



MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# *56th Commencement*

THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2023  
CURE INSURANCE ARENA  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY



MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

*56th Commencement*



*“Learning is not attained by chance,  
it must be sought for with ardor and diligence.”*

— Abigail Adams

# *Academic Tradition*

The wearing of academic regalia (robes, hoods, and caps) began in Europe in the Middle Ages, not as a symbol of achievement, but as a strategy to stay warm in the drafty halls of 13th century universities. When the practice crossed the Atlantic to become a tradition at early American colleges and universities, students wore academic attire as a kind of uniform that differentiated them from the permanent residents of the town.

In 1894, The American Intercollegiate Commission standardized the robe and accessories, which by this point in history were worn almost exclusively for commencement ceremonies and other significant college events.

According to tradition, undergraduates earning an associate or bachelor's degree wear a black gown with long, full sleeves and a black mortarboard cap with matching tassel. In some cases, they wear hoods or stoles representing the college or university's official colors.

Master's degree candidates wear black gowns with distinctive sleeves, a mortarboard cap, and a hood that is lined with the color or colors of the institution conferring the degree. The Master's hood is trimmed in velvet in the distinctive color of the graduate's academic field of study.

Brown – architecture and fine arts  
Light Brown – business  
Light Blue – education  
White – liberal arts  
Yellow – science  
Pink – music  
Royal Blue – Philosophy (all Ph.D. degrees)

Doctoral regalia is distinguished by long velvet panels adorning the front of a full, black gown and three velvet bars on the bell-shaped sleeves. The gown is trimmed in either black or royal blue, the traditional color of the doctor of philosophy degree, regardless of the disciplinary specialty. The hood is trimmed in a matching velvet and lined in satin in the colors of the institution conferring the degree. The cap for a doctoral ensemble is often made of velvet and may be a mortarboard or a four-, six-, or eight-cornered tam with gold tassel.

Beginning in the 1960s, some colleges and universities departed from the traditional black and adopted gowns in the institution's official colors, though most still adhere to the traditions governing hoods, mortarboards, and tams. Gold and green are the colors of Mercer County Community College. The gold is taken from the flags of both New Jersey and Mercer County; the green is symbolic of Mercer's oak and verdant fields. Together, they symbolize the limitless opportunities education provides.



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and ACADEMIC OFFICERS**

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**Dr. Robert J. Schreyer**

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*Interim Vice President, Student Affairs*

**Laura Schepps**

*Vice President, Finance and Administration*

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*Chief Information Officer*

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*Vice President, College Advancement*

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*College Ombuds, Student and Campus Care*

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*Dean, Division of Math, Science, and Health Professions*

**Dr. Robert Kleinschmidt**

*Dean, Division of Liberal Arts*

**Dr. Laura Sosa**

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Gregory Puliti

Madelaine Benowitz, *Class of 2022*

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Hon. Brian M. Hughes

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Christian Perez (*ex-officio*), *Student Government President*

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Kalyan Anumula  
Brian Bennett  
Lori Danko  
Hendricks Davis  
Randy Hanks  
Terry Jones

Kathy Klockenbrink  
Savita Lachman, Ph.D.  
Cesar Marroquin  
Linda Martin  
Diego Maya  
Deborah Millar  
Thomas Onder

Jeffrey Perlman  
Michael Procaccini  
Aamir Rehman, Ed.D.  
Kimberly Saul  
Allen Silk  
Paula Taylor  
Melissa Tenzer

## **FOUNDATION DIRECTORS EMERITI**

Jamil (Jim) Faridy (*deceased*)

James Floyd (*deceased*)

Timothy Losch (*deceased*)

Yong Sup Sim, Ed.D.

# President's Letter



Dear MCCC Graduating Class of 2023,

Congratulations on this important milestone in your educational journey!

This day is a “first” for many of you: Those of you who are first in your family to graduate with a college degree or credential are celebrating a victory not only for yourselves, but also for your loved ones. Those of you who plan to transfer to another institution to pursue a baccalaureate, masters, or doctoral degree may see this as your first commencement in a series of celebrations along your path to success. And those of you who completed your senior year of high school during the Covid-19 pandemic are finally getting your first opportunity to walk across the stage in a cap and gown. The entire Mercer community is happy for all of you and proud of your achievements.

At the front of this commencement program is a quotation by Abigail Adams, first lady of the United States, written in a letter to her son in 1780: “Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and diligence.” Surely most of today’s graduates would agree that ardor and diligence were needed to earn your place in this arena on this glorious occasion! What I really love about this quotation, however, is that Abigail Adams saw learning as a goal worth pursuing for its own sake. It’s true that learning might bring about other desirable outcomes, such as employment or other success, but I encourage you to appreciate the value and power of education—your own, personal education that no one can ever take away. I hope that you are all proud of yourselves for making this commitment to learning and seeing it through to the finish.

This is my first commencement as the new president of Mercer County Community College, so I want to thank you for the privilege of sharing this celebration with you and your guests. I wish you all continued success in your next pursuit and promise that we will always be here cheering you on!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Deborah E. Preston'.

Deborah E. Preston, Ph.D.  
President

# Commencement Program

PROCESSIONAL .....	Dr. Deborah E. Preston <i>President</i>
GRAND MARSHAL .....	Professor Laura Knight <i>Literature Coordinator, English Department</i>
WELCOME .....	Dr. Deborah E. Preston <i>President</i>
NATIONAL ANTHEM .....	<i>Green and Gold Quartet:</i> Avé Millennia Corbitt Maho Kurisl Campryn Le Cain Elizabeth Rzasa
GREETINGS .....	Kristin Appelget <i>Chair, Board of Trustees</i>
REMARKS .....	Hon. Brian M. Hughes <i>Mercer County Executive</i>
INTRODUCTION OF COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER .....	Dr. Deborah E. Preston <i>President</i>
ADDRESS TO THE GRADUATES .....	Bradley Butler <i>MCCC Class of 2009</i>
ACADEMIC HONORS .....	Dr. Robert J. Schreyer <i>Vice President, Academic Affairs</i>
RECOGNITION OF FACULTY .....	Dr. Robert J. Schreyer
AND DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD .....	<i>Vice President, Academic Affairs</i>
INTRODUCTION OF STUDENT SPEAKER .....	Dr. Bette Simmons <i>Interim Vice President, Student Affairs</i>
STUDENT SPEAKER .....	Christian Joaquin Perez <i>Class of 2023</i>
PRESENTATION OF GRADUATES .....	Dr. Robert J. Schreyer <i>Vice President, Academic Affairs</i>
CONFERRING OF DEGREES .....	Dr. Deborah E. Preston <i>President</i>
RECESSIONAL .....	



# *Graduates*

"I NEVER  
**DREAMED**  
ABOUT  
**SUCCESS**  
I WORKED  
**FOR IT.**"



## ASSOCIATE IN ARTS

**TUBA AHMED \*\*\***

*Liberal Arts*

**RHIANNON S. AL-SAAD I \***

*Education*

**GRACE PARKER BARDACHINO \***

*Liberal Arts*

**DENNIS FRANCIS BRADY**

*Liberal Arts*

**ALBANIE CHENNEL BROWN**

*Communication*

**JACQUELYN APRIL BUDAI \***

*Education*

**RYAN S. BURNES**

*Liberal Arts*

**TASHA B. CALIX \***

*Liberal Arts*

**ASHLEY D. COBOS-SOLIS \***

*Liberal Arts*

**ISABELLA ANGELINA CONIGLIO**

*Education*

**SEAN PATRICK DUIGON \*\*\***

*Liberal Arts*

**SARAH FRANCESCA ESPINELL**

*Liberal Arts*

**HEATHER NICOLE EWEN**

*Education*

**GERIZIM CINERET GARCIA**

*Education*

**THOMAS IAN GLADE**

*Liberal Arts*

**EMILY M. GRESCHAK**

*Liberal Arts*

**ANNA L. GUILLAUMETTE**

*Liberal Arts*

**KATHRYN COLBY HENDRICKSON**

*Education*

**VANESSA ANGELICA HERRERA-BATISTA**

*Education*

**JACOB KACZOROWSKI \***

*Education*

**STEPHEN KELLER**

*Liberal Arts*

**DAVID H. LARAUS \*\***

*Liberal Arts*

**JULIANA B. LEHNER**

*Liberal Arts*

**MICHELE M. MARRA**

*Liberal Arts*

**DELANEY MISIER \*\*\***

*Communication*

**NALIA MUHAMMAD**

*Communication*

**MALAK ADNAN MUSTAFA-HAJ**

*Education*

**JACEN WILSON ORDONEZ**

*Liberal Arts*

**AMY G. PARRIS \***

*Communication*

**BYRON G. PELECHU**

*Education*

**VINCENT H. PROCTOR \***

*Liberal Arts*

**ARTI S. RAMCHARAN \***

*Liberal Arts*

**CHARLOTTE SUMMER RISHKO \*\*\***

*Liberal Arts*

**AARRON K. RITCHIE-STOKES**

*Education*

**HELENA KRISTIANNE SILVESTRI**

*Communication*

**JOAN SQUADRITO**

*Liberal Arts*

**MATTEO SZARKA \***

*Liberal Arts*

**LEILY ADELIA TELLES RIVAS**

*Education*

**GIANNA MARIE TERMAN \***

*Education*

**GABRIELA ALEJANDRA TOBAR**

*Liberal Arts*

**ANNMARIE TOMENCHOK**

*Liberal Arts*

**GABRIEL D. TRUCH \***

*Liberal Arts*

**KATHERYN D. VARGAS \***

*Liberal Arts*

**AIDEN G. VELENGER**

*Liberal Arts*

**SHANNON HOPE WELSH \***

*Liberal Arts*

**SYRE A. WHITE**

*Liberal Arts*

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*Game Design*

**MICHAEL DAVID ORTEGA**

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**MYKHAYLO YANCHYK \*\*\***

*Medical Laboratory Technology*

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**IKER FERNANDEZ**

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*Business Administration*

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*Business Administration*

**JARED S. GILBERT \***

*Business Administration*

**SHANE ROBERT GRANT \***

*Business Administration*

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*Criminal Justice - Law Enforcement*

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*Nursing (ADN)*

\* Honors  
\*\* High Honors  
\*\*\* Highest Honors

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**PETER SZPAKOWSKI JR.**

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**NICOLE SAMANTHA TERRY**

*Business Administration*

**HANNAH E. THOMPSON \***

*Biology*

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*Nursing (ADN)*

**AMINA TOKHI**

*Public Health*

**ALUEN SERENA TOMAT-KELLY \***

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**EMILY JULISSA TORRES**

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**JONATHAN ANDREW TYNDALE \*\*\***

*Criminal Justice - Law Enforcement*

**MARYAM LAYLA UDDIN**

*Business Administration*

**NICOLETA KRASTEVA VATOV**

*Nursing Co-Op Program - SFMC*

**RAYLENE VICTOR**

*Nursing (ADN)*

**MARLEN EDITH VILLALOBOS-GARCIA**

*Nursing (ADN)*

**MATTHEW VOGT**

*Computer Science*

**MEGAN WERTS**

*Nursing Co-Op Program - SFMC*

**CARLA XIMENES**

*Nursing (ADN)*

## ASSOCIATE IN FINE ARTS

**LAWRENCE STEVEN BERKO**

*Photography*

**NASTASSIA SIAMASHKA \*\***

*Visual Arts - Fine Arts*

**KATHERINE V. TAUSSIG \***

*Visual Arts - Ceramics/Sculpture*

## CERTIFICATE OF PROFICIENCY

**ZACHARY AUER**

*Information Technology - Network*

**NAHIR CONCEPCION ORTIZ**

*Medical Office Assistant*

**CAROLYN DUNN**

*Professional Cooking*

**AMINATA MIMI FOFANA**

*Medical Office Assistant*

**JOHN R. GROSS**

*Medical Office Assistant*

**MELISSA O. MIGHTY \***

*Accounting - CPA Education Compliance*

**NICHOLAS I. MURPHY**

*Paralegal*



## ASSOCIATE IN ARTS

**MARIA ISABEL ABAD**  
*Education*

**MIKAEL CARLOS ARELLANO \*\*\***  
*Communication*

**MARY EMMA BASSETT**  
*Liberal Arts*

**KYLA ANISHA CARSON**  
*Liberal Arts*

**JACLYN MARIE CHIACCHIO**  
*Education*

**RYAN C. CHIARKAS**  
*Liberal Arts*

**MATTHEW COLLINS**  
*Education*

**LEILA J. DAVIS**  
*Liberal Arts*

**LESLIE DE LEON**  
*Liberal Arts*

**TATIANA NATALIA DORNER \***  
*Liberal Arts*

**RACHEL FORMANIAK**  
*Liberal Arts*

**MELISSA RENE HILES**  
*Liberal Arts*

**ALEXANDER JOHN HUDSON**  
*Liberal Arts*

**KAYLA NICHOLE KENDRICK**  
*Liberal Arts*

**YAFREISY MESA SANTANA**  
*Education*

**MICHAEL ANTHONY MIRANDA**  
*Communication*

**AARON X. MOSLEY \***  
*Communication*

**NADIA S. MUHAMMAD**  
*Communication*

**ASHLEY PENG \***  
*Liberal Arts*

**AMBER-LEIGH MORGAN RITTER**  
*Liberal Arts*

**VASTY RODRIGUEZ \***  
*Education*

**WILSON E. RUANO-GARCIA**  
*Education*

**ANTHONY L. RUHL**  
*Liberal Arts*

**LAURA MICHELLE SALGUERO**  
*Liberal Arts*

**ERIKA CELESTE SEGARRA**  
*Liberal Arts*

**SUMAYYAH SULTANA**  
*Liberal Arts*

**CARLEY MARIE SUTTON \***  
*Education*

**FELICIA L. SWAIN**  
*Education*

## ASSOCIATE IN APPLIED SCIENCE

**JOHN LOGAN ABATTO \***  
*Digital Media Arts - 3-D Animation*

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