built and the change that can happen when many stakeholders are brought to the table.

Professional Student Marshals

PRESENTED BY CATHERINE LOSS

RECIPIENT: Ain Ealey (Denver, CO)

Ain Ealey is graduating in May 2024 with her Master of Education in Community Development and Action (CDA). Throughout her time in the CDA program, Ain has used her intellectual talent and infectious energy to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion at Peabody, Vanderbilt, and beyond. Ain is the President of the Peabody Coalition of Black Graduate Students. In this role, she has been a key collaborator on a grant-funded traveling museum project dedicated to capturing the stories and contributions of Black students, staff, and faculty in Peabody College's history. For her CDA practicum, Ain worked as the lead Wellness and Health Navigation Specialist for Our Chance TN. Beyond her practicum work, Ain has drawn on her CDA and Peabody experiences to pursue justice-oriented scholarship. She presented her work at the Race and Research Fair hosted by Peabody's Initiative for Race Research and Justice, where her project won the People's Choice Award.

RECIPIENT: Jade Mercedes Felder (Troy, NY)

Jade Mercedes Felder is an author, higher education administrator, and devoted strategic enrollment management professional. Jade currently serves as the Director of Student Transitions at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, overseeing transfer student enrollment services and experiential learning degree requirements. Jade received her Master of Science in Higher Education Administration from the University of Miami and her Bachelor of Science in Music Education from Alabama A&M University.

RECIPIENT: Michael Chance Meyer (Savannah, GA)

Chance Meyer is a learning expert and professor in New England Law's Academic Excellence Program. Before joining New England Law and earning a doctorate in education from Peabody College, Meyer served as Assistant Dean of Academic Success and Professionalism at Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad College of Law. Prior to becoming an educator, Meyer was a capital defense attorney representing death-sentenced inmates in trial and appellate courts, in state and federal jurisdictions. He served as a law clerk to U.S. District Court Judge Robert T. Dawson. His research ranges from evidence-based practice and justice pedagogies in legal education to Eighth Amendment issues surrounding the death penalty.

RECIPIENT: Emily Duncan Irwin (Chicago, IL)

Emily Irwin is being honored as a commencement student marshal in recognition of her academic excellence and her leadership and support of her classmates in the Child Studies program. Emily just completed a Child Life internship at the Helen Devos Children's Hospital in Michigan and has accepted a position as a Child Life Specialist at Comer Children's Hospital in her hometown of Chicago, IL.

RECIPIENT: Gabriela Herrera-Espinosa (Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico)

Gaby is passionate about providing under-represented students with equal educational opportunities. During her time at Vanderbilt, she has excelled in her academics, field experiences, research, and professional skills in a way that distinguishes her from her peers. Her compassionate demeanor will be an asset to the field.

The Peabody Medal

PRESENTED BY CATHERINE LOSS

The Peabody Medal is the highest honor Peabody College can bestow on a graduate. It is awarded to the student who best personifies academic distinction, professional accomplishment, and contributions to Peabody College, the University, and the larger community. Peabody College awards two medals annually at commencement: one to a master's student and one to a doctor of education student.

RECIPIENT: Hannah Michelle Baughn (Cumming, GA)

Hannah Baughn is graduating from the Master of Education Program in Learning, Diversity, and Urban Studies in Peabody's Department of Teaching and Learning. Hannah earned her bachelor of science, cum laude, from Vanderbilt University in 2019 with a triple major in Elementary Education, Russian, and Second Language Studies. Hannah has taught in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools for the past four years, and she currently serves as a middle-school teacher for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE). Leveraging her Vanderbilt undergraduate education in language acquisition and master's-level work in learning and diversity in urban settings, Hannah supports immigrant and refugee students and families as they transition to the U.S. education system.

RECIPIENT: Ryan Sheldon Etheridge (Shelby, NC)

Ryan Etheridge is graduating from the Doctor of Education Program in Educational Leadership and Policy in Peabody's Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations. Ryan is the Director of Federal Programs and Systemic Improvement for Cleveland County Schools in Shelby, North Carolina, where he consults with districts, state agencies, and advocacy organizations on the strategic use of data to advance educational equity and organizational improvement. Ryan received the 2023 NC Dogwood Award from the Attorney General of North Carolina in recognition of his "remarkable commitment, excellence, and innovative approaches to tackling critical issues that have significantly impacted North Carolina's communities." Ryan holds a bachelor's degree from Clemson University and a master's degree from Appalachian State University. His doctoral capstone project examines the effects of school setting on fifth-grade student outcomes in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools.

Banner Bearer

PRESENTED BY DEAN BENBOW

The Peabody Banner Bearer is an honor bestowed on a graduating student in recognition of academic distinction and contributions to the Peabody community. The recipient is judged by the faculty to have excelled in all aspects of the program of study and is considered an outstanding example of a Peabody professional student.

RECIPIENT: Prince NaShun Taylor (Woodbridge, VA)

Prince Taylor is graduating from the Doctor of Education Program in Leadership and Learning in Organizations in Peabody's Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations. Prince currently serves as the Deputy Director for Operations at the Virginia Center for Development & Civic Engagement. He is a Navy veteran and a Senior Fellow of the Partnership for Public Service's Excellence in Government program. In response to the pandemic, Prince used his skills and expertise to design, implement, and promote a new program, Compassionate Contact Corps, which pairs trained volunteers with veterans who are socially isolated or experiencing chronic loneliness. He serves on an interagency workgroup led by the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General that addresses isolation and loneliness among veterans. Prince earned his bachelor of science and master's degree from Southern Illinois University. His doctoral capstone project investigated how qualitative data can better inform decisions around professional learning opportunities in K-12 education.

RECIPIENT: Jordan Kathleen Mareno (Raleigh, NC)

Jordan Moreno is graduating from the Master of Education Program in Higher Education Administration in Peabody's Department of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations. After graduating from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2019, Jordan moved to Atlanta to start her career in management consulting, and over the past five years has accumulated experience in nonprofit work, international development, and public policy. During her time at Peabody, Jordan has served as a graduate assistant in the Office of the Provost and as a Peabody Career Mentor. Jordan is currently a Higher Education Policy Fellow at The Education Trust where she works on improving college access and postsecondary success in Tennessee.

Closing Remarks

DEAN CAMILLA BENBOW

Please join us in the Wyatt Center Lobby following the awards presentations for a light reception honoring all of our distinguished graduates.
