

COMMENCEMENT
DECEMBER 2025





Looking for your graduate's name?

Visit gvsu.edu/commencement/yearbook or scan the QR code to view the list of 2025 graduates!



gvsu.edu/commencement/yearbook

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!

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!



Scan to listen to the *GVSU Alma Mater* at gvsu.edu/commencement/almamater

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
Euphoria, GVSU award-winning student a cappella group

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

Student Speaker Y Hong Nhu Nguyen

“Golden” EJAE, Audrey Nuna, and Rei Ami
Euphoria

Commencement Address John Keating, '79

Conferring of Degrees President Mantella
Jennifer Drake, Ph.D.,
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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

Moving of the Tassel Provost Drake

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 6, 2025

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

Adebayo Ogundipe, Ph.D., Dean

College of Health Professions

Jeffrey Potteiger, Ph.D., Dean

Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies

Mark F. Schaub, Ph.D., Dean

Kirkhof College of Nursing

Linda Lewandowski, Ph.D., Dean

University Libraries

Melanie Shell-Weiss, Ph.D., Interim Dean

*Graduate degree recipients will be congratulated by Erica Hamilton,
Vice Provost for Distributed Learning and Dean of The Graduate School.*

Live name reading of candidates will be performed by Cara Cadena, MLIS.

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

Samah Mansour, Ph.D., College of Computing
Gerry Simons, Ph.D., Seidman College of Business

Faculty Marshals

Barbara Hooper, D.N.P., Kirkhof College of Nursing
Jack Mangala, Ph.D., Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies

Stage Marshals

Kyle Barnhart, M.Ed., Alumni Relations
Katie Perschbacher, M.Ed., Dean of Students Office

Platform Officials Marshals

Majd Al-Mallah, Ph.D., College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Kathleen Bailey, Ed.D., College of Education and Community Innovation



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 Graduate,

Congratulations on earning your degree from Grand Valley State University! This is a moment to celebrate all that you've accomplished and the hard work, determination, and perseverance that brought you here. You've faced challenges, pushed through long days and late nights, and grown in ways that will shape your future for years to come.

Today is your day to celebrate not only your journey but also the people and experiences that helped you along the way.

I hope you'll carry forward the curiosity and love of learning that defined your time at Grand Valley. Those qualities will continue to open doors and guide you as you positively impact the world.

As your journey continues, remember that Grand Valley is always with you as 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.



Students from the freshman class, Fall 2021, shine their phone lights while standing on the stadium field.

Dear Laker,



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

Congratulations on reaching this incredible milestone! Today we celebrate your hard work, resilience, and growth, and we're grateful you chose Grand Valley State University as the place to learn, explore, and pursue your goals.

At Grand Valley, we believe education is 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've discovered your passions and sharpened your sense of purpose. The achievements of our alumni show that Lakers are well prepared for lives of meaning and impact.

As you step into what comes next, carry forward Grand Valley's spirit of learning, curiosity, and connection—and stay in touch. We look forward to celebrating your future successes as part of the Laker family.

Know that Grand Valley 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

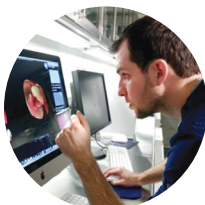
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Honorary Life Members

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

For the Fall 2025 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/honors

Tradition of Regalia

Academic dress consists of a gown, cap, and hood, which indicate the degree held by the wearer and the college or university that awarded that degree. Learn more about the significance of the various gowns, hoods, and more at gvsu.edu/commencement/regalia



2019

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



2023

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



Commencement Speaker

John Keating
GVSU alumnus
William James College, B.A., '79

John Keating has spent more than four decades as one of the most trusted and beloved voices in sports broadcasting. His career began at GVSU's student-run radio station, WSRX, where he quickly moved from broadcaster to station manager, laying the foundation for a lifetime in media.

After graduation, Keating—known then on-air as “Steve Knight”—worked in Grand Rapids radio and television before moving to Denver, where he covered major sporting events during a decade-long run at KMGH-TV. In the mid-1990s, he returned home to Michigan, becoming a fixture

on Detroit's sports scene with PASS Sports, Fox Sports Detroit, and later Bally Sports Detroit. Over the course of his career, he had the opportunity to cover Super Bowls, the Olympics, the Stanley Cup Finals, the World Series, and “a thousand great stories along the way.”

For nearly 30 years in Detroit, Keating anchored coverage of the Tigers and Red Wings, guiding fans through unforgettable moments that included Red Wings Stanley Cup championships and Tigers World Series appearances. His warm presence, humor, and deep respect for the athletes and teams he covered earned him 21 regional Emmy Awards and the admiration of colleagues and fans alike.

Looking back, Keating often noted that his broadcasting journey “started on the campus of GVSU and took me to Grand Rapids and then Denver and then home to Detroit,” where 29 of his 45 years in broadcasting were spent sharing coverage of Michigan's teams with viewers across the state. Through it all, he has credited his beginnings at Grand Valley as the spark that launched his career—an experience that gave him both the confidence and the community to dream big.



2024

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



2025

GVSU celebrates the success of the Reach Higher 2025 strategic plan.



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 150,000 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@gsu



@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



**GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**
ALUMNI





*Congratulations,
graduates!*

Visit the Laker Store on Monroe during commencement weekend to grab your alumni gear!

101 Monroe Center St NW | Grand Rapids, MI

December 6 hours of operation:
10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Stop by after commencement to shop a special alumni sale the first 20 visitors will receive a free* swag bag!
6:30 to 8 p.m.

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

 **lakerstore**
on Monroe



**GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**®

Turning What If Into What Is™

*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.

The University is an antidiscrimination, equal employment opportunity institution, consistent with its obligations as a federal contractor. 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. 12/25