



COMMENCEMENT  
DECEMBER 2024



# Looking for your graduate's name?

Visit [gvsu.edu/commencement/yearbook](https://gvsu.edu/commencement/yearbook) or scan the QR code below to view the list of 2024 graduates!

*Find your  
graduate's name!*



## **Colleges will be presented in the following order:**

*College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Seidman College of Business  
College of Computing  
College of Education and Community Innovation  
Padnos College of Engineering  
College of Health Professions  
Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies  
Kirkhof College of Nursing*



# Are you a graduate?

“Sign” the digital yearbook! Upload a photo, share your favorite memory at GVSU, or highlight an individual who positively influenced your time at Grand Valley. Family and friends can share your yearbook entry, too!

Use #GVgrad or #GVSU when posting to social media today, and appear on the big screen!

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## The Alma Mater

**Hail to Thee, Grand Valley by Arthur C. Hills**

Hail to thee Grand Valley — We're loyal, steadfast, true. / Praise our Alma Mater — We pledge our faith to you.  
Keep your banners flying, black and white and blue. / We sing to thee Grand Valley. United we're for you!

# Order of Ceremony

Welcome Video Presentation

Processional: Pomp and Circumstance ..... Sir Edward Elgar  
arr. Alex Wilson  
Grand Valley State University Brass Ensemble (prerecorded)

Opening of Ceremony ..... Courtney Karasinski, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Chair of University Academic Senate

Star-Spangled Banner\* ..... Francis Scott Key  
Natalie Tripp, Grand Valley State University student, soprano  
Chris Petersmark, M.M., faculty, collaborative piano

Welcome ..... Philomena V. Mantella, Ph.D.  
President, Grand Valley State University

Student Speaker ..... Hannah Hosfelt

“If You’re Out There” ..... John Legend  
Natalie Tripp  
Madeline Cooper, Grand Valley State University student, soprano  
Andrew Hardy, Grand Valley State University student, baritone  
Nolan VanHouten, Grand Valley State University student, baritone  
Professor Petersmark

Commencement Address ..... Chris Hammer, '09

Conferring of Degrees ..... President Mantella  
Jennifer Drake, Ph.D., Acting Provost

Moving of the Tassel ..... Acting Provost Drake

Alma Mater: “Hail to Thee, Grand Valley” ..... Arthur C. Hills

Closing of Ceremony ..... President Mantella  
Courtney Karasinski

Recessional

*\*Those who are able may stand.*



**1960**

*Michigan Legislature established Grand Valley State College in 1960. Nearly 800 acres were acquired in Allendale.*



**1963**

*Grand Valley opened its doors to 226 students in September 1963, offering liberal arts coursework.*

# Saturday, December 7, 2024

## Academic Deans

### College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Donovan Anderson, Ph.D., Interim Dean

### Seidman College of Business

Diana R. Lawson, Ph.D., Dean

### College of Computing

Marouane Kessentini, Ph.D., Dean

### College of Education and Community Innovation

Sherril Soman, Ph.D., Dean

### Seymour and Esther Padnos College of Engineering

Tim Born, Ph.D., Interim Dean

### College of Health Professions

Jeffrey Potteiger, Ph.D., Interim Dean

### Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies

Mark F. Schaub, Ph.D., Dean

### Kirkhof College of Nursing

Linda Lewandowski, Ph.D., Dean

### University Libraries

Annie Bélanger, MLIS, Dean

## Hooding Ceremony

### College of Health Professions

Susan Cleghorn, Dr. OT

Breanna Chycinski, OTD

*Graduate degree recipients will be congratulated by Erica Hamilton, interim vice provost for The Graduate School.*

*Live name reading of candidates will be performed by Gayle Schaub, M.A.-LIS.*

*American Sign Language interpreting provided by Misti Ryefield, M.S., College of Health Professions.*



**1972**

*Renamed to Grand Valley State Colleges to recognize the five cluster colleges, each with its own identity.*



**1979**

*The 1970s closed with a noteworthy addition to the campus: a football stadium, named Lubbers Stadium after President Lubbers.*



## Marshals

### Grand Marshal

Courtney Karasinski, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Chair of University Academic Senate

### Mace Bearer

Anne Sergeant, Ph.D., Vice Chair of University Academic Senate

### Student Marshals

Kathleen Bailey, Ed.D., College of Education and Community Innovation

Gerry Simons, Ph.D., Seidman College of Business

### Faculty Marshals

Jack Mangala, Ph.D., Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies

Wendy Reffeor, Ph.D., Padnos College of Engineering

### Stage Marshals

Kyle Barnhart, B.S., Alumni Relations

Susan Proctor, M.Ed., Alumni Relations

### Platform Officials Marshals

Martina Reinhold, Ph.D., College of Health Professions

Len O'Kelly, Ph.D., College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



**1984**

*The Great Laker,  
team mascot*



**1996**

*A public broadcasting pledge  
drive took place in 1996.  
WGVC — later WGVU —  
bit the airwaves in 1973.*



## Dear Class of 2024,

Congratulations on earning your degree from Grand Valley State University! This achievement is a testament to years of hard work, determination, and commitment.

Earning a degree is no easy task — it takes late nights, early mornings, and the ability to embrace and overcome challenges. This ceremony is a celebration of you and the work you've done and the sacrifices you've made that have led to this moment.

As you move forward into the world beyond GVSU, I encourage you to continue to nurture the love of learning that has carried you to this milestone. I have no doubt you will continue the tradition of Laker alumni who positively impact the world around them and make the world a better place. Wherever your future leads, you always have a place within our community because you are a Laker for a Lifetime!



Philomena V. Mantella, Ph.D.  
President



**2000**

*The Richard M. DeVos Center opened in 2000, giving GVSU visual significance in downtown Grand Rapids.*



**2004**

*Anisbinaabek (Dance and Feast) was sponsored by Grand Valley's Native American student group.*



*Freshman class, Fall 2020*



*Jr D*  
Jennifer Drake, Ph.D.,  
Acting Provost and Executive Vice  
President for Academic Affairs

**Dear Laker,**

Congratulations on reaching this incredible milestone!

Today is a celebration of your hard work, resilience, and growth, and we are grateful that you chose Grand Valley State University as the place to learn, explore, and pursue your goals.

At GVSU, we think of education as more than a series of classes. I hope your time here has sparked your curiosity, deepened your understanding, and inspired you to think and grow in new ways. I hope you have defined your passions and sharpened your purpose. GVSU's many stories of alumni success provide evidence that you are well-prepared for a life of meaning and impact.

As you step into what comes next, we hope you'll carry GVSU's spirit of learning and connection with you—and that you'll stay in touch. We want to hear about your future successes and continue to support you as part of the Laker family.

Wherever your journey leads, know that GVSU will always be proud to be part of your story.



**2010**  
*Grand Valley  
celebrated  
50 years of  
shaping lives!*



**2011**  
*The Laker for a  
Lifetime initiative  
strengthened the Grand  
Valley connection for  
students and alumni.*

# Officers of the University

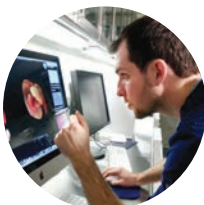
Philomena V. Mantella, Ph.D. ....	President
Laura Aikens, M.S.W. ....	Vice President for University Development
Stacie R. Behler, J.D. ....	Vice President and Chief Public Affairs and Communications Officer and Secretary, Board of Trustees
Jesse M. Bernal, Ph.D. ....	Vice President for Strategy and University Initiatives Chief of Staff to the President
Jennifer A. Drake, Ph.D. ....	Acting Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Jenny Hall-Jones, Ph.D. ....	Vice President for Student Affairs
Gregory J. Sanial, Ph.D. ....	Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer, Board of Trustees
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Miloš Topić, Ph.D. ....	Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Digital Officer
B. Donta Truss, Ed.D. ....	Vice President for Enrollment Development and Educational Outreach
Kara Van Dam, Ph.D. ....	Vice President and Chief Executive of GVSU Omni

# Board of Trustees

Mikyia S. Aaron, J.D., '10, Vice Chair .....	Taylor
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Noreen K. Myers, J.D., D.P.S., '72 .....	East Grand Rapids
Shelley E. Padnos, J.D., D.P.S. ....	Fennville
Kate Pew Wolters, M.S.W., D.P.S. ....	Grand Rapids
Philomena V. Mantella, Ph.D., (ex officio) .....	President of the University

## Honorary Life Members

Donna K. Brooks, L.H.D. • Dorothy A. Johnson, L.H.D. • John C. Kennedy, D.P.S.



**2014**

*Students and faculty worked with Van Andel Institute to improve early detection of cancer and disease.*



**2015**

*In April 2015, Dale Boedeker became the 100,000th person to be awarded a degree from Grand Valley.*



# Graduation Honors

The cords, stoles, sashes, and flags of different colors worn by some of the graduates are part of a special commencement tradition. They represent honors distinctions and recognize academic excellence or achievements in leadership. Some of the honors are based on grade point averages; other honors involve meritorious scholarship in fields of study or notable work for a particular organization.

Whether the distinction comes as part of a national honor society or is specific to Grand Valley — such as graduating from the Frederik Meijer Honors College — the colors of the garb have special meanings. Garb awarded by national academic organizations are generally the color attributed to a particular discipline. Those awarded by the university and nonacademic organizations generally represent a level of achievement and are unique to the university.

All of the garb signifies the students' dedication and hard work during their time at GVSU — attributes that will, no doubt, play a significant role in their future as well.

For the Fall 2024 graduates who may qualify for the honors distinction once final grades are posted, the designation of “honors candidate” has been granted.

Honors will be awarded as follows:

*Summa cum laude* — 3.9–4.00

*Magna cum laude* — 3.75–3.899

*Cum laude* — 3.5–3.749

A list of honor societies, awards of distinction, and recognition can be found at [gvsu.edu/commencement](https://gvsu.edu/commencement), under “honors recognition.”



**2019**

*President Haas took his first selfie with President-elect Philomena V. Mantella, Grand Valley's fifth president.*



**2020**

*"A Grand New Era" was the theme for the 2020 Presidents' Ball.*



## Guest Speaker

***Chris Hammer***

*GVSU alumnus*

*Mathematics, Secondary Education, B.S. '09*

During Chris Hammer's time at GVSU, he earned five All-American honors in cross-country/track and was a member of nine GLIAC Championship teams.

It was after his collegiate career when Hammer, a congenital below-elbow amputee, was introduced to the world of para sport. He made his debut representing the United States in Para Track in 2011. He would go on to compete at the London 2012 Paralympic Games in track before transitioning to the sport of triathlon. In his 12 years as a triathlete, Hammer has competed in more than 50 international Paratriathlon events,

including three more Paralympic Games (Rio 2016, Tokyo 2020, Paris 2024). After narrowly missing the podium in Rio and Tokyo, Hammer won the gold medal at the Paris Paralympic Games at 38 years old. Hammer is the first and only American paratriathlete to have met the criteria to compete against professional triathletes in long-course triathlon racing. He is a 2022 inductee into the GVSU Athletics Hall of Fame.

Outside of the sport of triathlon, Hammer has earned an M.S. in sport administration from Eastern Washington University, as well as a Master of Business Administration and a Ph.D. in sport psychology from the University of Utah.

Hammer and his wife, Amy, have two daughters, Peyton and Brooklyn.



**2023**

*GVSU reported a record-breaking incoming class, with the highest-ever percentage of students with diverse backgrounds.*



**2024**

*Data shows GVSU #1 in nation at retaining graduates in state.*



# Congrats, grads!

## *Welcome to the alumni community.*

Your relationship with Grand Valley and each other is only just beginning. Today you join a community of more than 148,000 alumni who will help you stay connected, informed, and engaged as a Laker for a Lifetime.



### Access Career Support

As an alum, you have free lifetime access to the GVSU Career Center. Our career coaches and workshops will help you plan or re-plan your career path, explore opportunities, improve your resumé, and expand your network.



### Unlock Services & Discounts

Request your alumni benefits card to enjoy great services and discounts such as alumni pricing at the GVSU Laker Store, restaurant and travel deals, library access, and more!



@gvsualumni



@alumni\_gvsu



@gvsualum



linkedin.com/school/gvsualumni



@GVSUAlumni



### Build Community

Connect with one of our alumni networks to socialize and network with fellow Lakers. Continue learning and growing with alumni events that take place throughout the year, across the country, and online.



### Keep in Touch

Stay connected to GVSU by updating your contact information. It takes only a few minutes to ensure that the university and fellow Lakers feel as close as ever.

[gvsu.edu/alumni/welcome](https://gvsu.edu/alumni/welcome)



A close-up photograph of a young woman in a blue graduation cap and gown. She is blowing a stream of colorful confetti (pink, yellow, orange, blue) from her mouth. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

**lakerstore**  
*on Monroe*

***Make sure to stop by the GVSU Laker Store on Monroe Center tonight, Saturday, December 7, to shop a special alumni sale, enjoy free swag bags for the first 50 visitors after 6:30 pm, and enter to win a special alumni prize basket\*!***

**We're located at *101 Monroe Center NW*, inside the Grand Rapids Art Museum and open until 8 p.m. tonight. See you soon!**

*\*Limit one bag per visitor; only available in person. Some sales exclusions apply, see store for details.*



**GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY®**

***At Grand Valley State University, we empower learners in their pursuits, professions, and purpose. The university enriches society through excellent teaching, active scholarship, advancement of equity, and public service.***

The paper this program is printed on contains fiber from certified, responsibly managed forests. It was produced using certified renewable energy, includes a minimum of 10% recycled fiber, and was printed locally.

Grand Valley State University is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution. It encourages diversity and provides equal opportunity in education, employment, all of its programs, and the use of its facilities. It is committed to protecting the constitutional and statutory civil rights of persons connected with the university. 12/2024

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