

# DePauw University



## STUDENT AWARDS CONVOCATION 2023



### Welcome

Dr. Lori S. White, President DePauw University

### Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship

David Crout, Director of Off-Campus Programs

### Rector Scholars

Dr. Michael Seaman, Assistant Professor of Classical Studies

### Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

Dr. Kevin S. Kinney, Professor of Biology

### Nelle Barnhart Award

John Mark Day, Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students

### Randal L. Wilson Memorial Union Board Award

### Kate McQueen Award

Dorian Shager, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs

### Alice G. Ross Senior Award

### NCAC Scholar-Athlete of the Year Award

Stevie Baker-Watson, Associate Vice President for Student Wellness,  
Theodore Katula Director of Athletics and Recreational Sports

### Staff Member of the Year Award

### The DSG Lifetime Achievement Award

James D. O'Keane, Student Body President  
Muhammad Rafeh Jamil, Executive Vice President  
Paige Burgess, Chief of Staff

### Faculty Speaker Award

John Mark Day, Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students

### Ferid Murad Medal

Dr. Dave Berque, Vice President for Academic Affairs

### Walker Cup

Dr. Lori S. White, President DePauw University

**24 APRIL 2023 • KRESGE • GCPA**  
**7:30PM - 8:30PM**



## Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, established in 2001, enables students with financial need to study abroad. Last October, the State Department recognized DePauw for producing 53 Gilman award recipients over the previous 20 years, more than most small institutions in America.

## Rector Scholars

The Rector Scholarship is DePauw University's oldest and preeminent merit academic award. Since its beginning in 1919 over four thousand graduates have earned Rectors, and many are among DePauw's most distinguished and honored alumni. They are the return on how Edward Rector, himself, described his gifts to the University. They were "investments in humanity, in the men and women who are to carry on the work of our country and the world when you and I are gone."

## Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

Since its founding in 1776, Phi Beta Kappa celebrates excellence in the liberal arts and sciences and champions freedom of thought. As America's most prestigious academic honor society, Phi Beta Kappa is uniquely equipped to advocate for the value and benefits of liberal arts and sciences education.

## Nelle Barnhart Award

For the senior who has made outstanding contributions to the curricular life of the student body in support of the academic mission of the University. Given in honor of I. Nelle Barnhart, Associate Dean of Students of DePauw, 1949-1979.

## Randal L. Wilson Memorial Union Board Award

For a junior who has made outstanding contributions to campus life. Established by Margaret Hardgrove Wilson ('41) and her husband Robert in memory of their son, who was president of the Union Board.

## Kate McQueen Award

For a student who has demonstrated a commitment to economic, environmental, social justice, and/or racial justice and has been an activist, trying to create positive changes for the campus, the Greencastle community, and/or the world.

## Alice G. Ross Senior Award

The Alice G. Ross Senior Award is in memory of George A. Ross' mother, a housemother of Kappa Alpha Theta. This is given annually to an outstanding senior woman from Indiana.

## NCAC Scholar-Athlete of the Year Award

The NCAC Scholar-Athlete of the Year is presented to the student athletes, male and female, who have the highest cumulative grade point average after their 7th semester. The student must have used a season of participation in the year in which they graduate to be eligible for the award.

## Staff Member of the Year Award

Selected by members of the Student Government, this award recognizes the significant contributions of a staff member to the life and organizations of students on campus.

## DSG Lifetime Achievement Award

The Lifetime Achievement Award is intended for the individual who has had a significant impact on a large number of individuals and organizations during their time at DePauw University.

## Faculty Speaker Award

Each year the senior class nominates faculty members to be the speaker at the Opening Convocation for the next incoming class of students. From these nominations, DePauw Student Government selected the faculty member that will welcome the new class of the first year students in fall 2023.

## Ferid Murad Medal Finalists

The Ferid Murad Medal recognizes the senior who has had the most significant scholarly and/or artistic achievements during his or her time at DePauw. The award is named after DePauw graduate and Nobel laureate Dr. Ferid Murad, class of 1958. In 1998, Dr. Murad received the Nobel Prize in Medicine for his discovery of the role of nitric oxide in the cardiovascular system, which led to changes in treatment following a heart attack.

**Amerti Guta**, from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is a junior Cellular and Molecular Biology and Biochemistry doublemajor at DePauw University in Greencastle, IN. She was awarded the Truman G. Yuncker Award as an outstanding Biology Student and the Percy Julian Award as a promising Biochemistry student. As an undergraduate researcher, Amerti has completed multiple research projects in microbial ecology, structural immunology, and enzyme kinetics.

During her first year, Amerti joined Dr. Akinwale's lab. Her work focused on assessing the impact of wastewater effluents on the microbial community of the receiving stream. In collaboration with Dr. Akinwale and other bright DePauw students, current alums, Amerti has published this work in *World Journal of Microbiology and Biotechnology*, and the *Journal of Hazardous Materials Advances*. She has presented her work as the sole undergraduate student at the Changing Microbiome symposium in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania. Combining her work in Environmental Microbiology and her career aspiration in biomedical sciences, Amerti is currently preparing her third manuscript on "Real-time Antimicrobial Susceptibility and





Metabolic Characterizations of an Environmental Strain *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia* NEBS15" and will be presenting it at the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) in March 2023. In addition, Amerti was part of Dr. Gurnon and Dr. Cray's lab that looks into *in silico* and *in vitro* characterization of rare genetic disorders. After spending two summers and multiple semesters working in DePauw's research lab, Amerti joined a structural immunology lab at UConn Health to conduct research in Dr. Ruan's lab. She studied host-microbe protein interaction in *Shigella* infection. She presented her work to the biomedical science community at UConn Health, Merck & Co. headquarters and the Annual SigmaXi conference where she received the Best Undergraduate Presentation award in Immunology and Physiology.

As a first-generation college student with a keen interest in mentorship and advocacy, Amerti serves as a Presidential ambassador, a resident assistant, a STEM guide, a civic fellow, and a lab manager assistant at DePauw University. Off-campus, Amerti serves as an executive assistant for EFEMS, a nonprofit organization that helps African women thrive in STEM. As recognition for her work on and off DePauw's campus, Amerti has received numerous awards. Chief among those is the Leading Light Award, Sallie Mae Scholarship, awarded to the overall top women in STEM in the state of Indiana. She has also received the 2022 Outstanding Resident Assistant of the Year award for her leadership and service in DePauw's Housing and Residence Life office, the Men's Hall Scholarship for her contribution to DePauw, and Wylie Condit Science Scholarship for her achievements in the Biology department. Amerti is also a member of various honorary societies, including the Phi Beta Kappa, a national honor society, and Sigma Xi, a research honor society. After graduating from DePauw, Amerti will pursue a Ph.D. program in Biomedical sciences. She has been admitted to and interviewed at multiple prestigious PhD programs, including Vanderbilt, Mayo Clinic, Cincinnati Children's, and UConn Health. She hopes to inspire and mentor underrepresented students in STEM.

**Hieu Tran** is a senior international student from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He pursues a doublemajor in computer science and mathematics. He has been a Dean's List and an Information Technology Associate. He has been exploring various topics in computer science from human-AI interaction to a combination of partial differential equations and neural network systems. Throughout his time at DePauw University, he has been working with Professor Steven Bogaerts in developing and improving machine learning algorithms. During his first and second year, he has been working with Tenzer Technology and Professor Steven Bogaerts in developing machine learning algorithms, which enhances the users' experience with game AI experience. During this time, he also assisted in visualizing income inequality across the U.S. and deploying it as a software package, resulting in the paper "Visualizing Income Distribution in the United States" at Harvard University's National Collegiate Research Conference. In his junior summer, he collaborated with Professor Steven Bogaerts and Professor Brian Howard to develop an "in-the-wild" agent that recommends Spotify songs based on facial expression recognition, which resulted in a co-first-authored paper "Emotion-Aware Music Recommendation" published at the EAAI-23 Conference on Artificial Intelligence. Outside of DePauw, he also worked with Professor Tan Bui and PHO-ICES GROUP (University of Texas Austin, TX) on modeling inverse problems to predict the trajectory of the hurricane using a hybrid method between partial differential equations and neural networks. During his senior year, he has been working with Professor Brian Howard in developing machine learning algorithms to automate proof theorem. After graduating from DePauw University, Hieu will pursue a Ph.D. program in Computer Science. He recently has been admitted to the Computer Science Ph.D. program at Purdue University.

## WALKER CUP FINALISTS

The Walker Cup is awarded each year to the graduating senior who has done the most for DePauw University during his or her college career. The prize was established in 1926 by a gift from Guy Morrison Walker, Class of 1890, a successful businessman and presidential advisor. Traditionally, the Walker Cup recipient speaks at commencement.

**Thomas Brelage**, from Fishers, Indiana, is a double major in Chemistry and Kinesiology and an Environmental Fellow. As a member of both the Men's Cross Country and Track & Field teams, Thomas has represented the Tigers in three consecutive NCAC Cross Country Championships and two Conference Track & Field Championships in the steeplechase. He has served as the team's male representative, Co-director of Community Outreach, and DESPY's Director for the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). Investing himself into DePauw's campus community, Thomas has acted as the Farm Working Group Director for the Sustainability Leadership Program, radio co-host of Whats Up Wednesday for WGRE Radio, and first-year mentor for the First-Year Experience Program. Conducting research alongside his fellow students, Thomas identified learning challenges for introductory chemistry students and produced a library of laboratory tutorial videos to bridge comprehension gaps for new students. Over the past two summers, Thomas enjoyed his time on campus as a farm hand at the Ullem Center Campus Farm and as a First-Year Transition Intern to welcome DePauw's Class of 2026 to campus. Currently, Thomas serves as a Presidential Ambassador, supports campus mentors as a Peer Mentor for the First-Year Experience Program, reviews coffee as a co-host for D3TV's Roys Bean Scene, and manages DePauw's Bike Loan Program for the Sustainability Leadership Program. After graduation, Thomas plans to attend graduate school to further his passion for Chemistry and Sustainability through environmental engineering or natural energy development.

**Edgar Garcia Cuatlatl** is a Rolla M. Malpas Scholar and Presidential Ambassador from Plymouth, IN, majoring in global health and minoring in kinesiology. As an incoming first-year, Edgar participated in the Bob Hershberger Servicio Program, which deepened his understanding of community service while laying the foundation for his future time at DePauw. As an upperclassman, he assisted the program as a student leader. His Civic Fellows involvement demonstrates his commitment to service, having volunteered for the campus farm, College Mentors for Kids, and Student Friend. As president, he oversaw Civic Fellows' annual service projects which included raking leaves for Greencastle residents, collecting donations to purchase holiday gifts, and helping at a day shelter for people experiencing crisis. Additionally, he was a TZ Spanish Enrichment Program coordinator, creating lesson plans to teach Greencastle children the culture and vocabulary of Spanish-speaking countries. As former philanthropy chair for Delta Upsilon, he helped the chapter raise \$1,055 for the Humane Society of Putnam County.

A first-generation student himself, Edgar has shown his passion for acclimating students in various ways: Director of New Member Education for his fraternity, a First-Year Mentor, and a mentor for pre-physical therapy students. Similarly, Edgar is the VP of Recruitment for Future Medical Professionals, which prepares students to pursue a healthcare profession.

This May, Edgar will start the IU Doctor of Physical Therapy program. Fueled by his passion for service, he hopes to provide to the uninsured and underserved with a focus on the Latinx population and children.





**Amerti Guta**, from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is a Cellular and Molecular Biology and Biochemistry double major at DePauw University. She was recently honored with the 2022 Leading Light Award, Sallie Mae Scholarship, which is presented to the overall top women in STEM across the state of Indiana.

Amerti is deeply committed to research and mentoring. During her time at DePauw, she has completed multiple research projects. Notable among her work is a study on the impact of wastewater treatment plants under the mentorship of Dr. Akinwale which is now published in *World Journal of Microbiology and Biotechnology*, and the *Journal of Hazardous Materials Advances*.

Amerti completed a summer internship at UConn Health where she joined Dr. Ruan's structural immunology lab to study host-microbe interaction in *Shigella* infection. She has represented DePauw and shared her research at six different academic conferences including her presentation at Penn State as the only undergraduate student selected for an oral talk, featured in DePauw Magazine Fall 2022 edition.

Amerti's dedication to empowering others through mentorship and advocacy is a clear indication of her commitment to supporting individuals who, like herself, may be first generation college students or students of color in STEM. Serving as a resident assistant and a peer tutor (STEM guide) for three years, Amerti truly enjoyed dedicating her time and talent to tailor her approach to each student. In addition, Amerti serves as a Presidential ambassador, a civic fellow, and a lab manager assistant at DePauw University. A member of the Phi Beta Kappa, a national honor society, and Sigma Xi, a research honor society, Amerti was also among the students selected to share their DePauw story on Amazon Prime's The College Tour series. Off-campus, Amerti serves as an executive assistant for EFeMS, a nonprofit organization that empowers African women in STEM.

Amerti has received numerous awards for her work and leadership, including the 2022 Outstanding Resident Assistant of the Year award, the Men's Hall Scholarship, and the Wylie Condit Science Scholarship & Truman G. Yuncker Award. After graduation, Amerti will pursue a PhD in Biomedical Sciences with a focus on Immunology at the Mayo Clinic.

**JD O'Keane**, from Lake Bluff, Illinois, is a double major in Economics and Political Science within the Management Fellows Honors Program. JD has been a four-year student athlete as a member of the Football team, a member of the Indiana Alpha chapter of Phi Kappa Psi, and is the current Student Body President.

From the moment JD was a first year, his leadership involvement on campus has run wide and deep and had a positive and meaningful impact. His motivation for helping give back to DePauw and the student body can be seen in the many hats he wears. Within DePauw Student Government, JD has served as Vice President of Academic Affairs, Chief of Staff and Executive Vice President. JD is a Management Fellow Ambassador, Admissions Ambassador and serves on Alumni and Admissions panels. JD was also asked to speak at the 2023 Board of Trustees Winter Retreat.

JD was selected to the Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC) and formerly D3TV's Board of Directors. Currently, he is enjoying his fourth year hosting his Sunday radio show on WGRE.

JD's passion for building, supporting and enhancing the DePauw community can be seen in many ways, such as: his initiative to launch Tiger Transit 3 days a week in which he volunteers to drive, currently partnering with Putnam County Hospital to bring back Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) to campus, working with Overdose Lifeline in Indianapolis to bring Fentanyl Testing Strips to campus, being selected by the Fraternal Government Relations Council to represent DePauw at a national conference in Washington D.C. and being selected to represent DePauw on Amazon Prime's, The College Tour.

JD's academic honor society recognitions include: Order of Omega, Pi Sigma Alpha, Omicron Delta Epsilon, Chi Alpha Sigma, Dean's List, Tiger Pride Honor Roll and NCAC Academic Honor Roll.

Upon graduation, JD will be working for BMO within their Commercial Analyst Development Program.



## A TOAST TO DEPAUW

Vivien Bard '17

To Old De-Pauw we toast to-day and

raise our voices high. We'll hon-or thee and

loy-al be and praise thee to the sky. Let

ev'ry son and daugh-ter stand U-ni-ted e'er for

thee, and hail Old Gold through-out the land; here's

to you, Old De-Pauw.