The GVSU Department of Writing's

Senior Celebration 2021

Friday, April 30, 2021 5:30 p.m. Zoom



Order of Ceremony

Welcome Remarks

Celebrating Our Writers

[Internship, Poetry Prize, AWP Awards, Distinction in Writing]

Interactive Wall of Celebration

Celebrating Our Students [Book Awards]

Celebration Video

Celebrating our Leaders

[GPA 3.5, Venderbush, Niemeyer, Outstanding Students]

Closing Toast and Remarks

Description of Awards

Internship Award

The Internship Award recognizes a student for achieving outstanding success in an internship. The selected student demonstrates a commitment to learning and professional development in the successful completion of a Writing internship experience.

Hannah Terry

Poetry Prize

Each spring, any Grand Valley student is eligible to submit a poem for the Poetry Prize. Poems by two students are chosen for prize. The winning poets receive a cash award and broadsides are created for the poems. The GVSU Art Gallery prints and frames the poems, which are then displayed on campus in student housing.

Haley Tanis

AWP Intro Journals Awards

This competition each fall semester determines the GVSU nominees to the national Intro Journals Project sponsored by the Association of Writers & Writing Programs. Local student work is entered in a national contest of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction by undergraduate and graduate students.

NONFICTION

Winner: Olivia Trappen

Honorable Mention: Hannah Kelly

FICTION

Winner: Frankie Spring

Honorable Mention: Hamlet Arnott Honorable Mention: Hannah Kelly Honorable Mention: Elaina Smith

POETRY

Winner: Alice Darling Winner: Frankie Spring Winner: Haley Tanis

Honorable Mention: Katharine Gardella Honorable Mention: Chiara Nicholas Honorable Mention: Elaina Smith

Distinction in Writing

The Distinction in Writing program encourages Writing majors to explore opportunities in addition to the regular curriculum. While the major prepares students with the fundamentals needed to succeed, the program recognizes that the most successful students pursue a wide variety of experiences and accomplishments. Often these out-of-class activities enrich our lives, shape us, help us to be the active, creative, humane people we aspire to be. The Distinction in Writing program recognizes students who pursue and achieve writing excellence beyond the classroom.

Katharine Gardella Dawson Heath Hannah Kelly Rachel Matuszewski Elaina Smith Kristie Winslow

Book Awards

The book awards are given by faculty to a specific graduating senior for a range of accomplishments or improvements demonstrated inside and outside of the classroom. Each faculty gives a book of their choosing to a selected student.

Katherine Arnold Kayleigh Boomgaard Joshua Drogemuller Katharine Gardella Dawson Heath Hannah Kelly Toria Keyes Michelle King
Devin Matos
Tasman Mattox
Elaina Smith
Haley Tanis
Hannah Terry
Kristie Winslow

GPA Awards

These awards are given to writing major seniors who have completed their college degree with a 3.5 GPA or higher.

Katherine Arnold
Joshua Drogemuller
Dawson Heath
Julianna Holth
Kalei Hubert-McLennan
Izzy Jerzyk
Hannah Kelly
Toria Keyes
Devin Matos
Tasman Mattox
Rachel Matuszewski

Joshua Nguyen
Amanda Pszczolkowski
Graham Reid
Spencer Rohloff
Starr Sumner
Haley Tanis
Hannah Terry
Zachary Tenney
Olivia Tizedes
Lidia Vesterfelt

Kenneth R. Venderbush Leadership Award Nominee

The Writing Department nominated one student for this university-wide award which recognizes a senior who has demonstrated an exceptional blend of academic achievement and leadership efficacy while making significant contributions to the campus community.

Hannah Kelly

Glenn A. Niemeyer Award Nominee

The Writing Department nominated one student for this award, which recognizes students who are well-rounded individuals with demonstrated excellence in both the classroom and extra-curricular activities. Recipients excel in the classroom and demonstrate a joy of learning as part of a community of scholars. Along with intellectual achievements, recipients participate in activities outside the classroom that serve to enrich their lives and the lives of others.

Dawson Heath

WRT Major Outstanding Student Award

The Writing Department's Outstanding Student Award goes to a graduating major who has demonstrated outstanding skills and potential as a writer, who has shown excellent engagement in all their writing classes, and who has participated in the extracurricular writing community. The Outstanding Student has a GPA in the major of at least 3.7 and an overall GPA of at least 3.25.

Hannah Kelly Amanda Pszczolkowski

Graduating Seniors

Katherine Arnold Breann Barge Kayleigh Boomgaard Gabrielle Cutler Macara Dahl Alice Darling Havden Dobb Joshua Drogemuller Leah Erben Katharine Gardella LaTonia Harris Dawson Heath Margues Hill Julianna Holth Kalei Hubert-McLennan Izzy Jerzyk Cecilia Keene Hannah Kellv Quinton Kern Toria Keves Michelle King

Tyler Krueger

Tyler Lange

Morgan Lovell **Devin Matos** Tasman Mattox Rachel Matuszewski Marisa McElrath Joshua Nguyen Samantha Nyenbrink Amanda Pszczolkowski Graham Reid Spencher Rohloff **Eric Ruthruff** Elaina Smith Starr Sumner Haley Tanis Zachary Tenney Hannah Terry Olivia Tizedes Olivia Trappen Lidia Vesterfelt Cutler Wilson Charles Wind Kristie Winslow

Senior Bios

Katherine Arnold is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing as well as a minor in Classics. While at Grand Valley, she worked with In Writing as a student writer, The Lanthorn as a student reporter, and with the Human Resources department as a marketing and design intern. One of her favorite projects was her Honors Senior Project, where she worked with Professor José and fellow student Zoie Zvonar to create a series of materials designed to teach young students about materialism. Katherine would like to thank Professor José for her insight, support, and their amazing conversations about visual design and purpose in writing. She has experienced more about writing than she ever thought she would, and she will greatly miss the Writing Department and all of the amazing faculty and students with whom she has had the pleasure of working.

Breann Barge is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing. While at GVSU, she served as the president of the student organization Untold Stories for People of Color. She worked as a consultant for the Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors for two years. She is spending her few remaining months preparing her portfolio for her next steps in life.

Kayleigh Boomgaard is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing, with minors in Spanish and Political Science. During her time at Grand Valley, she served as a poetry submissions reader for *fishladder*, as well as completed an internship with a Michigan Congressional campaign. Through her classes in the Writing Department, Kayleigh developed a passion for creative nonfiction writing thanks to Professor Beth Peterson, and she plans to pursue an MFA program in the

upcoming years. She recently published an article in *The Rose Thorn*, a magazine created by Grand Valley's Chapter of YDSA. Approaching graduation, Kayleigh would like to extend a sincere thank you to faculty in the Writing Department for helping her uncover her identity as a writer and for leading her to a career in the arts.

Macara Dahl is graduating in the winter of 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Writing and minors in both Digital Studies and Advertising and Public Relations. Macara has worked at the GVSU Writing Center during her time at Grand Valley and has loved getting to help other students gain confidence and agency with their writing. Macara also interned with a Grand Rapids nonprofit, Catherine's Health Center, working on their social media presence and assisting with communications. After graduation, Macara will be working as a full-time Catholic Missionary for an organization called Damascus. She is grateful for all of the skills and knowledge the writing program has given her and looks forward to helping people tell their stories moving forward!

Hayden Dobb is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Writing and English. While at GVSU, she spent most of her time writing and reading. Hayden also worked briefly for the Writing Department's newsletter, *In Writing*, and wrote for Grand Valley's section of *The Odyssey* her freshman and sophomore year. Her plans to study abroad after her junior year in England were interrupted, but she plans to travel after graduating to further her studies in writing and literature. Hayden would like to thank her friends and family for their undying support as she actively posts her writings of prose poetry and short stories and continues to search for places to publish her work.

Josh Drogemuller is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Writing and a minor in Digital Studies. While at GVSU, he made many friends and took lots of interesting experiences from the GVSU writing program, which exposed him to people of many different backgrounds

and beliefs. In the future, Josh hopes to continue working on many different projects, from building professional websites to rebuilding internet wrestling communities. Josh would like to thank every professor at GVSU for turning him into the informed, steadfast, proud American that he is today. He is not entirely sure where the road ahead will take him, but he is grateful for everything that Michigan has offered to him, and he will not forget his plentiful time spent on the banks of the Grand River.

Leah Erben is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing, a minor in Advertising & Public Relations, and a minor in Digital Studies. During her Grand Valley experience, Leah worked as a writer and then as the editorial project manager for the GVSU Promotions Office where she learned to channel her creativity into a love for promotional writing. She also had poetry and creative nonfiction pieces published in *fishladder*, poetry displayed in several on-campus galleries, and received Oldenburg Writing Contest recognition for poetry and creative nonfiction pieces. Through her involvement in Grand Valley's improv comedy team, Subject to Change, as well as a series of comedy courses taken through Second City Chicago, Leah has discovered a passion for comedy and comedy writing during her college experience. She plans to now explore marketing and media-related career paths. She'd like to thank her dad for his continued support, and she'd like to thank her goldfish Ernie for the constant encouragement and thoughtful advice.

Katharine Gardella is graduating in the spring of 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Writing as well as a minor in English literature. During her time at GVSU, she has served as a reader and assistant editor for poetry on the *fishladder* staff, as well as president of Anchored in Poetry, GVSU's slam poetry club. Her work has been published in *fishladder* and she has placed in the GVSU AWP intro awards as well as the Oldenburg Writing Contest. Although her plans for the future are not certain yet, she will continue writing and searching for community wherever she goes. Katharine would like to thank the

professors in the Writing Department for the opportunities she was given, especially Amorak Huey for always believing in her, even when she didn't believe in herself.

LaTonia Pearl Harris is a creative writer from Detroit, Michigan. She has grown up at Grand Valley on all facets, and it has allowed her to inquire, explore, and, most of all, learn. LaTonia has made lifelong connections and friendships in many disciplines, but she considers the Writing Department most endearingly as second home. Here, her professors stayed honest and allowed her to be as inquisitive as she dared. This community was further widened at the Writing Center, where she worked and learned about writing on new fronts. As her GVSU journey comes to an end, her writing career begins, and she will be performing her self-written poem "Out of Darkness" at GVSU's commencement. This opportunity will allow her to continue living out her purpose, using writing as her reaction as she steps on the world stage and ignites it.

Dawson Heath is graduating in the summer of 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Writing and minor in Digital Studies. During his time at GVSU, he worked in the Writing Center as a lead consultant and served as OPW co-president. He also worked as a LendGR consultant at the GVSU Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation and was a Niemeyer Award nominee. Looking forward, Dawson's plans are still up in the air but he's hoping to find work as a technical writer or UX designer in the Grand Rapids area. Dawson would like to thank Professor José for being a consistent source of optimism and support throughout his time as a Writing major, and all of the Writing professors he's had for pushing him to do his best. Dawson is incredibly grateful to have been part of the unique and wonderful community within the Writing Department.

Kalei Hubert-McLennan is graduating in the spring of 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Writing as well as a Bachelor in Allied Health Sciences. While at GVSU, she worked as the Student Communications Assistant/Student Writer for GVSU Alumni Relations. After graduating, Kalei plans on pursuing a career in editing as she also prepares to apply to various masters programs in Occupational Therapy and Editing/ Writing. Kalei would like to thank her family, friends, and professors for providing support and encouragement over the years. Kalei would specifically like to thank her parents for supporting her passion and helping her grow over the years. She would also like to thank Professor Losey for always pushing her to do her best and for helping her uncover her passion for editing. Kalei has enjoyed the last four years at GVSU. It was through this roller coaster of late nights, Starbucks, friendships, and adventures that she has come to be the person she is today. She will miss the Writing Department and all the amazing students, professors, and experiences that came with it as she goes on to the next chapter of life.

Izzy Jerzyk is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Writing. In the near future, she plans to travel worldwide (when it's safer to do so) and use her writing skills to capture every moment. It was a long journey to discovering her major, but she wants to thank every professor and fellow student who encouraged her along the way. Her favorite courses were the fiction workshops where she could explore her favored genre and find inspiration from every class.

Cecilia Keene is graduating in the spring of 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing. Her plans post-graduation are a little fuzzy, but she is excited for future opportunities to come. She obtained an internship at Dzanc Books in the fall of 2020 and would like to continue to explore the publishing world. Cecilia would like to thank her parents, her friends, and the Writing Department for all their support and guidance during this challenging year.

Hannah Kelly is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and minors in Digital Studies and Spanish. In her time at GVSU, she enjoyed working as a Lead Writing Consultant at the Fred Meijer Center for Writing as well as a Marketing and Design intern for the Benefits and Wellness department within GVSU Human Resources. She has also served as the President of In the Margins, the Co-President of the Organization for Professional Writers, and the Co-Director of the Student Reading Series. Hannah would like to thank each of the professors she's been lucky enough to work with both in the classroom and outside in different organizations, as well as the students she's worked alongside throughout this whole journey. The community she has found here and all the lessons she's learned from it will stick with her for the rest of her life.

Toria Keyes is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and Human Rights. One her favorite memories from GVSU is being an Assistant Editor for *fishladder*. She gained experience with sorting through manuscripts, proof-reading, publishing, and more. Working with the staff has enhanced her editing and interpersonal skills in a professional setting. She worked at the Writing Center for three years and enjoyed reading diverse essays from a variety of disciplines. She connected with students from all skill levels and all backgrounds to help them grow in their writing process. Toria would like to give a special thanks to all her professors in the Writing Department for educating her on professional and creative writing. She would also like to thank her director from the writing center, Lisa, Meredith, and her other writing center peers. Toria is proud to announce that she is now pursuing a career in editing and publishing!

Morgan Lovell is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing with a minor in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She plans to use the knowledge and skills that she has accumulated throughout her time at GVSU to write short stories, pursue journalistic endeavors, and better the community through community-led projects. One of the best things to have come from her experience at GVSU is the friendships she formed. Having just signed the lease to her first house with her two lifelong

friends, she is ready to start this next chapter of her life. She's now considering making a comic series and possibly going into animation.

Tasman Mattox is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and a minor in Chinese Language. She is a member of the Honors College and a lead consultant at the Writing Center. She was awarded an honorable mention in the personal essay category of the 2020 GVSU Oldenburg Competition. Her poems "Rabbit and I" and "for the sin of swallowing you", as well as her short story "Every Day Estrella", appear in the 2021 edition of *fishladder*. While at GVSU, she studied abroad in Chengdu, China in Summer 2018, and in Shanghai, China in Fall 2019. After graduation, she is moving to Fuzhou, China to teach English to kids and teens with EF English First.

Rachel Matuszewski is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and a minor in Digital Studies. During her time at GVSU, she served the fiction genre of *fishladder* from reader to head editor, worked as a staff reporter for *The Lanthorn*, and completed the Distinction in Writing program. Her work has been published in *fishladder*. For the next two years, she will be using her writing and document design skills while on mission with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. She has loved being a part of the hard working, creative, and close-knit Writing Department community. She would like to thank Caitlin Horrocks, Amy Ferdinandt Stolley, Chris Haven, Laurence José, Amorak Huey, Kay Losey, Zsuzsanna Palmer, Christopher Toth, and Oindrila Mukherjee for their constant encouragement and assistance, for sharing their own journeys as writers, and for creating a positive atmosphere to grow. Most importantly, she is thankful for the ways they have taught her that our world needs words and there are places for them.

Josh Nguyen is graduating spring of 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Writing. While at GVSU, he spent his time studying the conventions of technical writing and communication in professional

fields. His projects include business research reports, usability tests, genre studies, a dissertation on self-referential comedy, and a particularly thrilling website recommendation report for uplandconservancy.org. He wanted to take this opportunity to thank some old teammates and friends: Nathan Reinke, Jacob Creswell, Ben Klingensmith, Messur Iongkhir, Deborah Meyer, Eric Ruthruff, Marcus Cusic, Miranda Crews, Mariah Matthews, and Andie Mccarty. Josh would also like to thank the Professors Beth Peterson, Zsuzsanna Palmer, and Charles Lowe. Josh is grateful to have worked with so many exciting and forward-thinking people; he only regrets the possibility that he misspelled any of these names. Josh is going into the field of web writing, and he looks forward to taking his lessons into practice.

Samantha Nyenbrink is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing. She transferred to GVSU her sophomore year and has focused her studies at GVSU on creative writing. She is currently a Diversity Writer and Editor for Incluvie.com, and Samantha plans on further pursuing a career in content writing following graduation. Samantha would like to thank Professor Mukherjee for helping shape her creative writing and Professor Losey and her magazine writing class that prepared her for writing articles for Incluvie.com. Samantha will miss the sense of community GVSU holds, but she looks forward to the future for which GVSU has prepared her.

Amanda Pszczolkowski is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and a minor in Digital Studies. During her time at GVSU, she has worked for the student journal of art and writing, fishladder, stepping in as Editor-in-Chief this past year. Additionally, she has served as codirector of the Student Reading series, as well as on the e-boards for In the Margins: a poetry and creative writing club and the Organization of Professional Writers. She would like to thank the whole of the writing faculty for their unending support but especially Christopher Toth, for being behind her insane senior honors project, and Todd Kaneko, for helping her realize she could be a writer and actually be good at it.

Graham Reid is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Writing, as well as Minors in Music and Philosophy. After a summer internship, he will likely seek a job in the editing/publishing industry and write fiction in his free time. In addition to his writing activity, he also participated in the Laker Marching Band as a baritone for four years, and he joined the men's music fraternity Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. He would like to thank each of the professors he has had in the Writing Department, as each one has had a strong positive impact on his style as a writer, as well as his family and friends for supporting him along his academic journey.

Elaina Smith is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and a minor in Digital Studies. While at GVSU, she served as a genre editor for *fishladder*, an e-board member for the Organization of Professional Writers, an editor/contributor for *InWriting*, and a Writing Consultant. Her writing has appeared in *The Rapidian, InWriting*, and *fishladder*, and has received three honorable mentions in GVSU's AWP Intro Awards. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in editing or social media management, and eventually attend grad school for an MFA in Creative Writing. She would like to thank everyone in the Writing Department for the impact they had on her as a writer, student, and person, especially Caitlin Horrocks and Chris Haven for teaching her everything she knows about writing fiction. She will miss learning from faculty and classmates very much.

Starr Sumner is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and Political Science. As a senior, Starr won the Excellence in a Discipline award for Political Science. This semester she was also a writing intern for the Borgen Project, a national campaign that advocates to make global poverty a focus of U.S. foreign policy. Starr would like to continue her education and go on to law school.

Haley Tanis is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing. During her time at Grand Valley, she enjoyed working as a writing intern with Campus Ministry @ GVSU, conducting interviews and curating a booklet that details the story of the ministry for local churches and potential donors. She has had poetry published in *fishladder* and has received awards for her work in the Oldenburg Writing Contest. Haley would like to especially thank Chris Haven for inspiring her to pursue a Writing degree, encouraging her to further involve herself in class discussion, and offering support during their collaboration on her Senior Honors Project, a 50-page fantasy novel draft that is still currently under construction. Following graduation, Haley is hoping to find a job in creative writing, adopt a dog (or three), and eventually publish for her work as an author.

Zachary Tenney is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing, with an additional major in Philosophy and a minor in Environmental Studies. During his time at GVSU, he spent time as a writing consultant for the university's Writing Center and interned as a reporter for *Grand Rapids Magazine*. His future plans are uncertain, but in the near-term he will live and work in the Grand Rapids area while spending his spare time working on creative projects in writing, music, and film.

Hannah Terry is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Writing with a minor in Digital Studies. She has had the honor of learning how to edit and write both professionally and creatively, and she is excited to use her skills in the publishing industry. While at GVSU, she spent her time writing and copyediting articles for the Writing Department's newsletter, *InWriting*. She worked with several other Writing students at the Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors as a Writing Consultant where she discovered she wanted to use her writing abilities to help other writers as an editor. Hannah also served as a leader of GVSU's Delight Ministries chapter, where she found her home at GVSU. Hannah would like to thank her wonderful family for supporting her dreams and her many advisors for showing her how.

Olivia Tizedes is graduating in the winter of 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Writing and a minor in Advertising and Public Relations. She plans to spend the next year on the mission field with NET Ministries, a Catholic organization, and she will be putting on retreats for middle and high school students throughout the year. During her time at GVSU, Olivia completed an internship as an editor for the Journal of History. She also served as a fiction reader for *fishladder* and a copyeditor for *InWriting*. She would like to thank all of the professors who encouraged her to go outside of her comfort zone.

Olivia Trappen is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and a minor in Nonprofit Administration. She transferred to GVSU from Western Michigan University after her sophomore year. While her time here was short, Olivia was a proud participant of Delight Ministries and the Organization for Professional Writers. She also served as a receptionist for the Fred Meijer Center for Writing and Michigan Authors both in-person and virtually. Her creative nonfiction piece titled "At Risk of Feeling Regret" was chosen for the 2021 Annual AWP Intro Awards. Her plans for the future are yet to be determined, but she is well into preparations for post-grad life. Olivia would like to sincerely thank her colleagues at the Writing Center as well as her supervisors, Patrick Johnson, Lisa Gullo, and Meredith Fedewa, for always believing in her. Olivia's only woe is not becoming a part of Grand Valley's Writing Department sooner. Her experiences within this writing community have been nothing short of encouraging and inspiring—two things Olivia hopes to use as the foundation for her career and life going forward.

Lidia Vesterfelt is graduating in the summer of 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and English Language and Literature. Throughout her time at GVSU, Lidia has been a writing consultant at the Fred Meijer Center for Writing & Michigan Authors. Lidia was also a Fiction Reader for *fishladder*, and a writer and copyeditor for *InWriting*. This summer, she will be taking on a marketing and media

internship through the Grand Haven Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. Following that, she is not quite sure what she'll be doing, but as long as she is writing or editing, she will be happy. Lidia would like to sincerely thank Professor Haven, Professor Peterson, and Professor Stolley, who are just some of the many writing professors that impacted her time at GVSU. She is so glad that she made the decision to venture into the writing program four short years ago, and she is going to miss it very much.

Charles Wind is graduating in the summer of 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Writing. After he graduates, he plans to pursue a career as a technical writer at a business in the Detroit area. The Writing Department gave him the opportunity to further develop his knowledge in topics like document design, business communication, and editing. He would like to thank all of the writing professors for making his learning experience here at Grand Valley both fun and informative!

Kristie Winslow is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Writing and English Literature as well as a minor in Anthropology. While at GVSU, she participated heavily in undergraduate research, studying narrative structure. As a Library Summer Scholar, she created a subject guide on the monomyth. Her work on fairy tales for the McNair Scholars Program resulted in a forthcoming paper, "Memetic meaning-making in Snow White," as well as several presentations on the evolution of fairy tales. Within the Writing Department, she has actively participated in *fishladder* as a genre reader and is a layout editor of this year's edition. She has actively contributed to *InWriting* and was sponsored to attend AWP in 2020 and 2021. In 2019 she received the Writing Major Scholarship Award and participated in the Desire: Storytellers and Storymakers exhibit. Kristie plans to pursue graduate school in the future and is grateful for the guidance, support, and encouragement of the Writing Department.

The Department of Writing faculty and staff would like to congratulate all 2021 graduating seniors and wish them the best of luck. We look forward to seeing all your accomplishments in the future!

WRITING

Create. Shape. Design. Share.

