



Black Student
Success Centre



Second Annual:
**Black Excellence
Graduation Celebration**

Ceremony: 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Reception to Follow

L.R. Wilson Concert Hall

Digital



Program



MMUSUYIDEE : Good Fortune

A Message from the Black Student Success Centre (BSSC)

The Black Student Success Centre would like to thank the Black Graduation Celebration organizing committee, comprised of students, staff and faculty, who under the expert leadership of Faith Ogunkoya, oversaw every detail of today's celebrations. We would also like to thank our student volunteer team along with all the musicians, performers, speakers and vendors who participated in today's celebrations. To our DJ Fresh Moses and Afrolicious restaurant, thank you for keeping our spirits high and providing us with sustenance to continue the celebrations. Thanks also to our campus partners for their continued support, notably the Office of the President, Office of the Registrar, University Advancement, Office of Alumni Engagement, Student Success Centre, Athletics and Recreation, and African-Caribbean Faculty Association of McMaster University.

The Black Graduation Celebration is the culmination of many months hard work. It is the result of a wonderful collective effort that epitomizes BSSC's mission to champion the holistic academic, personal and professional success of Black students at McMaster. It is also an example of *Ubuntu* in action. Because of each of you who gathered today, we are able to celebrate and honour our graduands in community. Final thanks go to our graduands. Thank you for your service and the indelible mark you have left on McMaster. Undoubtedly good fortune awaits each of you. May you continue to use your gifts to uplift yourselves, your families and your communities.

Dr. Clare Warner and Iyobosa Faith Ogunkoya M.Ed.



Dr. Clare Warner, Senior Advisor of
Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism,
Department of Student Affairs



Iyobosa Faith Ogunkoya M.Ed.,
Manager, Black Student Success



A Message from the Black Graduation Celebration Planning Committee

On behalf of the Black Excellence Graduation Celebration Committee, comprised of Black McMaster staff, faculty, and students, we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the graduating Class of 2023. We are immensely proud to have helped to organize the second annual Black Excellence Graduation Celebration to honour and celebrate your achievements. The Black Excellence Graduation Celebration, championed by the Black Student Success Centre team and supported by this committee, stands as a testament to your remarkable achievements. We acknowledge the perseverance, commitment, and hard work you have shown in successfully completing your degree at McMaster University.

As you embark on the next chapter of your lives, your presence and contributions have shaped the legacy of excellence at our institution. We wish you the very best in all your future endeavours, and may MMUSUYIDEE (Good Fortune) follow you on your path to success.

Planning Committee Members

Staff & Faculty

Iyobosa Faith Ogunkoya M.Ed.
Manager, Black Student Success

Jordan Lentinello M.A.
Administrative Assistant,
Black Student Success Centre

Wahi Mohamed
Black Student Coordinator, Equity and Inclusion Office

Alex Montague
Project Coordinator, African-Caribbean Faculty
Association of McMaster (ACFAM)

Jodi- Anne Buckley
Black Recruitment Officer and Career Advisor, Faculty
of Engineering

Nicole Agyei-Odame M.A.
Recruitment & Academic Advisor (International),
Faculty of Social Sciences

Dr. Selina Mudavanhu
Assistant Professor, Communication Studies and
Media Arts, Faculty of Humanities

Renata Hall MSW
Manager, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Programs
Equity and Inclusion Office

Ola Kuforiji M.A.
Black Student Wellness Counsellor , Black Student
Success Centre

Dr. Alpha Abebe
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Humanities

Joan Johnson
Executive Assistant to the Associate Vice-President,
Equity and Inclusion Office

Dr. Nathan Andrews
Associate Professor, Political Science

Sophia Holness
Associate Director, Digital Student Experience,
University Technology Services

Planning Committee Members Contd.

Onyedikachi Mitchell Emmanuel-Kalu
Program Assistant, Global Experience and International, Student Success Centre

Andrea Gyamfi
Coordinator, Undergrad Students (International), Student Success Centre

Students

Marie-Claire Kapesa
Health Science, Co-President, Black Student Association

Malikca Lawrence
Arts & Science, Program Support Assistant, Black Student Success Centre, Co-President, Black Student Association

Toluwalase Dayo-Olaide
Science, Program Support Assistant, Black Student Success Centre

James Esemu-Ezewu
Arts & Science, Marketing and Communications Associate, Black Student Success Centre

Land Acknowledgment

We recognize and acknowledge that students of McMaster University meet and learn on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the "Dish With One Spoon" wampum, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Traditional Drumming

Across the African Diaspora, drums carry a profound cultural and historical significance. They announce significant social and political events, such as ceremonies related to birth, death, and marriage. Drums also play a role in facilitating courtship rituals, announcing the arrival and departure of community leaders, and accompanying religious practices. Today, the Black Graduation Celebration honours this tradition to communicate, mourn, inspire and celebrate.

Established in 2013, Afiwi Groove School attained non-profit status five years after its inception. The organization's objective is to empower, educate, and inspire individuals of all ages through African arts and culture. Afiwi Groove School creates a positive learning environment that encourages personal growth among its students, nurturing a deeper connection to their sense of self and identity. The word "AFIWI" holds a significant meaning, representing community, unity, and connection.



The djembe drum, developed in West Africa during the Malian Empire c. 1200AD

Kente Stole Gifters

Dr. Gary Warner

CM, LLD, Professor Emeritus, Associate LLD, Founder and Managing Partner at
Dean, Faculty of Humanities

Nicholas Brathwaite

Celesta Capital, McMaster B.Sc '82

Dr. Alpha Abebe

Assistant Professor, Faculty of
Humanities

Celeste Licorish

Manager, Educational Initiatives and
Assessment, Access Strategy, Student
Success Centre

Kente Stole Ceremony

Kente cloth is a type of traditional textile originating from the Ewe and Akan peoples of West Africa as far as 1000 B.C.E, and historically associated with the Asante Empire in the late 17th century in what is today Ghana.

Kente cloth is made up of interwoven strips of silk and cotton fabric, which are typically brightly coloured and feature intricate patterns and designs. Kente dress is worn on special occasions and is historically associated with royalty, nobility, wealth, and status.

The kente stole has become an essential part of graduation regalia, particularly in African diasporic communities. The robbing ceremony pays homage to the legacies of those who came before us. Also, the ceremony led by community leaders symbolizes the passing of knowledge and the celebration of graduands' achievements.

Sankofa Stoles is a Black-owned business with the objective of honouring and building connections with Black celebrants in Canada and around the world. The company's focus is on recognizing and celebrating community successes by providing a symbolic representation of cultural expression and achievement.



Each stole is
handwoven on a
loom in Ghana.

Order of Proceedings

Senior Leaders, Black Faculty & Distinguished Alumni Procession

Graduand Procession
Afiwi Groove Drummers

Black National Anthem: Lift Every Voice
Princess Aina-David – B.Eng '26; Jean Anang - Hons. B.A. '24

Land Acknowledgement
Kirsten Plummer B.Com '23

Welcome
Dr. Gary Warner, CM, LLD, Professor Emeritus, Associate Dean, Faculty of Humanities,
Director, Arts & Science, Founding Director, Office of International Affairs,
Director, Canadian University Service Overseas

President Address
Dr. David Farrar, President and Vice Chancellor

Keynote Address
Nicholas Brathwaite, LLD, Founder and Managing Partner at Celesta Capital,
McMaster B.Sc '82

Student Address
Anuoluwa Popoola B.HSc '23 and Toluwalase Dayo-Olaide BSc '23

Kente Stole Ceremony

Conferment of Black Graduation Awards
Dr. Clare Warner, Senior Advisor of Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism
Iyobosa Faith Ogunkoya, Manager, Black Student Success

Dance Performance
Good Fortune Medley

Closing Remarks
Dr. Juliet Daniel, Professor, Associate Dean of Research & External Relations, Faculty of Science
Dr. Bonny Ibhawoh, Senator William McMaster Chair in Global Human Rights,
Vice Provost, International Affairs

Black Graduation Celebration Awards of the 2022 -2023 Session

BSSC Spirit of Resilience Award Zainab Salami	BSSC Legacy Award Yaw Otchere
BSSC Catalyst for Change Award Tegwende Seedu	BSSC Ujasiri Award Lilian Mayombo
BSSC EmpowerHer - Black Girl Magic Award Anuoluwa Popoola	ACFAM Umoja Award The McMaster Association of West Indian Students (MACaws)
BSSC Your Light Shines Award Toluwalase Dayo-Olaide	BSSC Special Recognition - Alumni Award Keenan Lewis Jeppesen
BSSC Kuumba Award Inès Ndzana Siani	Sarah Alizerig

Doctor of Philosophy

Blessing Ojembe
Michael Kalu
Omotola Olasupo

Doctor of Medicine

Kika Otiono

Master of Biomedical Discovery and Commercialization

Brenda Nkonge

Master of Business Administration

Oluwakonyinsola Osinubi
Mahisha Ratnamylvaganam

Master of Health Management

Alicia Ralph

Master of Public Health

Chizoba Oriuwa
Tegwende Seedu

Master of Science in Nursing

Shawn Forbes

Bachelor of Arts

Maab Mahmoud (Political Science)

Bachelor of Engineering

Olaoluwa Adebayo (Chemical Engineering)

Ayodele Ajimoko (Electrical Engineering)

Tioluwalayomi Babayeju (Mechatronics Engineering)

Jenna Harris (Engineering Physics and Biomedical Engineering)

Guy-Jacques Isombe

(Management in Computer Engineering and Management)

Similoluwa Jayeoba

(Engineering Physics)

Charles Lawson-Wokoma

(Chemical Engineering)

Tawana Mphusu

(Management in Computer Engineering and Management)

Edith Tukpeyi

(Materials Engineering)

Bachelor of Health Sciences

Alethea Clarke (Midwifery)

Bachelor of Medical Radiation Sciences

Erika King Lawrence (Radiography)

Bachelor of Science

Alethea Clarke (Life Sciences)

Safia Meskiry (Nursing)

Laura Gordon (Nursing)

Adebisi Ayoola Enitan Ajibola (Nursing)

Katelyn Cecilia Garrow (Nursing)

Emmanuella Asman (Nursing)

Sifa Lwesso (Nursing)

Tsinat Semagn (Nursing)

Joaness Ahumibe (Nursing)

Bachelor of Technology

Sebastian Goto (Manufacturing Engineering Technology)

Devonte Grant (Power and Energy Engineering Technology)

Ayodeji Akinyemi (Power and Energy Engineering Technology)

Honours Bachelor of Applied Science

Temiloluwa Olubode (Applied Psychology in Human Behaviour)

Munira Mohamud (Applied Psychology in Human Behaviour)

Candace Walkes (Applied Psychology in Human Behaviour)

Payton Shank (Applied Psychology in Human Behaviour, Autism & Behavioural Science)

Breanna Liaki (Applied Psychology in Human Behaviour, Autism & Behavioural Science)

Nafeesa Momodu (Human Behaviour)

Tylere Thomas (Human Behaviour)

Sierra Richards (Human Behaviour)

Honours Bachelor of Arts

Tristan Lindo (Communication Studies)

Renee Boney (Communication Studies and Cognitive Science of Language)

Yaw Otchere (Economics)

Erika Takou Yopa (Economics)

Adesola Adedeji (Health & Society)

Jada Carmichael (Health & Society)

Hadassah Annor (Health & Society and Aging & Society)

Amina Mowlid (Health & Society and Political Science)

Delaney Holness (Health & Society Specialization in Mental Health and Addiction)

Mahalia Gilmore (Justice, Political Philosophy & Law)

Akosua Asafu-Adjaye Frimpong (Justice, Political Philosophy & Law)

Lilian Mayombo (Labour Studies)

Lisa St. Louis-Barnett (Political Science)

Agbeke Adesola (Political Science)

Melissa Pinelli (Political Science, Public Law & Judicial Studies)

Honours Bachelor of Arts

Sarah Andoh (Political Science, Public Law & Judicial Studies)

Faderera Sanda (Social Psychology)

Aaliyah Paul (Social Psychology)

Christin Paul (Sociology)

Honours Bachelor of Social Work

Cheryl Adams

Honours Bachelor of Commerce

Oluwatimilehin Aladesua

Bariedora Awi

Joshua Berhane

Amelia Choi

Mallak El Berougy

Biethel Keflu

Kirsten Plummer

Honours Bachelor of Health Sciences

Ahmed Berih (Biochemistry, Biomedical Research)

Mariyam Nebil Mohammed (Health Sciences in Biochemistry)

Brenda Nkonge (Health Sciences in Biomedical Discovery & Commercialization)

Anuoluwa Popoola

Sammah Yahya

Honours Bachelor of Science

Pearl Abiodun-Balogun (Biology)

Rhianna Anglin (Life Sciences)

Kassidy Appiah-Kubi (Kinesiology)

Toluwalase Dayo-Olaide (Biology)

Lilian Dwira (Kinesiology)

Aliza Gilbert (Life Sciences)

Shelda Habyarimana (Kinesiology)

Varun Kitson (Medical and Biological Physics)

Aya Mohamed (Kinesiology)

Alexa Nantsa (Life Sciences)

Ines Ndzana Siani (Kinesiology)

Sehely Rahman (Kinesiology)

Zainab Salami (Life Sciences)

Sahra Siyad (Life Sciences)

Oluwatamilore Sowunmi (Biology)

Honourary Degree Recipient



**Her Excellency Mme. Ellen Johnson
Sirleaf**

**Former President of Liberia, Nobel Laureate, Chair of
the Economic Community of West African States**

Her Excellency Mme. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is a Liberian politician, economist, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Born on October 29, 1938, in Monrovia, Liberia, she spent her formative years in the United States, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Accounting from Madison Business College and a Master of Public Administration degree from Harvard University. Upon returning to Liberia, she worked in various government positions, including serving as the Minister of Finance. She was later appointed as the President of the Liberia Bank for Development and Investment, becoming the first woman to lead a financial institution in Liberia.

In 2005, Mme. Sirleaf made history by becoming the first female elected Head of State in Africa, winning the presidential elections in Liberia. During her two terms in office, she focused on rebuilding the country after years of civil war, promoting gender equality, and combating corruption. In 2011, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, together with Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkol Karman, for their non-violent struggle for women's rights and peace-building in Liberia and Yemen. Mme. Sirleaf's leadership and accomplishments have made her a respected figure in both Africa and the world, and she continues to advocate for social justice and economic development.

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Ganvas
AfiwiGroove Drummers

DJ Fresh Moses
Alador Bereketab
Princess Aina-David
Good Fortune Medley



Sheri Rahman

Owner, Starr Decor, Reimbursement
Specialist, Rare Disease Field at Innomar
Strategies, B.Sc. Kin. '18



Yosra Musa (DJ Fresh Moses)

Operations Consultant, Small Seed
Consulting, Entrepreneur, B.A. '18



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