



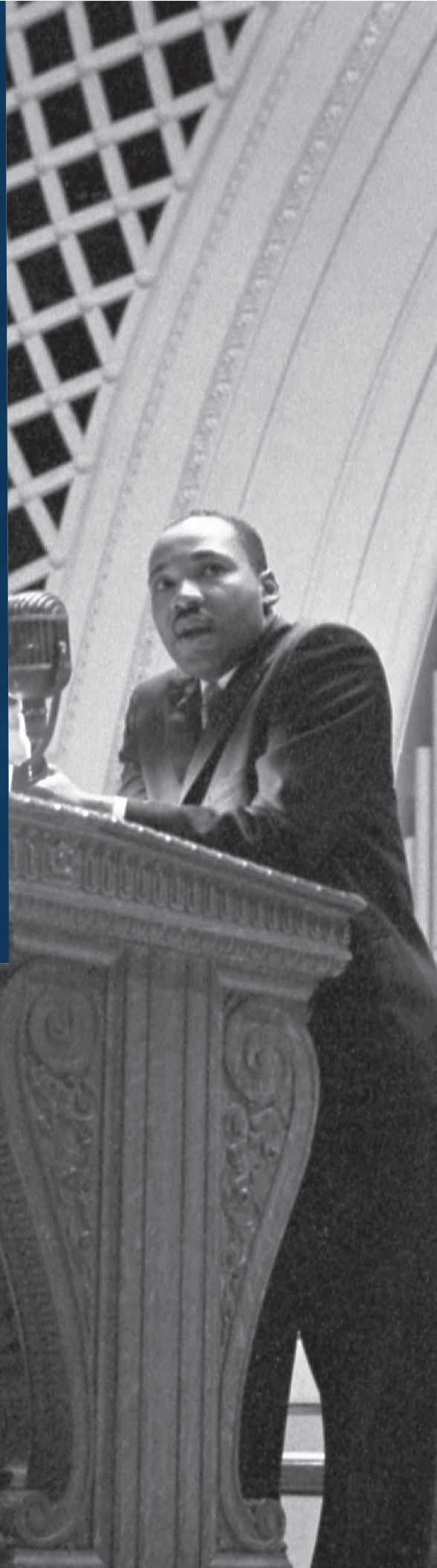
UNIVERSITY OF
MICHIGAN

17th Annual Central Campus

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
SPIRIT AWARDS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 2022

Program



Ceremony

WELCOME

Devon Keen

Director, Inclusion, Equity and Outreach and Graduate Student Research Assistant
School of Information

OPENING REMARKS

Patricia Coleman-Burns

Assistant Professor Emerita; Special Advisor to the Dean on Multicultural Affairs
School of Nursing

NOMINEE INTRODUCTIONS

Each cohort of Spirit Award nominees met before the ceremony to share their experiences and identify points of contact between their individual social justice efforts. Today they will share some of the themes that connect them, illustrating what Dr. King called “the inescapable network of mutuality” that joins all of humanity. They will speak about their collective impact, highlight lessons learned, and inspire us to remember that “whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly”.

Mariam Azeim, William Ahmad Dobbs, Kavya Chandra, Cora Galpern, Janani Gandhi, Cat Hadley, Evan Hall, Nikitha Kamath, Karyn King, Sanjana Kannikeswaran, Isabel LoDuca, Joshua Mollison, Caitlin O’Boyle

PAST AWARDEE MESSAGES

Gloriela Iguina-Colón ’18

MDRC, Researcher
Washington D.C

Hunter Zhao ’18

U.S. Department of State
Diplomat for the United States
Washington D.C.

Lello Guluma ’17 BA, ’10 MA

Health Researcher
Washington D.C.

Additional alumni messages on awards webpage: myumi.ch/K4N9o

NOMINEE INTRODUCTIONS

Ayodele Ojo, Xalma Palomino, Hugo Quintana, Roman Rhone, Michal Ruprecht, Luisa Sánchez, Taylor Smith, Sarah Szalai, Jessica Wang, Blake Weissman, Magda Wojtara, Becky Woolf

PRESENTATION OF THE AWARDS

Patricia Coleman-Burns

Assistant Professor Emerita; Special Advisor to the Dean on Multicultural Affairs
School of Nursing

CLOSING REMARKS

Whitney Peoples

Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
School of Public Health

Award Nominees on Next Page

Award Nominees



Mariam Azeim - Mariam is a senior from Flint, Michigan majoring in Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience with a minor in Gender, Race, And Nation. She strives to serve in the UM community through encouraging involvement, maintaining and forming new cross-cultural coalitions to promote diversity, while upholding a welcoming, inclusive, environment that caters to student growth in all forms.



William Ahmad Dobbs - William Ahmad Dobbs is a senior in the Ford School of Public Policy with a focus on international law and relations, where he was elected onto the school's DEI committee. Aside from activism, Dobbs has spent the past three years as a Diversity Peer Educator, leading various multicultural clubs across campus, and is currently an intern at the Culture Shift Team - a consulting firm focused on advancing DEI.



Kavya Chandra - Kavya Chandra is a pre-med sophomore studying philosophy and biology. She loves dancing, being outdoors, and being with friends.



Cora Galpern - Cora Galpern is a junior from Denver, Colorado majoring Sociology and Social Work. She has a passion for community organizing and hopes to obtain an MSW to continue this work in her professional career.



Janani Gandhi - Janani Gandhi is a senior from Wayland, Massachusetts studying public policy and quantitative methods in the social sciences. She is the chair of Students of Color in Public Policy.



Catherine Hadley - Catherine Hadley is a mother of two, a student, a Truman Scholar, and a life long activist focused on creating tangible change for the underserved in Michigan. Her activism and advocacy surrounds maternal health, food stamp expansion, disability justice, and childcare accessibility on and off of campus.



Evan Hall - Evan Hall is an HIV activist and disability rights advocate. His commitment to ending the epidemic centers on an interdisciplinary approach, bridging the biomedical perspective with social science research methods.

Awardee



Nikitha Kamath - Nikitha is a second-year student studying business administration at the Ross School of Business with a minor in computer science. She is passionate about business, technology, and education, and hopes to make a positive social impact through her work.

Awardee



Sanjana Kannikeswaran - Sanjana graduated from the University of Michigan in December 2021 with a degree in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology and minors in Music and the Sociology of Health & Medicine. She will be attending medical school next fall.



Karyn King - Karyn King is a 3rd year Bachelors of Business Administration Student concentrating in Management Organizations & HR with a minor in Philosophy. She is originally from Flint, Michigan and is passionate about using her voice and experiences to advocate for mentorship and access to resources for underrepresented backgrounds.



Isabel LoDuca - With over 6 years of nonprofit experience and as an advocacy lead for UNICEF USA, Isabel focuses on increasing equity and access to diverse voices from across the country. Her current work focuses on changing systems from within businesses and organizations by serving as a young adult stakeholder in political, CSR, and corporate advocacy discussions.

Awardee



Joshua Mollison - Joshua is a senior from Brooklyn, New York at the School of Information studying User Experience Design. His current primary campus involvements include serving on the Eboard for Black@Si and acting as an Undergraduate Student Representative for the UMSI DEI Committee where he advocates for the prioritization of Black student needs and elevates fellow student voices.



Caitlin O'Boyle - Caitlin is a Communications and German Major, who's mission at the University of Michigan is to enact social change. With the help of fellow students and student-lead organizations, Caitlin has been able to fulfill their mission.

Awardee



Ayodele Ojo - Ayodele Ojo is a junior majoring in Public Policy with a minor in Business Administration. Currently she is a research assistant for Ford's DEI Office, Co-founder and Co-President of Students of Color interested in Law, Government, Policy, and Social Justice, and a part of a couple other organizations as well.

Awardee



Xalma Palomino - Xalma Palomino was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. As a 3rd-year student double majoring in Political Science and Latina/o Studies, her leadership and service centers the Latinx and other minoritized communities, particularly focusing on educational access, representation, and leadership development. Her future plans include attending graduate school to study public policy and returning to Detroit to become involved in addressing disparities in the rights and political representation of the Latinx community.

Awardee



Hugo Quintana - Hugo Quintana is a Junior majoring in Public Policy with a minor in Spanish. On campus, he is involved in Michigan in Color; a section of the Michigan Daily that produces content by and for students of color and is a student-leader in the Ford School's DEI Coalition.



Roman Rhone - Roman is dedicated and driven student in the realm of business with a passion for racial justice. He is focused on community change and education in underrepresented communities.



Michal Ruprecht - Michal is involved in the Flint Justice Partnership, The Michigan Daily, and University of Michigan Mentorship Program. He will use these experiences to become a disruptive leader in medicine by promoting access to healthcare in underserved communities.



Luisa Sánchez - Luisa Sánchez is a Venezuelan-Cuban-American first-generation college student at the University of Michigan, studying Latina/o Studies and Political Science in the Honors Program. She is committed to supporting and uplifting the Latinx community through her work with the University of Michigan News en Español, research on Contemporary Performance in Puerto Rico, and several other community engagement efforts in Ann Arbor and Orlando.

Awardee



Taylor Smith - Taylor Smith is a 4th year student studying Business Administration with a minor in Community Action and Social Change in order to dive deeper into her passion of community development and resource building. Taylor grew up in Harper Woods, Michigan with her parents and younger brother, who are all major motivations for her work as they continue to push her to achieve success while bringing others along with her.

Awardee

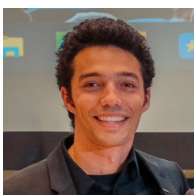


Sarah Szalai - Sarah Szalai is a community builder, creative thinker, and is driven by our collective humanity and need to care for our future now, so that we can create a community and world that is engaged, awake, and ready to take the next step. She applies these skills most notably as the founder of RAE, the Racial Awareness and Equity Task Force in Allen Park Public Schools by working to undo systems of inequity and increase support to reach the day to day experiences of BIPOC students.

Awardee



Jessica Y. Wang - Jessica is a current senior studying Molecular, Cellular, Developmental Biology with a minor in Gender & Health. She is ecstatic to be involved with Cia Siab's Anti-Hmong Violence Research Project, UROP, the Peace Corps Prep Program, Impact Investing Group and Coca-Cola Campus Ambassadors during her time at the university and hopes to continue pursuing her passions at the intersection of medicine and nonprofit work in the years to come.



Blake Weissman - Blake is a senior from the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, where he studies Business Administration. Blake's mission is to facilitate human connection to fight hatred and find unity. Blake is an associate at Hawke Ventures, an early-stage venture capital fund where he launched its first underrepresented Scout Program. The program helps underrepresented professionals and he has raised over \$350,000 in funding. Blake also serves on the Board for Spill the Honey Foundation, a nonprofit that spreads awareness about the alliance between the Black & Jewish communities during the Civil Rights Movement where he works with Dr. King's legal counsel Clarence Jones and a team of students to bring this knowledge to the world.



Magda Wojtara - Magda is a senior, graduating from the LSA honors program this semester, and majoring in Neuroscience with minors in Interdisciplinary Astronomy and Science, Technology and Society. After graduation she hopes to work further in the spheres of global citizenship, education equity and healthcare.



Becky Woolf - Becky is a sophomore studying Sociology of Health and Medicine and committed to health equity work. She is proud to be a Lead Peer Facilitator at the Barger Leadership Institute and a student researcher for the Policing and Social Justice HistoryLab.

Acronym Key

A/PIA - Asian, Pacific Islander American Studies
BSU - Black Student Union
CASC - Community Action and Social Change
CHGD - Center for Human Growth and Development
IGR - Program on Intergroup Relations
MCSP - Michigan Community Scholars Program
MESA - Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs
OAMI - Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives
SALAM - Successful Arab Leaders at Michigan

Sponsors

Co-sponsored by the University of Michigan Schools of Education, Nursing, Information, Kinesiology, Public Policy, Public Health, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Business, and Social Work (Community Action and Social Change Undergraduate Minor), as well as the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.