



**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON**

*Spring 2025 Commencement*

**GRADUATE COLLEGE  
OF SOCIAL WORK**

*Wednesday, May 7, 2025*

*Fertitta Center*







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### Message from the President

Dear University of Houston Graduates,

Congratulations on achieving this remarkable achievement. Today's graduation marks the start of a bright new beginning. Your longtime dream becomes a reality, and I join your family and friends in celebrating this milestone with you.

As you reflect on this moment, take pride in knowing it was your hard work, intellect, perseverance and belief in yourself that got you here. Equally important was the unwavering support of those around you. These values and connections have shaped who you are today and will propel you forward in your professional journey.

As you move ahead, remember the power of paying it forward. Be a mentor to someone else who dreams of achieving what you have. Moreover, remember to express gratitude to your professors, advisors, family and friends who supported you along the way.

The Tier One education you've received at UH has provided you with the tools to thrive. This is the home of nationally top-ranked academic programs, world-renowned faculty, an NCAA Final Four basketball team, cutting-edge research and industry leaders. I have no doubt that you will join the ranks of the many successful alumni who have come before you.

Congratulations, Coogs! The world is yours.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Renu Khator'.

Renu Khator  
*President, University of Houston*







### Message from the Provost

Dear Spring Graduates,

You've traveled a long road to reach this moment, but here you are! Congratulations on earning a degree from the University of Houston.

Whether you're the first in your family to graduate from college or perhaps a second-generation Cougar, today's ceremony marks a significant moment in your lives. It's also special for the University of Houston as your success has been our priority since you first stepped foot on campus.

Now, you embark on new journeys. Some of you may be entering the workforce. Others may be headed to graduate school. No matter your destination, please remember those who helped you get to this point.

Stay in touch with peers, professors and staff members and remind them that their guidance supported your academic journeys. Also, thank your spouses, siblings, parents, grandparents and others in attendance today for their daily inspiration.

Of course, be sure to truly recognize the one person responsible for today's celebration—you! You balanced classes, work, family and other obligations. It wasn't easy, but you did it. Now, you are poised to reap the rewards of a degree from UH.

Although you are leaving this wonderful campus, you will remain a member of our University family. You now carry the proud tradition of past UH graduates and will represent our institution in your professional endeavors. Be proud of your time here, and let others know that you are now and forever a Cougar.

Once again, congratulations!

Sincerely,

Diane Z. Chase

*Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, University of Houston*

University of Houston System

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University of Houston

PRESIDENT

Renu Khator

PRESIDENT’S CABINET

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Teri Elkins Longacre  
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GLOBAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

Pradeep Sharma  
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Dean  
Humana Endowed Dean's Chair in Optometry  
COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

Cynthia Warrick  
Interim Dean  
GRADUATE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

Dan E. Wells  
Dean  
Distinguished Professor of Science  
COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS

University of Houston History



The University of Houston was established as the Houston Junior College in 1927. As the college grew, it prospered and officially became the four-year University of Houston in 1934. Two years later, the college attained land for a permanent campus, and in 1939 it constructed its first building, the Roy G. Cullen Building. The University became a state institution in 1963.

The University includes 14 academic colleges, one school, and the multidisciplinary Honors College that teach a wide array of subjects – from math, arts and engineering to law, pharmacy and business. What started as a campus with a single building has grown into a world-class university, offering 285 undergraduate and graduate programs to more than 47,000 students annually.

UH is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university, and its public service and community activities, such as cultural offerings, clinical services, policy studies and small business initiatives, serve a diverse metropolitan population. Likewise, the resources of the Gulf Coast Region complement and enrich the University’s academic programs, providing students with professional expertise, practical experience and career opportunities.

In keeping with the University’s commitment to excellence, UH raised the benchmark of academic achievement when Phi Beta Kappa, the nation’s oldest and most prestigious academic honor society, awarded UH the approval to start a chapter. This designation welcomed UH to an elite group of the nation’s most esteemed colleges and universities.

## Commencement Traditions

Academic costumes of today have a history of nearly eight centuries. In medieval Europe, all townspeople wore long flowing robes and gowns. The materials and colors were governed by royal decree. Gradually, distinctive gowns were developed for the various professions, trades and guilds. Scholars wore robes and hoods to protect their shaved heads. Later, skullcaps were worn on the head, and the hoods became a cape that could be pulled over the head during unpleasant weather.

As additional universities were founded, distinctive forms of the gown and hood were adapted by their faculties for bachelor's (apprentices of the arts), master's (teachers) and doctoral (teachers who had completed postgraduate studies). When caps and hats came into fashion in the 15th century, the hoods became ornamental, draped over the shoulders and down the back.

The academic hat was first worn as a symbol of the master's degree and existed in various forms. The mortarboard style comes to us from Oxford University. When academic costumes came to America in 1754, styles were quite varied. In Europe, they still are; however, in our country, usage has been standardized by the Intercollegiate Code of Academic Costume.

### GERALD D. HINES COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Bachelor's Degree	Tassel: Violet
Master's Degree	Hood: Violet Tassel: Black

### KATHRINE G. MCGOVERN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Bachelor's Degree	Tassel: Brown
Master's Degree	Hood: Brown Hood (Music): Pink Tassel: Black
Doctoral Degree	Hood: Pink Tassel: Red

### C. T. BAUER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Bachelor's Degree	Tassel: Dark Blue
Master's Degree	Hood: Drab Tassel: Black
Doctoral Degree	Hood: Dark Blue Tassel: Red

### COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Bachelor's Degree	Tassel: Light Blue
Master's Degree	Hood: Light Blue Tassel: Black
Doctoral Degree	Hood (Ed.D.): Light Blue Hood (Ph.D.): Dark Blue Tassel: Red

### CULLEN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Bachelor's Degree	Tassel: Orange
Master's Degree	Hood: Orange Tassel: Black
Doctoral Degree	Hood: Dark Blue Tassel: Red

### CONRAD N. HILTON COLLEGE OF GLOBAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP

Bachelor's Degree	Tassel: Navy
Master's Degree	Hood: Navy, Red and White Tassel: Black
Doctoral Degree	Hood: Dark Blue Tassel: Red

UH LAW CENTER

Master’s Degree	Hood: Purple Tassel: Black
Doctoral Degree	Hood: Purple Tassel: Red

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Bachelor’s Degree	Tassel: Citron
Master’s Degree	Hood: Citron Tassel: Black
Doctoral Degree	Hood: Dark Blue Tassel: Red

TILMAN J. FERTITTA FAMILY  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Doctor of Medicine Degree	Hood: Kelly Green Tassel: Red
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COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES  
AND MATHEMATICS

Bachelor’s Degree	Tassel: Golden Yellow
Master’s Degree	Hood: Golden Yellow Tassel: Black
Doctoral Degree	Hood: Dark Blue Tassel: Red

ANDY AND BARBARA GESSNER  
COLLEGE OF NURSING

Bachelor’s Degree	Tassel: Apricot
Master’s Degree	Hood: Apricot Tassel: Black
Doctoral Degree	Hood: Apricot Tassel: Red

COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

Master’s Degree	Hood: Gold Tassel: Black
Doctor of Philosophy Degree	Hood: Royal Blue Tassel: Red
Doctor of Optometry Degree	Hood: Seafoam Green Tassel: Red

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY

Bachelor’s Degree	Tassel: Olive
Master’s Degree	Hood: Olive Tassel: Black
Doctor of Philosophy Degree	Hood: Royal Blue Tassel: Red
Doctor of Pharmacy Degree	Hood: Olive Tassel: Red

GRADUATE COLLEGE  
OF SOCIAL WORK

Master’s Degree	Hood: Citron Tassel: Black
Doctoral Degree	Hood: Citron Tassel: Red

HOBBY SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Bachelor’s Degree	Tassel: Peacock Blue
Master’s Degree	Hood: Peacock Blue Tassel: Black

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

Bachelor’s Degree	Tassel: White
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## Ceremonial Symbols



### THE SEAL

Throughout history, seals have been used to authenticate official documents. The University of Houston and UH System seals both bear the Official Seal of Arms of General Sam Houston, as handed down to him from his noble ancestors. It includes the escutcheon in the center of the seal — consisting of checkered chevrons denoting nobility — and three martlets, gentle lowland birds that symbolize peace and deliverance. A winged hourglass is placed above the shield. Surmounting this is the motto “In Tempore,” meaning “In Time.” The greyhounds indicate speed of giving aid. The UH seal was first adopted in 1938 as the present campus was established. Although the look of the seal has evolved over the years, the first version was etched into the floor of the Roy G. Cullen Building.



### UNIVERSITY MACE

The University Mace, which is carried in academic processions, is a staff symbolizing the University’s authority and unity. The tradition of the academic mace began in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century when two ancient instruments, the royal scepter and the battle mace, were combined to form a university president’s symbol of authority.

### THE ALMA MATER

All hail to thee,  
Our Houston University.  
Our hearts fill with gladness  
When we think of thee.  
We’ll always adore thee  
Dear old varsity.  
And to thy memory cherished,  
True we’ll ever be.

*Words and music by Harmony Class of 1942*



## Honorary Degree

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### NATHAN FOWLER, M.D.

Dr. Nathan Fowler, a distinguished alumnus, is considered one of the world’s foremost experts in drug development for blood cancers. As chief medical officer for BostonGene, Fowler provides strategic direction to the biomedical software company, empowering it to advance precision medicine therapies for cancer patients. The award-winning company uses AI-powered solutions to provide clinicians with actionable insights, support personalized therapy decisions, expedite drug development and improve patient outcomes.

Prior to joining BostonGene, Fowler was a professor of medicine and director of the clinical investigational and translational research program in the Lymphoma and Myeloma department at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. At MD Anderson, Fowler focused on developing groundbreaking new therapies for cancer patients, which led to FDA approval of several novel therapeutic agents in lymphoma. In addition, he led the development of one of the first combination immunotherapy regimens for untreated lymphomas and is the primary investigator for the ongoing international phase III study with the combination.

A profound researcher, Fowler has published over 175 articles in peer-reviewed journals, numerous textbooks on innovative approaches to cancer therapy and is a sought-after speaker for high-profile conferences. He graduated cum laude from the University of Houston with a bachelor’s degree in biology and a minor in Spanish in 1996, earned his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston in 2001, where he also completed his residency, and received fellowship training in hematology/oncology at both Georgetown University Hospital and MD Anderson.

Most impressive is Fowler’s rich history of service and community engagement. As a student at UH, he volunteered to teach officers Spanish at the Houston Police Department. His fluency in Spanish — supported by his undergraduate minor — has become a vital asset in his medical practice, allowing him to communicate directly with Spanish-speaking patients, enabling more personal, effective care. Prior to his work in medicine, he served in the U.S. Army as a nuclear, biological and chemical defense specialist. Moreover, Fowler is the founder and president of the Halo House Foundation, a Houston-based nonprofit organization providing affordable housing to blood cancer patients receiving medical treatment. His nonprofit — which charges patients only \$20 per night for fully furnished apartments — has provided over 9,000 days of housing to hundreds of families.

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The Doctor of Humane Letters degrees, honoris causa, given for exemplary service to the University of Houston or society at large, is the highest honor UH can bestow.



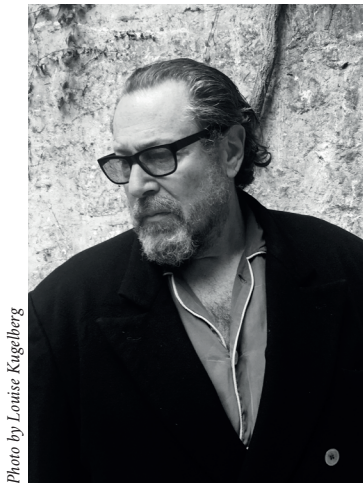


Photo by Louise Kugelberg

## Honorary Degree

### JULIAN SCHNABEL

A prolific and groundbreaking artist, Julian Schnabel is a world-renowned painter whose multidisciplinary work spans sculpture, architecture, furniture and film. Widely regarded as one of the most influential American artists of the last 40 years, Schnabel rose to prominence as a leading figure in the neo-Expressionist movement in the 1980s. He later became a celebrated filmmaker and continues to excel in both fields today.

An accomplished alumnus of the University of Houston, Schnabel earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1973. He later became the first UH graduate to be honored with a solo exhibition at the University’s Blaffer Art Museum.

His first major exhibition was a group of paintings at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, in 1976. By the late 1970s, he was exhibiting at some of New York’s most prestigious galleries, including Mary Boone and the legendary Leo Castelli Gallery. The strength of Schnabel’s work lay in his use of preexisting materials not traditionally used in art making, varied painting surfaces and inventive modes of construction — breaking artistic norms of the time. His unorthodox approach helped revive painting in the United States and beyond during a period largely characterized by conceptual art and minimalism.

In the 1990s, Schnabel expanded into filmmaking, directing and writing “Basquiat” — a critically acclaimed film about the famed artist Jean-Michel Basquiat and New York’s 1980s art scene. To date, he has directed six major films, including the acclaimed “Before Night Falls”, which earned Javier Bardem an Academy Award nomination for his breakout role. His 2007 film “The Diving Bell and the Butterfly” was nominated for four Academy Awards, including Best Director, and earned Schnabel the Best Director Award at the Cannes Film Festival.

Schnabel’s paintings are housed in some of the most prestigious museums in the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Reina Sofia in Madrid; the Tate Modern in London; and the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris. A true visionary, Schnabel transformed the language of painting and paved the way for new generations of artists.

The Doctor of Humane Letters degrees, honoris causa, given for exemplary service to the University of Houston or society at large, is the highest honor UH can bestow.



## President’s Medallion

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### CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, established in 1944 by hotel magnate and philanthropist Conrad N. Hilton, has long championed initiatives that alleviate human suffering and foster global goodwill. Hilton’s profound belief in the transformative power of hospitality led to a significant milestone in 1969 when he donated \$1.5 million to the University of Houston to establish the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management — the first hospitality school in Texas. This foundational gift laid the groundwork for what has

evolved into the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership, a premier institution in hospitality education.

Over the decades, the Hilton Foundation’s unwavering support has been instrumental in the college’s growth and success. The foundation has contributed substantially to the college by funding critical infrastructure, innovative programs, scholarships and strategic initiatives. Notably, in 2021, amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the foundation bestowed a \$10 million unrestricted endowment to aid the college in navigating the crisis and continuing its mission of cultivating future hospitality leaders.

The endowment has provided critical operational and student support, including student scholarships, research funding, professional development training, library materials, equipment acquisition, staff and clerical support, and other key areas that enrich and enhance the college.

The foundation’s commitment extends beyond financial contributions. It also provides strategic guidance to grow the world’s only hospitality program where students work and take classes in an internationally branded, full-service Hilton hotel, which is also operated by the college. In addition, the Hilton company has hired thousands of Hilton College graduates who work in Hilton hotels around the world. Their enduring support has helped students — many of whom are the first in their family to attend college — become leaders in the hospitality industry.

Today, the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership is revered globally as one of the best in hospitality education and research thanks to the enduring support of the Hilton Foundation. Since its founding, the foundation has awarded more than \$3.6 billion in grants, bringing hope, healing and transformative change to thousands worldwide. A profoundly benevolent organization, each year the Hilton Foundation awards a multimillion-dollar prize to a nonprofit leading effort to alleviate human suffering — the world’s largest annual humanitarian award.

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The President’s Medallion is awarded at the sole discretion of the President to individuals and organizations that have distinguished themselves by their support of the University of Houston and the community.



# Hewlett Packard Enterprise

## President’s Medallion

### HEWLETT PACKARD ENTERPRISE

Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) is a Fortune 100, global edge-to-cloud company advancing the way people live and work.

Headquartered in the Greater Houston region, HPE helps organizations connect, protect, analyze and act on data and applications, to turn insights into meaningful outcomes to thrive in today’s complex world.

Named one of the World’s Most Ethical Companies by Ethisphere, HPE is dedicated to offering IT solutions that help their customers and partners achieve their social impact commitments. In 2018, HPE made a transformative \$10 million gift to the University of Houston’s Data Science Institute as part of a game-changing collaboration to increase innovation. The gift also funded a scholarship endowment and high-performing computing equipment to enhance data science research activities across all UH colleges. In addition, funding supports education programs for K-12 students, as well as UH students, faculty and staff.

In honor of their gift and extensive contributions, the institute was renamed the Hewlett Packard Enterprise Data Science Institute, which has become a central hub for data science education and interdisciplinary research at UH. The institute has expanded educational opportunities by offering micro-credentials and certificate programs in data analytics, artificial intelligence, high-performance computing and related fields, that are critical in today’s industries. Students benefit from hands-on experiences, industry workshops and mentorship from HPE professionals who serve as lecturers and collaborators on real-world projects. This integration of academic and industry expertise ensures that graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of a data-driven workforce.

Furthermore, the institute actively engages with the broader community by developing programs for middle and high school students, aiming to strengthen the STEM pipeline through project-based learning initiatives. These efforts help build a diverse and skilled workforce equipped to tackle future technological challenges.

Moreover, the partnership has enhanced UH’s capacity to deploy data science tools to address major societal challenges in the health care, energy and smart materials sectors, among others. The enhanced computational power has enabled researchers to conduct advanced analyses and simulations that have transformed disaster response, advanced breast cancer detection and improved the diagnosis of lupus-related kidney disease.

By fostering education, research and community engagement, the partnership has positioned UH as a leader in data science and innovation, benefiting the University, Greater Houston, Texas and beyond.

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Graduate College of Social Work  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

**Message from the Interim Dean:**

Congratulations on your graduation today from the Graduate College of Social Work.

At today's commencement ceremony, we celebrate your hard work, dedication, and commitment. We honor your many accomplishments as Graduate College of Social Work students and acknowledge the support of your family, significant others, friends, and classmates who have helped you during your educational journey. We also recognize the outstanding GCSW faculty and staff whose expertise, encouragement, and support have contributed to your success.

This commencement ceremony marks the beginning of your career addressing some of the most pressing social issues facing our communities. You possess unique skills and knowledge that have prepared you to advocate for and serve those in need.

I, along with the faculty and staff of the Graduate College of Social Work, wish you every success in the coming years and we look forward to your continued involvement with our College and with our Graduate College of Social Work Alumni Association. Today, on your graduation, we honor you and wish you a successful and rewarding social work career.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Cynthia Warrick'.

Cynthia Warrick, Ph.D.  
*Interim Dean*

University of Houston  
Graduate College of Social Work

Commencement Ceremony  
Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 7:00 p.m.  
Fertitta Center

PROCESSIONAL	Moores School of Music Candidates for Graduation Platform Party
CALL TO ORDER	Chiara Acquati <i>Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development</i>
PRESENTATION OF COLORS	Houston Battalion ROTC Color Guard
NATIONAL ANTHEM	Moores School of Music
WELCOME   INTRODUCTION	Cynthia Warrick <i>Interim Dean</i>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND AWARDS	Ginger Lucas <i>Associate Dean for Academic Affairs</i>
SPIRIT OF SOCIAL WORK AWARD, NON-ALUMNUS AWARD	Interim Dean Warrick, <i>presenter</i> The Honorable Garnet F. Coleman, <i>recipient</i>
INTRODUCTION OF COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER	Interim Dean Warrick
COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS	The Honorable Erica Lee Carter <i>Former Congresswoman for the 18<sup>th</sup> district</i>
PRESENTATION OF PH.D. DEGREE CANDIDATES	Quenette Walton <i>Associate Dean for Doctoral Education</i>
HOODING OF PH.D. CANDIDATES	Dissertation Advisors
PRESENTATION OF M.S.W. DEGREE CANDIDATES	Associate Dean Lucas
CANDIDATE NAMES READ BY	Steven Parks <i>Lecturing Faculty</i>
HOODING OF M.S.W. CANDIDATES	Assistant Professor Jessica Bagneris Clinical Associate Professor Donna Amtsberg
CONFERRAL OF DEGREES	Interim Dean Warrick
CLOSING REMARKS	Interim Dean Warrick
ALMA MATER	Moores School of Music
RECESSIONAL	Moores School of Music



**GCSW Spirit of Social Work Award**  
**UH Alumni Association Foundation Non-UH Alumnus Award**

**THE HONORABLE GARNET F. COLEMAN**  
**Texas House of Representatives**

A State Representative for District 147 in the Texas House from 1991-2022, Representative Garnet F. Coleman has been a leader in the areas of health care, economic development, criminal justice, and education. During his

service, he was the Senior ranking member of the Public Health Committee as well as the Chairman of the County Affairs Committee.

Representative Coleman has been deeply committed to expanding access to health care for all Texans including serving as a member of President Obama’s State Legislators for Health Reform, a working group of 32 state legislators dedicated to health reform in their communities.

His most significant legislative accomplishments include joint authoring legislation that simplified access to children’s Medicaid for more than 600,000 children in Texas who were not enrolled because of bureaucratic barriers. He helped secure an increase of \$161.5 million for at-risk childcare services and joint authored legislation that created the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in Texas, which makes low-cost health insurance available to more than 400,000 children from working families. Rep. Coleman also passed the Sandra Bland Act which included de-escalation training for officers, jail diversion, jail safety, improved data collection, and improvements to mental healthcare.

On two occasions, Representative Coleman was named to the Texas Monthly Ten Best Legislators List and in 2005 he received the Eli Lilly Reintegration Award for his efforts to increase services and decrease the stigma associated with mental illness. He has also been awarded the American Psychiatric Association Jacob R. Javits Public Service Award.

Representative Coleman was Chair of the Legislative Study Group, a non-partisan house caucus dedicated to the development of sound public policy, from 2003-2022. In addition, he has the honor of being a past chairman of the Texas Legislative Black Caucus.

Representative Coleman authored and passed legislation that created the Greater Southeast Management District, the Downtown Management District, and the Fourth Ward and East Montrose Improvement Districts. Rep. Coleman also joint-authored legislation during the 2017 legislative session which helped increase affordable housing units in communities of color.

Representative Coleman remains active in the Houston community. He serves on the advisory board of the Houston Children’s Museum and the Ensemble Theater. In 1991, Rep. Coleman founded S.M.A.R.T. Kids, a youth development program that provides much-needed tutoring for inner-city students. Raised in Houston, Rep. Coleman attended Howard University in Washington, D.C., and graduated from the University of St. Thomas cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in 1990. He also completed the prestigious Harvard University Senior Executive Program for State and Local Government. Rep. Coleman and his wife, Angelique, reside in Houston’s University Oaks neighborhood. They have two children, Austin and Evan.





### Commencement Speaker

#### THE HONORABLE ERICA LEE CARTER

FORMER CONGRESSWOMAN ERICA LEE CARTER is a dedicated advocate for children and community empowerment, inspired by her late mother, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. With extensive experience across federal, state, and local government, as well as the non-profit sector, Congresswoman Lee Carter has consistently focused on effecting positive

change through impactful policy-making.

From 2013 to 2019, she served as an elected Trustee for the Harris County Department of Education. Since 2020, Congresswoman Lee Carter has led initiatives on economic equity, voting rights, and budget management for Commissioner Rodney Ellis's Policy Division in Harris County Precinct One. Notably, she spearheaded the County's inaugural funding commitment to afterschool programming through County Connections, which saw its funding doubled in summer 2022. She also played a pivotal role in developing the resolution that established the CROWN Act as a countywide employee policy in March 2022. Most recently, the Congresswoman contributed to the design of an \$18 million Revolving Loan Program to support minority- and women-owned business enterprises (M/WBEs) which launched in September 2024.

Congresswoman Lee Carter began her career as a first-grade teacher in the Houston Independent School District. After earning her Master's degree, she served as a Budget Analyst for the Governor of New York, focusing on policies to enhance equity in education statewide. Her career further expanded in the Governor's federal advocacy office, where she addressed federal tax policy. In Texas, she was instrumental in expanding the Nurse-Family Partnership through state funding and successful legislative advocacy.

A proud graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University's Terry Sanford School of Public Policy, the Congresswoman holds a Master's of Public Policy degree. She resides in the Greater Third Ward Houston area with her husband, Dr. Roy L. Carter, Jr., and their wonderful twins.

After the passing of her mother, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, in July 2024, the Congresswoman was elected to serve Texas's 18<sup>th</sup> Congressional District in a special election. She assumed office on November 12, 2024, becoming the first daughter to immediately succeed a mother in the United States Congress. She served until January 3, 2025, completing her mother's term in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. During her tenure, the Congresswoman was sworn into the Congressional Black Caucus and became the 95<sup>th</sup> member of the Democratic Women's Caucus, voted on 61 bills including the trillion dollar budget, hosted a community federal job fair, co-lead legislation to combat human trafficking in school zones, and secured extended federal deadlines and resources to address environmental justice issues in Houston's Fifth Ward.

Congresswoman Erica Lee Carter is grateful to her husband Roy, 2 children, father, Dr. Elwyn Lee and brother Jason for their support.



Fall 2024 – Graduates

MASTER OF  
SOCIAL WORK

Rebeca Edith Amaya  
Tanisha L.E. Belvin  
Concepcion Raquel Camarillo

Mallika Choudhury  
Jennifer Blair Coffin  
Lexi Denbow  
Brian Michael Dusablon  
Ava Renee Garrison

Gabriel Grady  
Sarah Elizabeth Martinez  
Nancy L. Martinez Guzman  
Tristen Chase Seagull  
Ana Maria Strawn

Spring 2025 – Candidates for Graduation

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

John Edward Bickel  
Mentalization Model of Resiliency for  
Youth Affected by Intimate Partner  
Violence  
COMMITTEE CHAIR: Dr. Robin Gearing

Holly Davies  
The Effect of Flooding on Mental  
Health: An Analysis of Subgroup  
Features Utilizing Multigroup  
Analysis  
COMMITTEE CHAIR: Dr. Susan Robbins

Elena Ionescu  
Dementia-Friendly Communities  
and Business Engagement:  
Navigating Stigma, Building Inclusive  
Environments, and Advancing Social  
Work Interventions for Older Adults  
with Dementia  
COMMITTEE CHAIR: Dr. Monit Cheung

MASTER OF  
SOCIAL WORK

Maristel Cedillo Aguilar  
Berenisia Aguilera  
Allison Akard  
Ayo Akerele  
Joi Nikole Armstead  
Rachel Leigh Babb  
Carolina Nathalia Ball  
Hannah Barker  
Anna Bean  
Tara Beck  
Emily R. F. Beebe  
David Beltran  
Lauren E. Bigelow  
Patricia Lisbeth Blanco  
Leah Charlotte Blankenship  
Ana Maria Bohorquez Salinas  
Daryal A. Bond  
Claire Michelle Brown  
Tasia Brown  
Ryan Paul Bruce

Jaclyn Elise Burgdorf  
Giselle Locadia Burley  
Temitope Zainab Busari  
Ina Darlene Cannon  
Madeline Elaine Carruba  
Amber Lee Castillo  
Douglas W. Cathey  
LaKeshia Lynette Charles  
Lisa Y. Chatman  
Aproteem Choudhury  
Asif Chowdhury  
Jose Leonel Cisneros  
Ivy Ivie Cocuzzi  
Justin Collier  
Cordelia Collins  
Timothy Connolly  
Carolyn Cooke  
Jennifer Correa  
Jazmin Patricia Cuellar-Robles  
Penny Davila  
Alirma Khadijah Davis  
Michelle Anne Reyes De Belen  
Faustino De La Cruz, Jr.  
Hannah M. Drury  
Leighton Eber  
Jami Eckols-Leonard  
Yuritzi Elizondo-Zamora  
Andrea Mariela Escoto  
Bryan D. Evans  
Oluwadamilola Opeyemi Ezekiel  
Brooke Ann Fisher  
Abrianna S. Fletcher  
Ismael Francisco Flores Guzman III  
Victoria Marie Frutos  
Victor Antonio Galvez  
Iris Arabella Garcia  
James Garcia-Prats  
Gil Garza  
Valeria Alejandra Garza  
Jessica Ann Goede  
Tracy A. Gordon

Areli C. Gonzalez Chavez  
Andrea Nohemy Gonzalez Rojas  
Chiffon Janell Goynes  
Jessica Lynna Gregory  
Raylon Garnell Haley  
Andi Hamilton  
David Xavier Hamm, Jr.  
Torey Handy-Copper  
Ashley Chauntele-Michelle Hardy  
Kennisha Harris  
William Henderson  
Valerie Rae Hernandez  
Molly Mae Hinkel  
Jessica Sproull Howell  
Lauren Elizabeth Huang  
Miranda Hurtado-Ramos  
Yolanda Ibarra  
Masoumeh Jalali Javaran  
Sami Jarbough  
Luryn John-Miller  
Alia Joi Jones  
Quaniece Jones  
Ta'Shay Shovonne Jones  
Madalyn Angela Kaldenberg  
Breonna Kerley  
Aerial Whitney Kerr  
Seongwook Kim  
Ingrid Kocjan  
Teandra D. Lauderdale  
Yolanda Diane Lawson  
Ruby Soo Lee  
Tyler G. Lemmons  
Bethany Lenhart  
Grace Elizabeth Lynch  
Mónica Pérez Martínez  
Chris Michael McDonald  
William Kofi McNulty  
Victoria Grace Means  
Evelyn E. Mejia  
Alexandra Elizabeth Merrell  
Gregory Neil Metcalf

Commencement Ceremony

Brian J. Million  
Megan L. Mistic  
Yadira Molina  
Claudia H. Montoya Salamanca  
Ida Muñoz  
Cassandra Elizabeth Najera  
Sally Nguyen  
Uwaila Oghosasere Okundaye  
Olga Elvira Ordonez  
William Erick Orozco  
Natalia Palomino  
Sadaf Patel  
Sara Noemi Perez  
Brittany Leigh Perez-Williams  
Christy Phạm  
Mary Pless  
Uriah Powell  
Leanne Marie Dawn Prendergast  
Sofia Jasmin Price  
Janay Prince  
Jennifer Rangel  
Meghan Reid  
Olivia Reanna Reid  
Cecilia Marisa Reynolds  
Camelia L. Rezgui  
Daniel Riojas  
Anika Renee Rodriguez

Noe Louis Rodriguez, Jr.  
Melissa Roman Salamanca  
Sarah Elizabeth Rommel  
Jaianna Na’lani Nicole Rubalcava  
Natalie Grace Saenz  
Akane Saitoh  
Lorenzo Anthony Salinas  
Christina L. Sanders  
Mink Sandhu  
Rachel Scharfman  
Jennifer Schirmer  
Suzy Seep  
Bobbie L. Sessions  
Keith Shoemaker  
Heather M Sloan  
Lauren Grace Snodgrass  
Moya Anne Somerset  
Jennifer Soto  
Erin Ward Stanley  
Raechel Stucky  
Allison Taylor Sullivan  
Lindsay J.H. Sumrow  
Marsha Gwen Suttle  
Sahnobiah Louise Dior Swaso  
Christina Maria Tahtouh  
Annsley Kay Tarver  
Don’Nisha Viona Tate

Errol Aaron Taylor  
Ashley Lauren Thiel  
Abigail Marie Timmins  
Taylor Alice Tolson  
Drew Tonjes  
Isamar Trejo  
Heidi Marie Troche  
Rebecca Eileen Turner  
Fiama Villagrana-Ocasio  
Felicia Mae Wagner  
Janet Wagner Torres  
Martheline Wallace  
Lizeth Walters  
Hannah Corrine Walton  
Johnnie Clayton Ware  
Amy S. Watson  
Nicole Laura Simone Weary  
Marshala M. Wilkins  
Jessica Helen Bennett Williams  
Alexis Raquelle Wilson  
Irma E. Wilson  
Deborah Meryl Wotring  
Jazlyn Lakalia Nicole Young  
Jonathan Zamudio Gutierrez  
Sarahi Zaragoza Cardenas

Summer 2025 – Candidates for Graduation

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Alberto Cabrera  
Exploring Mental Health Stigma  
Associated with Obsessive-  
Compulsive Disorder Subtypes in  
Latino Communities in the United  
States  
**COMMITTEE CHAIR:** Dr. Robin Gearing

Alexandra N. Hood  
Promoting Better Outcomes for Black  
Girls with Systems-Involvement  
and Police Contact through Positive  
Childhood Experiences  
**COMMITTEE CHAIR:**  
Dr. Quenette L. Walton

Limor Luss Smith  
Self-stigma in emerging adults with  
serious mental illness: Development,  
resilience, and mental health outcomes  
**COMMITTEE CHAIR:** Dr. Robin Gearing

MASTER OF  
SOCIAL WORK

Janet O. Adebayo  
Emily Janet Alfaro  
Yesenia Elizabeth Alvarenga  
Zainab Arif  
Kayla Sharde Armstrong  
DeJa DeJung Austell  
Candy Itzel Avila Pascual  
Angela G. Ayala Leon  
Christine B. Ballard  
Jorge Armando Barron  
Valerie Renee Beltran  
Ardrienne S. Bradberry  
Angel Nicole Bray-Chmielowiec  
Meaira Bryant  
Lillie Faye Caballero  
Caitlin Callan  
Sandra Tayde Camarillo  
Emely Elizabeth Cardenas  
Pablo Leroy Cardoza

Sydni Elyse Charbonnet  
Madelyn Marie Cohn  
Timothy Connolly  
Evelyn Elizabeth Cruz  
T’Ziah Money Denise Davis  
Ashley Ellese Evans  
Alexandria Nicole Flores  
Cynthia Stephanie Galeano  
Michael Garcia  
Vanessa Garcia  
Trina M. Gonzaga  
Alyssa Morgan Gonzales  
Alejandra Gonzalez  
Taeiah Graves  
Dejuanna Renee Greenhouse  
Ashley Chauntele-Michelle Hardy  
Jala Ann Ivory  
Loren Jones  
Emily Jung  
Autumn Skye Lauener  
Alma Lopez  
Lorena Elizabeth Lopez

University of Houston  
Graduate College of Social Work  
Commencement Ceremony

Nancy L. Martinez Guzman	Paola Rojas Lara	Dustin August Shane Tillman
Sydney Rose Medina	Josephine Salazar	Daniel Varela
Kathryn Ruth Melton	Sophia Rose Sanchez	Marleny Guadalupe Vega
Kwi Cha Myers II	Brittne Marie Sinclair	Erika Villa
Lourdes Ocasio	Grace'Lyn Semaj Stephan Small	Katherine Francis Volrie
Valerie Belle Provence	Keva St. Fort	Farirai Isabel Walker
Tiffany V. Quini	Candace Tavares	Rea'ianna Monea Winston
Evelyn Annette Ramos	Sherita Thomas Craig	Ronaldo C. Youngblut

Commencement Scholarships

ANN PARHAM SCHOLARSHIP

Emily Jung

ASSOCIATION OF LATINA AND  
LATINO SOCIAL WORK EDUCATORS

Berenisia Aguilera

AUSTIN LEGISLATIVE SCHOLARSHIP

Drew Tonjes

BARBARA MCGINITY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Alexandria Nicole Flores

BARBARA & ERNEST HENLEY ENDOWED  
SCHOLARSHIP

Temitope Zainab Busari

C.F. REIBENSTEIN ENDOWMENT FOR SOCIAL  
WORK EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

Patricia Lisbeth Blanco

Penny Davila

Uriah Powell

CAROLINE M. GARCIA SCHOLARSHIP

Cecilia Marisa Reynolds

Rachel Leigh Babb

CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL SCHOLARSHIP

Drew Tonjes

CHILD & FAMILY CENTER FOR  
INNOVATIVE RESEARCH AWARD

Alexandra N. Hood

Elena Ionescu

Jazlyn Lakalia Nicole Young

CHILD WELFARE EDUCATION PROJECT (CWEP)  
STIPEND

LaKeshia Lynette Charles

Lisa Y. Chatman

Carolyn Cooke

Iris Arabella Garcia

Jessica Lynna Gregory

Don’Nisha Viona Tate

Felicia Mae Wagner

DR. BARBARA G. (BOBBI) AND  
MR. J. VICTOR (VIC) SAMUELS DAC  
ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Joi Nikole Armstead

DeJa DeJung Austell

Rachel Leigh Babb

David Beltran

Patricia Lisbeth Blanco

Leah Charlotte Blankenship

Temitope Zainab Busari

Sandra Tayde Camarillo

Ina Darlene Cannon

T’Ziah Money Denise Davis

Leighton Eber

Taeiah Graves

Quaniece Jones

Emily Jung

Teandra D. Lauderdale

Alexandra Elizabeth Merrell

Uriah Powell

Akane Saitoh

Jennifer Schirmer

Suzy Seep

Grace’Lyn Semaj Stephan Small

Lauren Grace Snodgrass

Raechel Stucky

Sahnobiah Louise Dior Swaso

Candace Tavares

Drew Tonjes

Erika Villa

Martheline Wallace

Alexis Raquelle Wilson

EXECUTIVE & PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
HOUSTON SCHOLARSHIP

Jazlyn Lakalia Nicole Young

FERNANDO J. ZUNIGA Y RIVERO DOCTORAL  
FELLOWSHIP

Elena Ionescu

GEORGE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

Tara Beck

Asif Chowdhury

Ta’Shay Shovonne Jones

Berenisia Aguilera

Faustino De La Cruz, Jr.

Luryn John-Miller

Victoria Grace Means

Sadaf Patel

Christy Pham

Janay Prince

Natalie Grace Saenz

Rachel Scharfman

Allison Taylor Sullivan

Errol Aaron Taylor

GEORGE W. MAGNER ENDOWED  
SCHOLARSHIP IN SOCIAL WORK

Lexi Denbow

Jennifer Schirmer

**GLOBAL LEADERS OF BEHAVIORAL-HEALTH  
EDUCATION (GLOBE) STIPEND**

Ayo Akerele  
Emily Janet Alfaro  
Tanisha L.E. Belvin  
Ardrienne S. Bradberry  
Claire Michelle Brown  
Ina Darlene Cannon  
Sydni Elyse Charbonnet  
Mallika Choudhury  
Justin Collier  
Abrianna S. Fletcher  
Cynthia Stephanie Galeano  
Ava Renee Garrison  
Luryn John-Miller  
Breonna Kerley  
Ida Muñoz  
Evelyn Annette Ramos  
Olivia Reanna Reid  
Natalie Grace Saenz  
Christina Maria Tahtouh  
Sherita Thomas Craig  
Marleny Guadalupe Vega  
Fiama Villagrana-Ocasio

**IMA HOGG SCHOLARSHIP**  
Andrea Nohemy Gonzalez Rojas

**INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP**  
Berenisia Aguilera  
Ana Maria Bohorquez Salinas  
Elena Ionescu  
Alia Joi Jones  
Daniel Riojas  
Meghan Reid

**IRA C. COLBY SCHOLARSHIP**  
Candy Itzel Avila Pascual  
Leah Charlotte Blankenship

**JOSEPHINE STEWART SCHOLARSHIP**  
Valerie Belle Provence

**LINDA K. MAY SCHOLARSHIP**  
Areli C. Gonzalez Chavez

**LYDIA MENDOZA SCHOLARSHIP**  
Daniel Riojas  
Erika Villa

**MAKING JUSTICE PROJECT LAB DISSERTATION  
SEED GRANT AWARD**  
Alexandra N. Hood

**MARK MAGAZINER FELLOWSHIP**  
Emily R. F. Beebe  
Tasia Brown  
Ina Darlene Cannon

**MH-RITES PH.D. STUDENT RESEARCH GRANT**  
Limor Luss Smith

**MICHAEL AND VICKEY DALEY SCHOLARSHIP**  
Drew Tonjes

**NASW GOSNELL SCHOLAR**  
Mónica Pérez Martínez

**PHI ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP**  
Carolina Nathalia Ball  
Alirma Khadijah Davis  
Valeria Alejandra Garza

**R. J. DEBOTTIS SCHOLARSHIP**  
Trina M. Gonzaga

**RUTHMARY A. GOLDMAN SCHOLARSHIP**  
Masoumeh Jalali Javaran

**SANDRA A. LOPEZ SCHOLARSHIP**  
Joi Nikole Armstead

**STELLA L. ERHARDT SCHOLARSHIP**  
Kayla Sharde Armstrong  
Sydni Elyse Charbonnet  
Autumn Skye Lauener

**UH GCSW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
SCHOLARSHIP**  
Miranda Hurtado-Ramos  
Allison Taylor Sullivan

**VICKI TIDWELL PALMER FELLOWSHIP**  
Uriah Powell  
Leanne Marie Dawn Prendergast  
Candace Tavares

**WAYNE B. DUDDLESTEN, SR.  
ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**  
Evelyn Annette Ramos  
Rea'ianna Monea Winston

**WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST  
ENDOWMENT  
IN GERONTOLOGY SW**  
Giselle Locadia Burley  
LaKeshia Lynette Charles  
Sarah Elizabeth Martinez  
Megan L. Mistic  
Camelia L. Rezugui  
Noe Louis Rodriguez, Jr.



**Message from the UH Alumni Foundation Board President**

Let me be the first to welcome you to the UH Alumni Association. You are joining a global network of over 305,000 Cougars. With your participation, we can only grow stronger. As you embark on this next chapter, know that your Alumni Association is here to help you stay connected with your beloved alma mater. From volunteering at an event, joining an Association or Network, signing on to UH Link, to becoming a

Life Member, the opportunities to engage are endless.

Please scan the QR code below to enjoy all the activities that soon await you. In the meantime, savor this moment and continue to soar.

True we'll ever be and Go Coogs!

*Shazia Khan*

Shazia Khan ('84)

*UH Alumni Association Foundation Board President*

**Have You Completed  
Your Alumni Checklist?**



<https://houstonalumni.com/recent-grads/>



