



4th Annual

**First-Generation
Celebration of Achievement
Award Ceremony**

Changing the Narrative in 2021

May 1, 2021

1 p.m. EST

Premiering virtually at
youtu.be/xLPn7FCRCrM

Introduction of ceremony

Vicki T. Sapp, PhD

Director for Student Engagement, Diversity and Inclusion
and Assistant Professor

Welcome

Steven J. Scheinman, MD

President and Dean

Student Affairs congratulatory remarks

Tanja K. Adonizio, MD

Associate Dean for Student Affairs
and Assistant Professor of Medicine

Graduate Education congratulatory remarks

Leonard (Len) Farber, MA

Director of Career Engagement, Graduate Education

Presentation of MD and MBS graduates

Best regards remarks

Michelle Schmude, EdD

Associate Dean of Admissions, Enrollment Management and
Financial Aid and Associate Professor

Closing remarks

William Jeffries, PhD

Vice Dean for Medical Education, Vice President for
Academic Affairs and Professor of Pharmacology

Alumni induction

Christopher Boland

Director of Alumni Relations

Closing remarks

Vicki T. Sapp, PhD

**First-Generation
Celebration of Achievement
Subcommittee**

Amy Kline, MA

Associate Director, Center for Learning Excellence

Tanya Morgan, MS

Assistant Director, Center for Learning Excellence

Vicki T. Sapp, PhD

Director for Student Engagement, Diversity and Inclusion
and Assistant Professor

Mary Lawhon Triano, CRNP-C

Director of Academic Success and Assistant Professor

MBS Class of 2021 honorees

Rahma Ali
Kendra Benn-Francis
Neal Bharati
Darin Chhing
Tenzing Dolma
Ijeoma Ejogu
IeTausjua Eley
Shantia Horsford
Taylor Jones
Solange Nsang
Mariah Panoussi
Husna Rahim
Alivia Roberts
Maddison Vail
Gabrielle Wilks

MD Class of 2021 honorees

Tara Avery
Brian Entler
Ussama Ghumman
Nhuna Ha
Nathan Hoff
Jennifer Jordan
Jessica Knapp
Tara Knox
Jenna Marinock
Navindra Tajeshwar

Honoree reflections

Rahma Ali, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: Arabic/English

Thank you (FAM BAM) for always being there and supporting me! Y'all are real ones. <3

Tara Avery, MD Class of 2021

"Happiness can be found in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light." To my family and friends: Thank you for being my beacon, guiding me and continuously reminding me who I am, where I'm from and who I hope to be.

Kendra Benn-Francis, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: English

Thank you to my loving family and friends who continuously supported me in everything I do.

Neal Bharati, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: Hindi

It's a blessing to belong to a family that always supports you to follow your dreams. I would not have been where I am, without you all, thank you!

Darin Chhing, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: English

To my family, thank you, for your enduring love and immeasurable support throughout my journey! To my friends, new and old, my deepest gratitude, for endless laughter and your heartfelt encouragement through life's wondrous symphony.

Honoree reflections (continued)

Tenzing Dolma, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: Tibetan

བོད་རྒྱལ་ལོ།

Thank you to my family, friends and community for being my pillars of strength; I am because we are!

Ijeoma Ejogu, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: Igbo

Izu Ahia Wu Ezhi Ihe Ma Ewere Egwu Chineke – There should be a higher purpose to whatever you do.
Thank you to my family for teaching me excellence in character and intellectual curiosity. "Goodness without knowledge is weak and feeble, yet knowledge without goodness is dangerous. Both united form the noblest character and lay the surest foundation of usefulness to mankind." - John Phillips

IeTausjua Eley, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: English

Thank you to my mom, grandmother and friends for believing in me and supporting me. Your encouraging words make the tough times so much easier.

Brian Entler, MD Class of 2021

Native language: English

To know the road ahead, ask those coming back.
To all of my family and friends, thank you so much for the continued love and support. I could not have achieved this degree without sacrifices made by all of you.

Honoree reflections *(continued)*

Ussama Ghumman, MD Class of 2021

Native language: Urdu/English

Thank you for your endless support, understanding and love.

Nhuna Ha, MD Class of 2021

Native language: Vietnamese

Friends and family like mine are a treasure greater than any I can imagine. Thank you for your unconditional support and for always being there for me along my journey.

Nathan Hoff, MD Class of 2021

Native language: English

Thank you to everyone who has supported me on this journey. I wouldn't be here without you.

Shantia Horsford, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: English

Thank you to God for giving me the strength keep moving on, and to my family and friends for believing in me. I would like to express great gratitude to the GCSOM faculty for their continued support and encouragement in helping me pursue my journey towards medicine.

Taylor Jones, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: English

I want to thank my husband and family for always believing in me/pushing me to better myself. I could not have gotten to where I am today without them.

Honoree reflections *(continued)*

Jennifer Jordan, MD Class of 2021

Native language: English

I want to thank my family, friends and boyfriend for their continual support each and every day in my journey to become a doctor. Thank you for always believing in me!

Jessica Knapp, MD Class of 2021

Native language: English

Thank you sincerely to all of my family, friends and the faculty and staff who supported me through medical school. I would not be here without you all.

Tara Knox, MD Class of 2021

Native language: English

My family means the world to me and I attribute my success to their love and support. I am in a position to help so many people because my family has been there when I needed help.

Jenna Marinock, MD Class of 2021

Native language: English

"An education is something no one can take away from you." Mom and dad, thank you for instilling in me the importance of an education and for providing the love and support I needed to succeed in this journey.

Honoree reflections *(continued)*

Solange Nsang, MBS Class of 2021

I give thanks first to my God who has given me grace and favor. Special thanks to my humble husband who has always been that driving force encouraging me not to give up and to all my lecturers for time dedicated to help me through this journey.

Mariah Panoussi, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: English

I would like to thank my new friends and faculty members for their support through the MBS program. I'm immensely grateful for my family who have given me support and encouragement through my pre-medical journey.

Husna Rahim, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: Dari

همیشه سرم بالاست، چون بالا سرم خداست.

Thank you to my parents, family and friends for their continuous encouragement in everything I do! Your guidance and support have paved the way to where I am today, and I am forever grateful for all of you.

Alivia Roberts, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: English

Mom and dad, thank you for your love, guidance, support and for the sacrifices you've made to allow Alexis and I to flourish. Everyone at Geisinger has touched my heart and impacted me in many ways, but I would like to thank Dr. Ronald Strony for encouraging me to do this MBS program and Dr. Michael Sulzinski for being the best advisor I could have ever asked for.

Honoree reflections *(continued)*

Navindra Tajeshwar, MD Class of 2021

Native language: English

Thank you to my family and friends who supported me on this journey. Although it was off the beaten path, I never lacked company.

Maddison Vail, MD Class of 2021

Thank you to my mom and dad for always believing in me and pushing me to be the best I can be!

Gabrielle Wilks, MBS Class of 2021

Native language: English

Mi luv unuh suh til !

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Thank you to my amazing mother, grandmother and family for your unconditional love and support throughout this program, we did it!

Thank you

Center for Learning Excellence

Department of Medical Education

Facilities

IT Services

Marketing and Communications

Media and Public Relations

Office for Student Engagement, Diversity and Inclusion

President's Office

School of Graduate Education

Student Affairs

Special thanks to the First-Generation and Ally Student Support Committee, the First-Generation Celebration of Achievement Award Ceremony Subcommittee, Heather Davis, Liz Zygmunt, Kara Badyrka and Andrea Mulrine. Last, but not least: Janis Williams and Sharon Bednarz for going above and beyond to make this and all events hosted by Student Affairs a success!



Geisinger
Commonwealth
School of Medicine

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine is committed to non-discrimination in all employment and educational opportunities.