



DOWNSTATE
HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

**COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**CONVOCATION
and
AWARDS CEREMONY**

**THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024
3:00 PM**

**HEALTH SCIENCE EDUCATION BUILDING
ALUMNI AUDITORIUM**



GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTION

Jeffrey S. Putman, EdD
Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
F. Charles Brunicardi, MD, FACS
Dean, College of Medicine

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

Awards for Excellence and Acknowledgement of Honors in the School of Graduate Studies

Presented by: David Christini, PhD
Interim Dean, School of Graduate Studies
Hillary Michelson, PhD
President, The Robert F. Furchgott Society

Annual Research Day Awards

Each year at the Annual Research Day, graduate students compete for awards. Awards for the best presentation in specific categories of research are awarded each year from Graduate School resources.

Recipients: **Mulin He, Craig Kelley**

Liberalitas Award 2024

This award is for academic altruism, a central value of the School of Graduate Studies (established in 2013 in memory of Drs. Mary Makowske and Vahe Amassian). This award recognizes the graduating student who was viewed by his or her fellow graduate students as the most significant peer resource. This individual's character and generous contributions to others on the campus promises a future where they are always a highly sought-after colleague.

Recipient: **Timothy Morello**

The Alfred Stracher Student Author Research Award

This award was established in memory of Dr. Alfred Stracher, chairman of the Downstate Biochemistry Department from 1972 to 2006, and a Downstate faculty member for 54 years. This award is open to students across Downstate. The recipients are chosen by the Deans of the schools and colleges to acknowledge research excellence that translates to the improvement of human health.

Honorable Mention: **Pemla Jagtiani (COM), Alexander Pan (COM), Sophie Queler (COM)**

Recipients: **Ana Mejia-Bautista (SGS) 3rd Prize,
Joanna Tabor (COM) 2nd Prize,
Matthew Marcelino (COM) 1st Prize**

The Robert F. Furchgott Medical Student Research Award

In 1992, Science heralded nitric oxide (NO) as “molecule of the year” less than six years after the late Dr. Furchgott identified it as a physiological dilator of blood vessels. The late Dr. Furchgott was the 1998 co-winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine “for the discovery concerning nitric oxide as a signaling molecule in the cardiovascular system.” The mild-mannered, humble, and generous Dr. Furchgott was back at work in his lab days after winning the Nobel Prize, which did not surprise anyone who knew him. This award is given to a student who demonstrates excellence in their research in the spirit of Dr. Furchgott.

Honorable Mention: **Samuel Gedailovich, Jennifer Wang**

Recipient: **Adem Idrizi**

The Robert F. Furchgott Award for Excellence in Research

The Committee of the Faculty of the School of Graduate Studies has recommended that the School of Graduate Studies honor the graduate student whose research, as represented by the thesis document, is considered most outstanding among the cohort of graduate students who have defended their thesis within the past year.

Recipient: **Craig Kelley**

College of Medicine Honor Scholarships and Achievement Awards

Presented by: **F. Charles Brunicardi, MD, FACS**
Dean, College of Medicine

Endowed Honor Scholarships

Awarded to students who achieve a high level of academic performance.

Recipients: **Weston Buehring, Agnes Jiang, Treven Wesley**

Jadwin Honor Scholarships

Awarded to students who achieve a high level of academic performance.

Recipients: **Bradley Amazan, Kenny Hong, Sneha Patel**

Yudkowsky Honor Scholarships

Awarded to students who achieve a high level of academic performance.

Recipients: **Lina Alhanshali, Alissa Belzie, Nader Mohamed**

American Medical Women's Association/Glasgow-Rubin Certificates of Commendation

These awards recognize the achievements of the women in the top 10% of the graduating class.

Recipients: **Nicole Ackerman, Sonali Bhat, Kaitlynnne Cunningham, Jacqueline DiSalvatore, Sophie Eldred, Jennifer Gottfried, Kelsey Hackett, Eun Kyeong Hwang, Agnes Jiang, Alexandria Krauss, Sneha Patel, Perri Vingan, Katty Wu, Sylvia Zielinski**

Merck Awards

These awards from the pharmaceutical company acknowledge academic achievement in medical studies.

Recipients: **Edward Bae, Alexandria Krauss, Nicolás Valentino, Samuel Yim, Sylvia Zielinski**

Fred H. & Sadie Sirkin Achievement Award

Awarded to a female student for academic excellence.

Recipient: **Kaitlynnne Cunningham**

Eugene B. Feigelson, MD Scholarship

Established by former Dean Eugene B. Feigelson, MD, this merit scholarship is awarded to a medical student who has demonstrated academic excellence in pursuit of their career.

Recipient: **Lisa Scott**

Trude Perlman Award

Established by Dr. Bernard Perlman of the Class of 1955 as a living memorial to his wife. It is awarded to a student's spouse/significant other to acknowledge their sacrifice during the four years of medical school.

Honorable Mention: Roxanne Landis (Spouse of Jesse Landis),

Brian Umbach (Fiancée of Jacqueline DiSalvatore),

Emily Wilson (Spouse of Matthew Wilson)

Recipient: **Nukri Khoshtariya (Spouse of Christopher Musial)**

Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence

The SUNY Chancellor's Award acknowledges graduating students who have been recognized for academic excellence, career achievement and community service and leadership.

Recipients: **Jessica Mineroff, Timothy Morello**

Academic Development Award for Excellence and Leadership in Teaching

Awarded in recognition of enthusiastic and continuous contributions to enhancing the academic achievements of their fellow students.

Presented by: Seth Langley, PhD

Recipients: **Andrew Dorritie, Matthew Marcelino**

Nathan Spitzer, MD '25 Honor Achievement Award in Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Medicine

This award was established by Dr. Adrienne Siegel, daughter of Dr. Nathan Spitzer, class of 1925, in memory of her father, for a graduating medical student who exhibits excellence in cardiovascular and pulmonary medicine.

Presented by: Stephanie DiBrienza

Recipient: **Edward Bae**

Office of Student Life Awards

Award for Lifetime Membership

Lifetime membership is awarded to those individuals who have made significant contributions to the Student Center and/or its programs throughout their tenure on campus.

Presented by: Adam Burgman and Schuyler Hooke

Recipients: **Moazam Afzal, Liam Deegan, Justin Ingram, Nancy Li**

Programming Awards

Collaborative Program Award-Latino Medical Student Association (with the Occupational Therapy Program)

Community Service Award-Brooklyn Free Clinic

Diversity and Inclusion Program Award-Physicians for Human Rights

Educational Program Award-Global Health Club

Student Organization Awards

Most Improved Organization of The Year-American Medical Women's Association

New Organization of The Year-Radiology Club

Organization of The Year-Daniel Hale Williams Society

Zahra Said Scholarship

Established by a retired Downstate faculty member in honor of his late wife who he describes as "a passionate advocate of empowerment through education for women." It is awarded to a graduating woman who embodies these characteristics and who overcame cultural, religious or socioeconomic hardship.

Presented by: Christopher Román, PhD

Recipient: **Noorulain Paracha**

Health Equity Advocacy Leadership Pathway Certificate of Merit

This award recognizes students that have helped to create a dynamic learning environment and elevated discussions on health equity and social justice. The students have been champions for promoting health equity.

Presented by: Christopher Román, PhD

Recipients: **Lina Alhanshali, Bradley Amazan, Emily Bakaj, Amanda Ciardiello, Miar Elaskandrany, Alexander Fang, Rythika Francis, Ariana Gopal, Sharif Hosein, Shrishna Maskey, Jessica Mineroff,**

**Diarra Ndiaye, Olga Pinkhasov, Alexis Roth, Kayla Schacher,
Anuradha Shetty, Sania Tahir, Olivia Tracey, Kelita Waterton, Lulu Wei,
Katty Wu, Lori Zomback**

Health Equity Advocacy Leadership Pathway Certificate of Distinction

This award recognizes students that have made contributions to the Health Equity Advocacy Leadership Pathway and have gone above and beyond the goals of the program. The students have implemented sustainable equity focused initiatives at Downstate that will have a lasting impact.

Presented by: Christopher Román, PhD

Recipients: **Justin Ingram, Nader Mohamed, Vivek Shah,
Latia Skerving, Jeremy Wilson**

The Global Health Pathway Award

The Global Health Pathway is a longitudinal curricular pathway for medical students interested in Global Health to identify, engage in, and advance innovative and sustainable solutions in healthcare worldwide. Students who graduate from this pathway have participated on a continuous basis in all required pathway lectures, projects, and activities. The students have demonstrated significant time, commitment and excellence in completing the Global Health Pathway and organizing events that have made the pathway enjoyable and inviting for all.

Presented by: Jack DeHovitz, MD

Recipients: **Srishty Amarnani, Alissa Belzie, Sonya Chemouni Bach,
Shivali Devjani, Christina Falcone, Nouraiz Falik, Nitasha Goyal,
Nicholas Hines, Eun Kyeong Hwang, Amanda Jirgal, Pratima Jurakhan,
Judy Lee, Kevin Moattari, Christopher Musial, Marcos Vargas,
Jordan Zhou**

The Medical Educator Pathway Certificate of Merit

This award recognizes graduating students who developed and implemented a curriculum or scholarly medical education project and who demonstrated significant time and commitment to completing the pathway requirements for near peer teaching, institutional service and mentorship at the SUNY Downstate College of Medicine.

Presented by: Lee Eisner, PhD

Recipients: **Daniel Brereton, Fredrick Birnbaum, Adam Daniels,
Alexander Fang, Lakshay Khosla, Benjamin Krasnyanskiy, Lekha Patel,
Olga Pinkhasov, Vivek Shah, Elaine Winge**

The Medical Educator Pathway Certificate of Distinction

This award recognizes graduating students who have had leadership roles in medical education and have contributed to promoting the goals of the Medical Educator Pathway at the SUNY Downstate College of Medicine. The recipient students have demonstrated significant time, commitment and excellence in at least one of five areas: teaching, education administration, scholarship, curriculum development, assessment and/or mentorship.

Presented by: Lee Eisner

Recipients: **Nicole Ackerman, Jacqueline DiSalvatore, Felix Rozenberg**

Graduates of the Clinical Neurosciences Pathway

The Clinical Neurosciences Pathway is a program of advanced academic activities in the neurosciences. Students who graduate from the program have participated on a continuous basis in all required components of the Pathway throughout their medical training at Downstate.

Presented by: Lisa R. Merlin, MD

Recipients: **Naveera Arif, Brandon Badillo, Gregory Belizaire, Rivka Benyaminov, Dennis Cummins, Javier Dejesus Lugo, Shivali Devjani, Andrew Dorritie, Miar Elaskandrany, Christina Falcone, Paul Flynn, Jennifer Gottfried, Nitasha Goyal, Brandon Grill, Elver Ho, Adem Idrizi, Benjamin Krasnyanskiy, Luke Morales, Kevin Moran, Zaid Nakadar, Zainab Nathani, Noorulain Paracha, Rahul Roshin, Armaan Shah, Binyamin Simkhaev, Joanna Tabor, Andrew Voigt, Treven Wesley, Sylvia Zielinski**

Departmental Awards for Excellence

Excellence in Anesthesiology Awards

The Joseph P. Giffin Award for Clinical Excellence in Anesthesiology

Awarded to a student who exhibited clinical excellence and received honors in the anesthesia elective.

Presented by: Dennis Dimaculangan, MD

Recipient: **Diarra Ndiaye**

The Gerald L. Wolf Award for Research in Anesthesiology

Awarded to students that have demonstrated outstanding research acumen in anesthesiology.

Presented by: Dennis Dimaculangan, MD

Recipients: **Miar Elaskandrany, Adem Idrizi, Jordan Zhou**

Cell Biology Awards for Academic Excellence

The Cell Biology Awards recognize excellence in anatomy, histology/cell biology and neuroscience.

Jacqueline S. Jakway, PhD Award for Excellence in the Anatomic Sciences

Presented by: John Kubie, PhD

Recipients: **Isabella Dana, Perri Vingan, Alice Yau**

Jacqueline S. Jakway, PhD Award for Excellence in Anatomic Science Education

Presented by: Samuel Marquez, PhD

Recipients: **Andrew Dorritie, Nader Mohamed**

Excellence in Dermatology Awards

Elizabeth M. Carr, MD Award for Excellence in Clinical Dermatology

Dr. Elizabeth Carr was a former resident, chief resident and faculty member of the Department of Dermatology. During her time with us, she was a constant source of collegiality, enthusiasm and humor. Her intense attention to detail and absolute refusal to complete a task without doing it perfectly is legendary. She loved the practice of Dermatology, as well as teaching students and residents. She was devoted to the care of her patients and giving back to the community.

Presented by: Sharon Glick, MD

Recipients: **Julianne Kleitsch, Kelita Waterton**

Alan R. Shalita, MD Award for Excellence in Dermatological Research

Dr. Shalita was a distinguished Professor and the former Chairman of the Department of Dermatology for nearly 40 years. He was a pioneer and internationally known for his expertise in the treatment of acne. Dr. Shalita was best recognized for his skills as a clinician, a researcher and educator. His research contributions were groundbreaking work on the treatment of acne, which impacted and benefited the lives of millions of patients worldwide. Dr. Shalita was revered by all the doctors he mentored and trained and beloved by all who knew him.

Presented by: Sharon Glick, MD

Recipient: **Jessica Mineroff**

Society for Academic Emergency Medicine 2024 Excellence in Emergency Medicine Award

This award recognizes a senior medical student who has demonstrated excellence in the specialty of emergency medicine.

Presented by: Linda Fan, MD, MEd

Recipient: **David Kim**

Hyman Merenstein, MD Excellence in Family Medicine Award

This award is in remembrance of a wonderful family physician, epidemiologist, and devoted teacher of medical students in Family Medicine at Downstate. He was a dedicated and humane doctor, and voluntary faculty member in Family Medicine from 1970-1998. This award recognizes “clinical excellence, dedicated service and devotion to the interest and promotion of Family Medicine”

Presented by: Crystal Marquez, MD

Recipient: **Sonya Chemouni Bach**

Excellence in Medicine Awards

The Eli A. Friedman Award of Distinction in Internal Medicine

Distinguished Teaching Professor of Medicine, Dr. Eli A. Friedman obtained his MD degree from SUNY Downstate Medical Center, became the first “Nephrology fellow” in the USA at Harvard, set up the first federally funded hemodialysis program in the United States in 1963 and invented the ‘Suitcase kidney’ for portable dialysis. Widely cited, his publications include 10 books and over 530 Peer-reviewed scientific papers. He is known as one of the master teachers of medicine of our time.

Presented by: Moro Salifu, MD, MPH, MBA, MACP

Recipients: **Nicole Ackerman, Sophie Eldred, Joshua Hirsch, Kevin Moran**

Excellence in Neurology Awards

The Abraham Max Rabiner Award for Excellence in Neurology

Abraham Max Rabiner, MD (1892-1980) was the first director of neurology at Kings County Hospital from 1954 to 1958. He had been a neurologist at the Long Island College of Medicine from 1937 to 1954. He was interested in and published in all aspects of neurology. He was known as a brilliant and charismatic teacher of students throughout his career.

Presented by: Brian Anziska, MB, ChB, Ernest J. Barthélemy, MD, MPH, MA

Recipient: **Joanna Tabor**

American Academy of Neurology Medical Student Prize for Excellence

This recognition is awarded to up to two graduating medical students who have demonstrated outstanding achievement and clinical acumen in neurology and/or neuroscience, and who have decided to pursue a career in neurology, pediatric neurology, or neurosurgery.

Presented by: Nuri Jacoby, MD

Recipients: **Nitasha Goyal, Joanna Tabor**

Excellence in Obstetrics & Gynecology Awards

Morris Glass Prize

Dr. Glass was a Downstate graduate who became the first Chairman of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at Albert Einstein in 1955. The award is given to the student who was the most outstanding clinically during the third year OB/GYN rotation.

Presented by: Melanie Peters, MD

Recipient: **Rawlica Sumner**

Abraham J. Rongy Prize

This award is given to the student who is most likely to succeed in the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Presented by: Melanie Peters, MD

Recipient: **Katty Wu**

Excellence in Ophthalmology Award

Awarded to the medical student who exemplifies admirable and ideal qualities as a future ophthalmologist.

Presented by: Inci Dersu, MD

Recipient: **Mohamed Sylla**

The Christopher Pavlides, MD Memorial Award

Dr. Pavlides received his medical degree from SUNY Downstate, and later went on to teach orthopaedic surgery at Downstate in the 1970's and 1980's. In his honor, a graduating medical student entering orthopaedic surgery is selected to receive recognition for their efforts.

Presented by: William Urban, MD

Recipient: **Nayeem Baksh**

Outstanding Medical Student Performance in Otolaryngology

This award is presented to the student who does the most outstanding work in inpatient care, outpatient care, operating room experience and presentation at departmental grand rounds.

Presented by: Sydney Butts, MD

Recipient: **Jennifer Gottfried**

The Award for Excellence in Pathology

This award recognizes a graduating senior who has demonstrated a genuine passion for pathology and is expected to make substantive contributions to the field.

Presented by: Jenny Libien, MD, PhD

Recipient: **Luke Morales**

The College of American Pathologists Distinguished Medical Student Award

This award recognizes an exceptional medical student with a passion for pathology.

Presented by: Jenny Libien, MD, PhD

Recipient: **Luke Morales**

The Dominick J. DiMaio, MD Research Grant and Scholarship

Dr. DiMaio was Professor of Pathology at Downstate and was head of the Brooklyn Medical Examiner's office. His career at Downstate spanned three decades and he cemented a legacy at Downstate with three generations of family associations. His fondest career memories were of teaching medical students at Downstate about forensic pathology. Dr. DiMaio's most cherished accomplishment was the textbook he wrote with his son Vincent (Downstate Class of 1965), "Forensic Pathology", which remains the quintessential textbook of forensic medicine. To honor Dr. DiMaio's commitment to Downstate and his love of pathology, his daughter, Dr. Ann DiMaio (Class of 1983), and her husband, Dr. William Ricci, have established a foundation to support medical students interested in pursuing research in pathology. The Dominick J. DiMaio Pathology Research Scholar will have the opportunity to do a research project of their choice with a faculty member of the Department of Pathology at Downstate Health Sciences University.

Presented by: Ivan Hernandez, PhD and Jenny Libien, MD, PhD

Recipient: **Jesus Lopez (Class of 2025)**

Richard L. Day, MD Award for Outstanding Performance in Pediatrics

This award is presented to a graduating student who, with evidence of scholarship, in the opinion of the faculty and residents, demonstrates the most outstanding clinical performance in pediatrics.

Presented by: Stephen Wadowski, MD

Recipient: **Matthew Marcelino**

The Soon M. Rho, MD Memorial Award in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

Dr. Rho completed his residency training at Rusk Rehabilitation at NYU and joined Downstate in 1976. He continued to train PM&R residents at Downstate until 2014. In his honor, this award is presented to a graduating medical student who has demonstrated a passion for Physiatry and is expected to make substantive contributions to the field.

Presented by: Sanjeev Agarwal, MD, MS

Recipient: **Elver Ho**

Outstanding Achievement in Psychiatry Award

This award recognizes the graduating student who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in psychiatry and shows exceptional promise in the field.

Presented by: Jeffrey Feola, MD

Recipient: **Matthew Wilson**

The Lucy Frank Squire, MD Award for Excellence in Radiology

*This award is presented to the member of the graduating class embarking on a career in Radiology who had the best performance in the Diagnostic Radiology course in the Advanced Clinical Year. Dr. Squire was a pioneer in developing Radiology education for medical students. She joined the Downstate faculty full-time in 1972 and was recognized nationwide for her innovations in teaching. Her influence is still felt around the world, as the textbook she authored, *Fundamentals of Radiology*, is now in its seventh edition and has been translated into seven languages.*

Presented by: Steven Ostrow, MD

Recipient: **Armaan Shah**

Excellence in Surgery Awards

The Clarence Dennis Award for Surgical Scholarship

Dr. Dennis was the Chairman of the Department of Surgery from 1951-1972. He established himself as a leader in cardiopulmonary bypass physiology, and was instrumental in the invention of the heart-lung machine. He performed the first successful open-heart surgery in New York State, using a bypass machine he built and used the machines as the first "assist device" in cardiac surgery of the failing left ventricle. A gifted educator, he trained scores of surgeons in New York, affecting the lives of countless people around the world. His residents established the Clarence Dennis Society in his honor.

Presented by: Panagiotis Koungias, MD

Recipient: **Christina Falcone**

The Samuel L. Kountz Award for Clinical Excellence in Surgery

Dr. Kountz was Chairman of the Department of Surgery from 1972-1977. He was the ultimate academic surgeon – a Fulbright Scholar and innovator in organ transplantation. He developed the kidney perfusion machine used for organ preservation, performed the first kidney transplant between non-identical twins and established the role of methylprednisolone in combating acute rejection. One of the first African-American department chairs in surgery, Dr. Kountz created the Transplantation Division here at Downstate.

Presented by: Panagiotis Koungias, MD

Recipient: **Justine Rosalez**

The John G. Kral Award for Outstanding Surgical Research

Before Dr. Kral came to Downstate in 1988, he had established himself as an international expert in the fields of surgical metabolism and obesity surgery. In 1983 he co-founded the American Society for Bariatric Surgery. He authored over 50 book chapters and over 60 peer-reviewed papers, many in high impact journals such as NEJM, BMJ, and Pediatrics. He continued his research in metabolic studies at SUNY Downstate up to his death in 2019. Kral was born in New York and then raised, educated and trained in Sweden before returning to the U.S. where he never lost his Scandinavian work ethic and open mindedness. His office was a sanctum where students and residents could discuss shortcomings and aspirations, in addition to their research projects.

Presented by: Panagiotis Kougias, MD

Recipients: **Daniel Brereton, Perri Vingam**

Award for Outstanding Performance in Urological Research

This award is presented to graduating students for outstanding research performance.

Presented by: Jeffrey Weiss, MD, PhD, FACS

Recipients: **Alexander Fang, Lakshay Khosla**

Faculty and Staff Awards

Outstanding Educator in the Foundations of Medicine

This award is determined by the results of course evaluations completed by the second year class and reviewed by a Dean's committee. It recognizes outstanding teaching in the Foundation Years.

Presented by: Riccardo Bianchi, PhD

Recipient: **Xian C. Jiang, PhD**

Outstanding Educator in the Clinical Years

This award is determined by the results of course evaluations completed during the clinical years and reviewed by a Dean's committee. It recognizes outstanding teaching in the Clinical Years.

Presented by: Elka Jacobson-Dickman, MD, Jason Lazar, MD

Recipient: **Isabel McFarlane, MD**

Hugh J. Carroll, MD Award for Clinical Excellence

There are two major attributes of a skilled clinical teacher of medicine – the science of medicine (communicating to students the knowledge essential for the diagnosis of disease and the treatment of patients) and the art of medicine (intimate compassion for patients, the cultivation of humanistic attitudes among one's students).

Presented by: Elka Jacobson-Dickman, MD, Jason Lazar, MD

Recipient: **Ellen Ginzler, MD, MPH**

Outstanding Educators of the Year from Clinical Affiliates

This award recognizes teachers of excellence from among faculty at affiliate sites.

Presented by: Elka Jacobson-Dickman, MD, Jason Lazar, MD

Recipients: **Melanie Cheng, MD - Kings County Hospital Center,**

Charles Lapunzina, MD – Brookdale Hospital Center,

Joshua Schiller, MD - Maimonides Medical Center

Special Recognition from The Class of 2024

Recipient: **Nigel Andrews, MA**



**Good Luck
and
Best Wishes
to the
Class of 2024**





DOWNSTATE

HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University is one of the largest academic health centers in the United States and one of four health science centers within the 64-unit State University of New York system. SUNY Downstate includes the College of Medicine, the School of Graduate Studies, the College of Nursing, the School of Health Professions, the School of Public Health, a major research center, and the University Hospital of Brooklyn.
