



BACCALAUREATE

FRIDAY, MAY 1 | 7 PM

PHILANDER SMITH UNIVERSITY
M.L. HARRIS AUDITORIUM

THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY EIGHTH COMMENCEMENT

SATURDAY, MAY 2 | 9 AM

STATEHOUSE CONVENTION CENTER
GOVERNOR'S HALL I, II, III



HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY

Officially founded in 1877, Philander Smith University is the result of the first attempt west of the Mississippi River to make education available to freedmen (formerly enslaved African Americans). The forerunner of the institution was Walden Seminary, named in honor of Dr. J. M. Walden, one of the originators and the first Corresponding Secretary of the Freedmen's Aid Society. In 1882, Dr. G. W. Gray, President of Little Rock University, the institution for the Arkansas Annual Conference, met Mrs. Adeline Smith, widow of Mr. Philander Smith of Oak Park, Illinois, while soliciting funds. The late Mr. Philander Smith had been a liberal donor to Asiatic Missions and had developed an interest in the work of the church in the South. In making her gift to Dr. Gray, Mrs. Smith designated \$10,500 for Walden Seminary. The trustees accepted the gift and gave it special recognition by changing the name of the struggling Walden Seminary to Philander Smith College. A new site for the school had already been purchased at Eleventh and IZard Streets. The gift made by Mrs. Smith was a significant contribution toward the construction of Budlong Hall, the first brick building on the new site.

Boasting a rich Christian heritage, the institution acknowledges a definite obligation to The United Methodist Church and was chartered as a four-year college on March 3, 1883. The first Baccalaureate Degree was conferred in 1888. The institution's Presidents are recorded as follows:

The first President was the Reverend Thomas Mason, who resigned in 1896. He was succeeded by Reverend James Monroe Cox, Professor of Ancient Languages. Dr. Cox, who retired in 1924, was succeeded by the Reverend George Collins Taylor, a graduate of the College. Dr. Taylor served as President from 1924 to 1936.

In May 1936, Dr. Marquis LaFayette Harris succeeded Dr. Taylor. Harris, who greatly enhanced the College, was succeeded by Dr. Roosevelt David Crockett, a graduate of the College, on June 1, 1961. Dr. E.T. Dixon, Jr. took office on January 1, 1965, as Philander's Sixth President. Succeeding Dixon was Dr. Walter R. Hazzard, who took office as the Seventh President of the College on July 1, 1969. Succeeding Hazzard was Dr. Grant S. Shockley, who took office on January 1, 1980, as the Eighth President of Philander Smith College. Dr. Shockley was succeeded by Dr. Hazo W. Carter, Jr., who was elected unanimously by the Board of Trustees and took office on August 20, 1983. When Dr. Carter resigned the presidency in August 1987, he was succeeded by Dr. Myer L. Titus, a 1954 graduate of the College. Dr. Titus retired as President on June 30, 1998. Elected by the Board of Trustees in February 1998 as the Eleventh and first female President of Philander Smith College was Dr. Trudie Kibbe Reed. In 2004, Dr. Julius Scott succeeded Dr. Reed as Interim President. In 2004, the Board announced the selection of Dr. Walter M. Kimbrough as the Twelfth President of the College. In May 2012, Dr. Kimbrough resigned from the presidency. On July 1, 2012, Dr. Johnny M. Moore, a 1989 alumnus, became the Thirteenth President of the College. Following the resignation of Dr. Moore in February 2014, Dr. Lloyd Hervey, a 1968 alumnus of Philander Smith College, was named Interim President. Dr. Roderick L. Smothers, Sr., succeeded Dr. Hervey and began his tenure as the 14th President of the College on January 1, 2015. After Dr. Smothers' resignation in May 2023, longtime Board of Trustees member Dr. Cynthia A. Bond Hopson was appointed Interim President. In August 2023, Philander Smith College became Philander Smith University, marking a significant milestone in the institution's history and evolution. The following August, fellow Trustee Dr. Maurice D. Gipson succeeded Dr. Bond Hopson as Interim President. In May 2025, the Board of Trustees named Dr. Maurice D. Gipson as the Fifteenth President.

MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY

Philander Smith University is a small, privately supported, and historically Black, four-year liberal arts institution related to the Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church. The University offers undergraduate degrees including the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Science, the Bachelor of Business Administration, the Bachelor of Social Work, and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, as well as a graduate degree, the Master of Business Administration.

The University's mission is: *"To graduate academically accomplished students, grounded as advocates for social justice, determined to change the world for the better."* Philander Smith University, the only United Negro College Fund (UNCF)-member institution in Arkansas, strives to provide a quality college education for all regardless of race, religion, sex, national origin or ethnic background.

2026 BACCALAUREATE SPEAKER

Reverend Vandalyn Kennedy

*V*andalyn Kennedy is a preacher, entrepreneur, educator, leadership strategist, and keynote speaker who transcends traditional secular-sacred divides, empowering people to achieve their goals and change their lives. Named one of the Church of God in Christ's "150 Most Influential Women" and a "Woman in the Pulpit" to watch by the New York Times, she has been recognized as a change agent, community-builder, and leader for more than 20 years.

Outside of the ministry, Vandalyn is also a highly successful entrepreneur; she founded the human capital solutions startup Bridging the Gap (BTG) to help individuals, teams, and organizations realize their full potential. BTG delivers leadership development, coaching,

mentoring, and consulting through targeted training, classes, workshops, events, and more, onsite and off, in both secular and sacred spaces.

Born in Brooklyn, Vandalyn attended Sarah Lawrence College at age 16, earning undergraduate and graduate degrees in education. She went on to earn a second master's degree in music and music education from Columbia University, a master of divinity degree from Columbia University's Union Theological Seminary, and certification in youth and black theology from Princeton University's Theological Seminary. Today, her leadership responsibilities within the Church of God in Christ organization extend to six million people globally.



PHILANDER SMITH UNIVERSITY
BACCALAUREATE ORDER OF CELEBRATION
Friday, May 1, 2026

PRELUDE

Order My Steps
G. Burleigh

ACADEMIC PROCESSIONAL

War March of the Priest
Mendelssohn

CALL TO CELEBRATION*

Reverend Ronnie Miller-Yow
Vice President for Mission, Culture and Religion | University Chaplain

Leader: Today, we gather to celebrate the faithfulness of God in the lives of the Class of 2026!
Congregation: **If it had not been for the Lord on our side, where would we be?**
Leader: Through every trial, every test, and every tear, God has carried us through!

Congregation: **His grace sustained us, and His mercy kept us!**
Leader: Now we step forward, not in fear but in faith, walking into purpose!
Congregation: **For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations!**

HYMN OF CELEBRATION*

Lift Every Voice and Sing
arr. By James W. Johnson/J. Rosamond

Philander Smith University Choir
Mr. Vernon Harris, '03, Director

INVOCATION*

Mr. Aidan Deal, '26

WELCOME AND OCCASION

Dr. Shannon Clowney-Johnson
Provost | Chief Academic Officer

COMMUNITY GREETING

Reverend Natasha Murray
Central District Superintendent, The United Methodist Church | PSU Trustee

Reverend Aaron Withers, '00
Pastor, First Trinity Church of God in Christ (Pine Bluff)

MUSICAL SELECTION

Philander Smith University Choir
Mr. Vernon Harris, '03, Director

READING FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

Old Testament Reading | Mrs. Ebonie Anderson, '26
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NIV)

New Testament Reading | Ms. Shanteria Davis, '23 (MBA '26)
Romans 8:28-31 (NRSV)

**Those who are able are requested to stand*



INTRODUCTION OF THE SPEAKER

Ms. Cyrah Johnson, '26

MUSICAL SELECTION

Philander Smith University Gospel Choir
Mr. Vernon Harris, '03, Director

BACCALAUREATE SERMON

Reverend Vandalyn Kennedy
International Speaker | Educator | Faith Leader

BLESSING OF THE GRADUATES

Reverend Ronnie Miller-Yow
Vice President for Mission, Culture and Religion | University Chaplain

REMARKS

Maurice D. Gipson, J.D., Ph.D.
President and CEO, Philander Smith University

Alma Mater

BENEDICTION

Reverend Robert L. Tilmon, '84
Pastor, St. Stephen Baptist Church

RECESSIONAL

War March of the Priest
Mendelssohn

**Those who are able are requested to stand*







Alma Mater

Dear Alma Mater, tried and true,
We'll win respect and love for you,
We pledge our hearts to you each day,
To do our best, at work, at play.

Dear P.S.C., when from your fold,
We'll lift the dear old Green and Gold.
O'er Alma Mater vigil keep,
Her high ideals we'll strive to meet.

When college days are at an end,
Our hearts will ever toward you bend.
With loyalty, we'll always be,
A part of you, Dear P.S.C.

(Written in 1968 by Dr. Carl Gordon Harris, '52)

College Hymn

Philander Smith, Oh how we love thy name.
Your rich tradition brought to you much fame.
Through years of service you have grown to be:
A place of wisdom, love, and humility.

Philander Smith, when we are far away,
From your great teachings we will never stray

You've giv'n a gift none other could ever give:
A wholesome and abundant life to live.

Philander Smith, your high ideals we'll keep:
A Christian heart, and love for truth we'll seek:
We'll know the Truth and it shall make us free;
Thy fruits shall grow through all eternity.

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Lift ev'ry voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has
taught us.
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has
brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?

We have come, over a way that with tears has been
watered.
We have come, treading our path through the blood
of the slaughtered,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might,
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where
we met Thee,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we
forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God, True to our native land.

PHILANDER SMITH UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT ORDER OF SERVICE

Saturday, May 2, 2026

MAURICE D. GIPSON, J.D., PH.D., PRESIDENT AND CEO | PRESIDING

PRELUDE	The College Hymn	Mr. CamRyn Stillman <i>Organist</i>
PROCESSIONAL	Pomp and Circumstance March No. I, Trio <i>Edward Elgar</i>	
WELCOME		Maurice D. Gipson, J.D., Ph.D. <i>President and CEO, Philander Smith University</i>
INVOCATION*		Reverend Ronnie Miller-Yow <i>University Chaplain Vice President for Mission, Culture and Religion</i>
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE*		
NATIONAL ANTHEM*	Star Spangled Banner <i>Francis Scott Key</i>	Philander Smith University Choir <i>Mr. Vernon Harris, '03, Director</i>
NEGRO NATIONAL ANTHEM*	Lift Every Voice and Sing <i>Arr. by James W. Johnson / J. Rosamond</i>	Philander Smith University Choir <i>Mr. Vernon Harris, '03, Director</i>
OCCASION		Dr. Shannon Clowney-Johnson <i>Provost Chief Academic Officer</i>

Presentation of Candidates for the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters

CANDIDATES FOR THE HONORARY DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS

Mr. Jeremy C. Carter, '11 (*awarded posthumously*)
Mr. Robert Blue, '68, *Trustee Emeritus*

MUSICAL SELECTION		Philander Smith University Choir <i>Mr. Vernon Harris, '03, Director</i>
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COMMENCEMENT REFLECTIONS

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE		Ms. Sydnee Jackson, '26 <i>Miss Philander Smith University 2025-26</i>
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FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE		Reverend Dr. Earl Graham <i>Department Chair of Philosophy, Religion and Letters</i>
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**Those who are able are requested to stand*



Conferring of Degrees Ceremony

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

Maurice D. Gipson, J.D., Ph.D.
President and CEO, Philander Smith University

TRUSTEE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. Terence Cox
Philander Smith University Board of Trustees

Presentation of Candidates and Granting of Degrees

- CANDIDATES FOR THE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
- CANDIDATES FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE
- CANDIDATES FOR THE BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK DEGREE
- CANDIDATES FOR THE BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEGREE
- CANDIDATES FOR THE BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE

NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INDUCTION

Ms. Alice Richardson, '77
President, National Alumni Association PSU

ALMA MATER

The Philander Smith Alumni and University Choirs
Mr. Vernon Harris, '03, Director

BENEDICTION

Reverend Ronnie Miller-Yow
Vice President for Mission, Culture and Religion University Chaplain | University Chaplain

RECESSIONAL

Trumpet Voluntary
Jeremiah Clarke



2026 BACCALAUREATE AND COMMENCEMENT COMMITTEE

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Reverend Ronnie Miller-Yow, <i>Chair</i> | Ms. Karen Hunter, '04 |
| Dr. Shannon Clowney-Johnson, <i>Co-Chair</i> | Dr. Rhonda Lovelace-Tilmon, '89 |
| Mr. Leonard Baker | Mrs. Sericia Nelson |
| Mr. Kevin Cooper, '08 (MBA '24) | Ms. Bertha Owens |
| Ms. Angela Davis | Ms. Vanessa Parker |
| Mrs. Jennifer Dixon | Mrs. Keisha Ri'chard Patterson, '94 |
| Mr. Vernon Harris, '03 | Dr. B. Sherrance Russell |
| Ms. Carmen Hamilton Parks | Ms. Jasmine Thomas |
| Mrs. LaToya Howard-Lasker | Chief Arthur Williams |
| Mr. Fred Hurt, '08 (MBA '25) | Ms. Donna Young, '04 (MBA '24) |

**Those who are able are requested to stand*



HONORARY DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS

Mr. Jeremy C. Carter, '11

Jeremy C. Carter was a cherished alumnus, beloved Philander Smith University staff member, and friend to all. Born in Memphis, Tennessee, to Elizabeth Nesbitt and Darren Carter, Jeremy embodied the spirit and dedication of a Black Male Educator. As a first-generation college student, he earned his Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a minor in Black Family Studies at Philander Smith College (now Philander Smith University) in 2010.

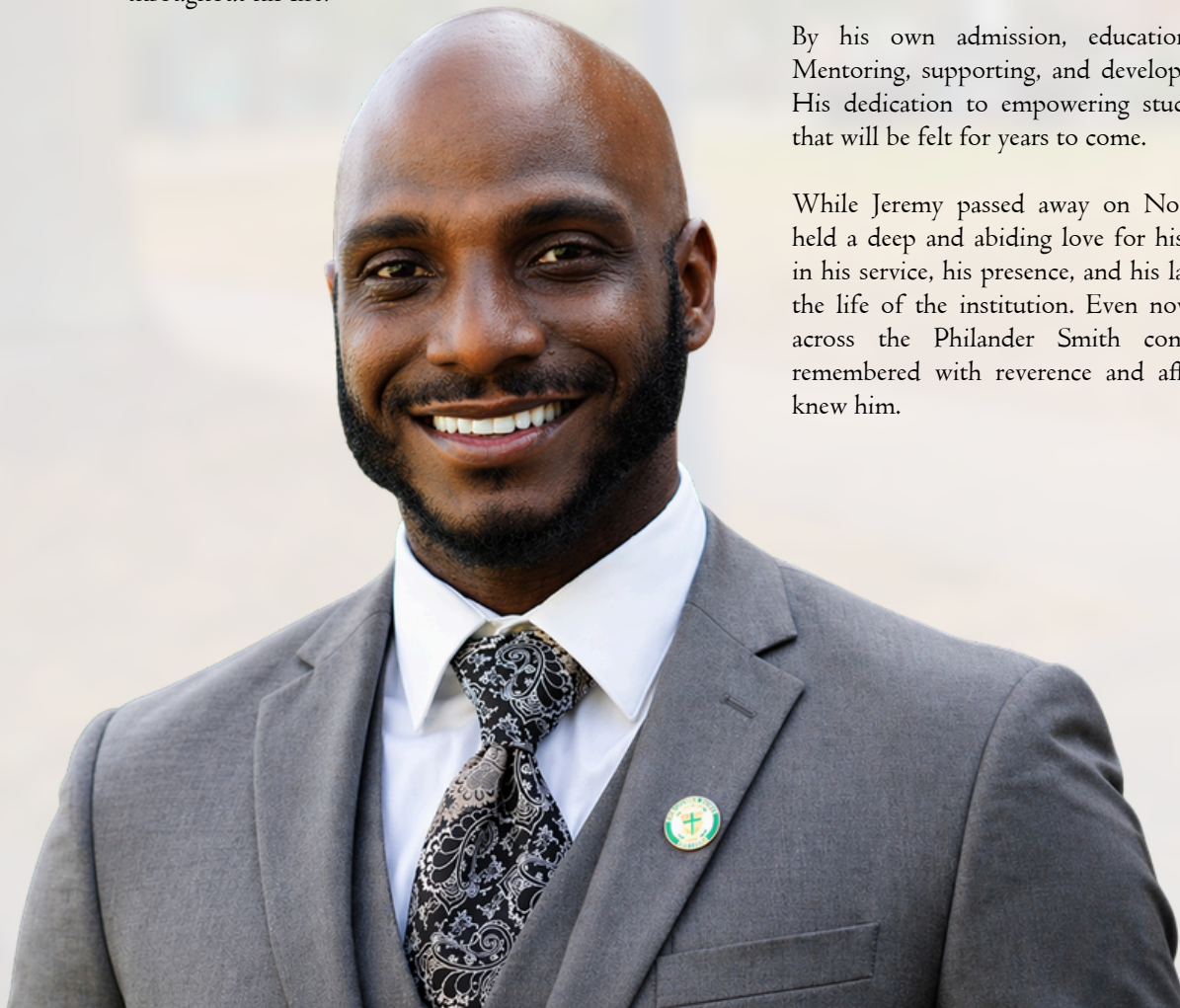
Under the leadership of then-President Dr. Walter M. Kimbrough, Jeremy left an indelible mark on campus life, leading with passion and purpose. He served as President of the Student Government Association, Director of the Chosen Generation Gospel Choir, and President of the Religious Life Council. A founding member of the Bless The Mic Street Team, he held numerous leadership roles and built a legacy of commitment and advocacy. In Fall 2008, he was initiated into the Beta Chi Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., where he forged deep bonds with his line brothers, a connection he held close throughout his life.

Jeremy's devotion to student success led him to further his studies at Miami University-Ohio and Relay Graduate School of Education, where he earned a Master's in Elementary Education and Teaching and another in Student Affairs in Higher Education. His career reflected his passion for student development, with roles as Housing Coordinator,

Director of Student Engagement and Leadership, Academic Advisor, and classroom teacher. In July 2023, Jeremy was appointed Associate Dean of Campus Culture and Religious Life at Philander Smith University. However, titles never confined his willingness to serve; Jeremy was a servant leader at heart. Returning to PSU in 2022 as Director of Housing and Residential Life, he inspired a new generation of students with his Panther Pride and love for worship. Continuing his deep commitment to faith and music, he took the reins of the PSU Gospel Choir as its director, transforming it with his remarkable gift for teaching, directing, and worshipping.

By his own admission, education was Jeremy's life. Mentoring, supporting, and developing were his ministry. His dedication to empowering students created a legacy that will be felt for years to come.

While Jeremy passed away on November 11, 2024, he held a deep and abiding love for his alma mater, reflected in his service, his presence, and his lasting contributions to the life of the institution. Even now, his impact endures across the Philander Smith community, and he is remembered with reverence and affection by those who knew him.





HONORARY DOCTOR OF HUMANE LETTERS

Mr. Robert Blue, '68

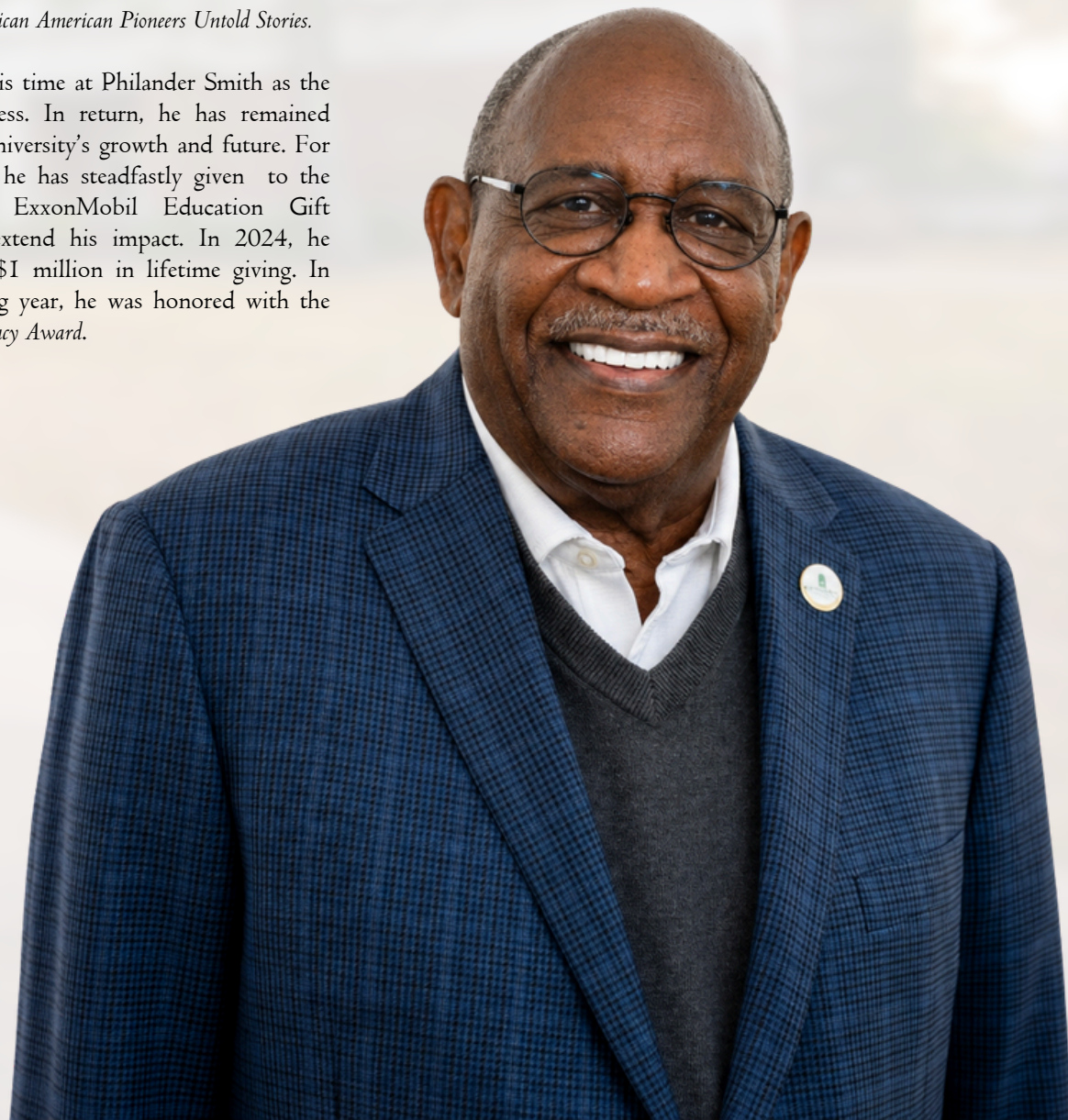
Robert Blue left his hometown of Mound Bayou, Mississippi, in 1964 to pursue higher education, setting the stage for a life shaped by purpose and perseverance. A proud graduate of Philander Smith College, he credits the institution with opening doors that defined his path, including his first professional interview with Humble Oil and Refining Company.

That moment led to a 32-year career with ExxonMobil, where Robert contributed across marketing, sales, and engineering. He also dedicated 30 years to the Arkansas Army National Guard, retiring in January 1999 with the rank of Sergeant Major (SGM). He is recognized as the first African American Sergeant Major in the Arkansas Army National Guard, a distinction documented in the *Arkansas National Guard African American Pioneers Untold Stories*.

Robert often points to his time at Philander Smith as the foundation for his success. In return, he has remained deeply invested in the University's growth and future. For more than two decades, he has steadfastly given to the institution, using the ExxonMobil Education Gift Matching Program to extend his impact. In 2024, he reached a milestone of \$1 million in lifetime giving. In recognition, the following year, he was honored with the University's inaugural *Legacy Award*.

Elected to the Philander Smith Board of Trustees in 2015, Robert now serves as Trustee Emeritus. His dedication, however, extends beyond financial support, as he and his wife, Carolyn, have also served as Honorary Chairs of the President's Scholarship Gala, and he remains active in the National Alumni Association, Philander Smith University.

A lifetime member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Robert's life of service reflects both gratitude and intention. He recognizes what Philander Smith made possible in his own life and is committed to ensuring others have access to that same path.





2026 CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES

HONORARY DEGREE

Mr. Robert Blue

POSTHUMOUS HONORARY DEGREE

Jeremy C. Carter

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Management Concentration

Adams, Angela Shanta **

Belcher-Claxton, Taneya

Brown, Basia Yvonne **

Buffington, Dareon Stephon **

Creggett, Jamie Jenecia

Davis, Shanteria Shemere **

Etienne, Cipher Denise

Hampton, Ronald L. **

Jones II, Gerald Wayne

Mars, Savanna F.

McGary, Kristlin Chanel

Milton, Taniya R.

Minor, Jessica Christine **

Ramos, Jermaine La'Juane **

Stokes, Jade Jantoine

Thompson, Precious Coylene

Todd, Tongula Reshun **

Program Management

Concentration

Banks, Irmease Leatrell

Brantley, Amari *

Canada, Krystal J. *

Ezeagwula, Quinton Ikequon *

Hall, Jackeisha *

Hurt, Frederick Francis *

Jackson, Candace La'Shay *

Jackson, Rosilynd LaTrese *

James, Admetha LaShea Lawrence

James, Keith Allen

Jones, Jamieshea C. *

Lowe, Jaylen Christopher

Manuel, Caron Jarrell *

Mayo, Takiyah Schana'e *

Milton, Taniya R.

Newell, Ganell Lynise *

Page, Taivarus Javon

Phillips-Peters, Tiffany Marie *

Scott, Teirani La'Chelle *

Slaughter, Tiffany La'Shelle

Smith Jr., Warren Anthony **

Turner, Dasia *

SCHOOL OF ARTS, EDUCATION, AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Bachelor of Arts

English

Johnson, Cyrah D.

Cum Laude

Parker Jr., Tavarus Adarryl

Interdisciplinary Major

Liberal Arts Program

Horton, Jayonna

Hunter, Ja'Lon

Thrower, Judah Destiny Edwards

Philosophy & Religion

Floyd, Kimberly Cookie

Visual & Performing Arts

Studio and Art History

Concentration

Lee, Sania Xandria

Theater Concentration

Adams, James L. *

Murphy, Demarcus

Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Russell, Emree

Magna Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Swopes, Jarmaiya

Bachelor of Science

Elementary Education K-6

Johnson, Samya

Parker, Reagan Paris Rudd

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Veritas, Antonio Elevacion

Magna Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Educational Studies

Concentration

Calhoun, Layla

Gray, Taylor Terran

Jordan, Tabry Makayla

Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Smith, Latonya

Cum Laude

Bachelor of Arts

Physical Education

Council, Evan T. *

Gatson-Barnum, Emanuel

Green, Erica

Magna Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Jackson, Jamarius *

Johnson, Jasmin Tyana Monique *

Lakes, Cartavian M. *

Merritt II, Desmond Gardell *

Richard, Lorritzia *

Richmond, Corey Jamal *

Robinson, Tyianna M. **

Rudd, Javien

Rue-Whitfield Jr., Maurice Forte'

Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Winn, Zarea LeSchelle

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction Field

Winston, Ari Dah'lonoga Rejai *

Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Bachelor of Science

Criminal Justice

Bass, Qushanda

Bell, Ja'Riyah Sha'nah

Cum Laude

Brown, Terrion Martynes

Buford, Brianna Simone'

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Delaney, Melodie Shana *

Magna Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Flenaugh, Ja'Myia *

Mems, Terrance Terrell *

Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Parks, David Charles Lee

Magna Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Randolph, Kelby Rashae

Scott-Alexander, Evan

Sur, Aaditya

1st Rank in Class

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction Field



2026 CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES

Thomas, Miracle
Cum Laude
Wallace, Savannah
Williams, Jerlisa Renea
Magna Cum Laude
Distinction in Field

Bachelor of Arts

Political Science

Baker, Timothy James Alvin
Bandelier, Naaman Christian
Summa Cum Laude
Distinction in Field

Freeman, Tearincy *
Cum Laude

Hampton-Oates, Mazjai
Magna Cum Laude
Distinction Field

Onoriobe, Daisy
1st Rank in Class
Summa Cum Laude
Distinction in Field

Stokes, Mikeatavius
1st Rank in Class
Summa Cum Laude
Distinction in Field

Psychology

Abney, Tamia Chante *
Beckton, Kassidy
Blackmon, Darius Anthony *
Butler, Mia Nandia *
Davis, Jounhethan Samari
Franklin, Daija J. **
Gilmore, Asia L.
Grace, Mariah
Summa Cum Laude
Distinction in Field
Johnson, Taliyah Monique
Kellah, David *

Lockett, D'Andre
Cum Laude
Lundy, Jeanique Evette
1st Rank in Class
Summa Cum Laude
Distinction in Field
Smith, Kristopher
Washington, Toshiya Sharal
Cum Laude
Wright, Alana

Sociology

Smith, Emilee Ann Olivia

Bachelor of Social Work Social Work

Avery, Jordan Da'quaveus
Davis, Erika Jerusha Brooks
Distinction in Field

Howard, Breslin
Speed-Henry, LaShawn
Williams, Kaiden
Cum Laude

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, INNOVATION, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Bachelor of Business Administration

Business Administration
Accounting Concentration
Berry Jr., David
Gibbs, Katavious Lamonte
3rd Rank in Class
Summa Cum Laude
Distinction in Field
Wright Jr., Kendrix D.

Entrepreneurship Concentration

Gibson, Janeriah Ellatrice
Cum Laude
Keith, Shylah Kyle
King, Caleb Joshua
Cum Laude
Milton, Taniya R. **
Murrill, La Tika Shawnt'i
Magna Cum Laude
Distinction in Field
Thomas, Jorden Waddell
Yancy, Terica

Healthcare Administration Concentration

Jackson, Sydnee Nicole
2nd Rank in Class
Summa Cum Laude
Distinction in Field

Management Concentration

Gordon, Quansaa A. **
Jackson, Alexis Allison
Lattimore Jr, Craig Lamont **
Moore, Sa'Mia Arnea *
Nora Jr., DeCarlos Marquis
1st Rank in Class
Summa Cum Laude
Distinction in Field
Pitts, Michala Gail
Rogers, Tavion Symar *
Turner, Asia Nicole **
Distinction in Field

Marketing Concentration

Farrell, Rhoda Kawala
Johnson Jr., Jermayne
Reece, Raymond

Organizational Management

Anderson, Ebonie Unike **
Distinction in Field
Buie, Selyna Kreal
Distinction in Field
Burks, Jeremy Ardell
Cum Laude
Distinction in Field
Butler, Marion Cornelius **
Coleman, Shannon Kaye
Cuthbertson, Bradley Joe
Floyd, Teneice Evette *
Distinction in Field
Frazier, SanTasha Leonia
Gilliam, Miranda S.
Distinction in Field
Hardy, Alex Kenard **
Cum Laude
Harper, Shakera Jayvett **
Hood, Alyssa Latrice
Jackson, Kimberly *
Lee, Kristopher F. *
Distinction in Field
Lee, LaToya Samantha **
Distinction in Field
Morgan, Jerome *
Magna Cum Laude
Distinction in Field
Uchendu, Janetia Lorine *
Distinction in Field
Wesson, Kianna
Summa Cum Laude
Distinction in Field



2026 CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, AND TECHNOLOGY

Bachelor of Science

Biology

Adeniruju, Isaac Akinloluwa *

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Brunson, Triona Elizabeth

Carroll, Christian Lezell *

Craig-Travis, Jessica

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Ealy, Jahda Kesay **

Cum Laude

Gaston, Taylor Danielle

Cum Laude

Greer, Travis

Hall, Alana Ashanti *

Harris, Genesis Sy'Narra *

Herts II, Zelenka Shellyse

Mbulu, Ruth

Cum Laude

Miller, Derelene Dereniqua

Magna Cum Laude

Riser, Jalin **

Scott, Tiryndy Millennia **

Taylor, Christopher E. **

Wesley, Amari Simone

Woodard, Sy'Niya *

Chemistry

Addae Jr., Fredrick Immanuel

Bronson, Christopher X.

Computer Science

Agbugba, Kenna

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Brown, Brandon Quincy

Cartwright, Ashton Egan Paul

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Clay, Devon

Colebrooke, Trent

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Deal, Aidan

Magna Cum Laude

Ezeogu, Sarah Uchechi

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Fernander, Mikea Alexia

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Gbadamosi, Zainab

1st Rank in Class

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Okparaugo, Kingsley

Shobande, Oluwafikunayomi

1st Rank in Class

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Udedibor, Otito Chukwuemeka

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Umoren, Immanuella Emem

1st Rank in Class

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Wogu, Pearl Chizaram

Summa Cum Laude

Distinction in Field

Mathematics

Anyomi, Selasi

Autry, Lauran Naomi

While every effort is made for clearance prior to the printing deadline, final action to ensure an accurate listing of the names of all persons qualified for degrees cannot always be taken before the program goes to print. Therefore, the listing of the name in this program should not be construed as an indication that the person in fact received a degree from Philander Smith University at this Commencement. Conversely, the absence of a student's name from this list does not necessarily mean that the person was not awarded a degree.



DONALD W. REYNOLDS
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KNOWLEDGE IS FREEDOM



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COMMENCEMENT AND REGALIA

COMMENCEMENT

The term “Commencement” derives from a practice in the Medieval University where it was customary for a candidate for an academic degree to present a public lecture or disputation to the faculty and other scholars gathered to hear it. If the disputation was successfully defended and accepted, the candidate was “Admitted” to the degree “with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities thereunto appertaining.” This first public lecture or disputation was originally called an “Inception.” It signified the beginning or “Commencement” of the scholar’s academic career in the degree to which he/she had been admitted. The ceremony surrounding this inception or “graduation” has subsequently come to be called Commencement.

HONOR CORDS

The Honor Cords are used to recognize students’ achievements during commencement, and they identify those students who have the right to wear the cords. At Philander, the green, white & gold cord represents Summa Cum Laude which is with Highest Distinction (3.75 - 4.0 GPA); the gold & white cord represents Magna Cum Laude, which is with High Distinction (3.5 - 3.7499 GPA); the white cord represents Cum Laude which is with Distinction (3.0 – 3.49 GPA); and the old gold cord represents Distinction in Field of Study. Various other colors are used to identify members of the Honors Society, fraternities, sororities, and others.

ACADEMIC REGALIA

The distinctive dress associated with academic processions and convocations dates from the Middle Ages, when long-sleeved, hooded gowns for necessary for warmth in the unheated stone colleges. Most of the scholars were clerics in holy orders, and they wore cloaks to which were attached hoods that could be pulled up to cover their tonsured heads. Over the centuries, much diversity occurred in academic costumes. To bring some order to this diversity in 1894, in the United States, the Intercollegiate Commission met in New York and agreed on a code of academic dress which has become the standard for most colleges and universities. According to this code, both the styling and color of the regalia have significance. The design of the gown indicates the degree. The bachelor’s gown is simple, with full sleeves. The master’s gown is much like the bachelor’s except for the long sleeves, which hang loose. The doctor’s gown is fuller and more elaborate. It has velvet edging and three velvet stripes on the full, gathered sleeves. Usually, the color of the gown is black. Hoods, which are worn over the gowns, are similar for all degrees, although differing slightly in length. The candidates for the Bachelor’s Degree usually do not wear the hood. The hood has a velvet edging, which indicates the area of the degree. The inside or lining of the hood is satin in the colors of the college or university granting the degree. A partial list of the degree colors to be found on the edge of the hood or the trimming on the doctor’s gown is given below. The usual cap, proper for all degrees, is the black mortarboard, although some colleges use the beret to represent the doctorate. Tassels, usually black, are worn over the left front quarter of the cap for a degree holder and on the right for a candidate for a degree. Holders of the doctorate may wear tassels of gold thread. Holders may also wear tassels in the colors of the college or university granting the degree.

Agriculture	Maize	Public Administration	Peacock Blue
Music	Pink	Engineering	Orange
Arts, Letters, Humanities	White	Public Health	Salmon
Medicine	Green	Fine Arts, Architecture	Brown
Business Administration	Drab	Science	Golden Yellow
Oratory Speech	Silver Grey	Forestry	Russet
Dentistry	Lilac	Social Science	Cream
Philosophy	Dark Blue	Journalism	Crimson
Economics	Copper	Social Services	Citron
Physical Education	Sage Green	Law	Purple
Education	Light Blue	Theology/Divinity	Scarlet



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