

APRIL

2021

COMMENCEMENT



## THE ALMA MATER HAIL TO THEE, GRAND VALLEY

*by Arthur C. Hills*

Hail to thee Grand Valley — We're loyal, steadfast, true.  
Praise our Alma Mater — We pledge our faith to you.  
Keep your banners flying, black and white and blue.  
We sing to thee Grand Valley. United we're for you!

*On the cover: Russel H. Kirkhof Center in the spring. Photos taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

# COMMENCEMENT CELEBRATIONS

Meet our newest graduates at [gvsu.edu/commencement](https://gvsu.edu/commencement)  
by selecting “digital yearbook” and “April 2021 graduates”

## Congratulations!

We know how special this occasion is, as you and your family and friends celebrate your accomplishment. We take great pride in your success and want to commend you – along with Grand Valley’s faculty and staff – for successfully navigating the adjustments necessary for completing your degree during the pandemic. You are now Lakers for a Lifetime! Please also take the opportunity to thank those who helped you reach this important milestone.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mikyia S. Aaron, J.D., '10 .....	Taylor
Victor M. Cardenas, M.P.A., '00 .....	Novi
Randall S. Damstra, M.B.A., '82 .....	Ada
Elizabeth C. Emmitt, B.A. ....	Byron Center
Susan M. Jandernoa, B.S., Vice Chair .....	West Olive
Noreen K. Myers, J.D., '72 .....	East Grand Rapids
Megan S. Rydecki, M.P.A., '07, '09, Chair .....	Grand Rapids
Kate Pew Wolters, M.S.W., D.P.S. ....	Grand Rapids
Philomena V. Mantella, Ph.D., (ex officio) .....	President of the University

## Honorary Life Members

Donna K. Brooks, L.H.D. • Dorothy A. Johnson, L.H.D. • John C. Kennedy, D.P.S.



### 1960

Michigan Legislature established Grand Valley State College in 1960. Nearly 800 acres were acquired in Allendale.



### 1962

Ground was broken for the first building, Lake Michigan Hall, in 1962.



### 1963

Grand Valley opened its doors to 226 students in September 1963, offering liberal arts coursework.



### 1972

Renamed to Grand Valley State Colleges in order to recognize the five cluster colleges, each with its own identity.



Dear Class of 2021,

Congratulations! Graduation is a time to celebrate a job well done and a goal achieved. We recognize you showed true Laker grit by persevering through a global pandemic to earn your Grand Valley degree! We extend our thanks to the family members and friends who assisted you along the way and join in your celebration. You did it!

We are proud of you as you go forward in the next step of your educational and professional journeys. Grand Valley remains committed to your success, well-being, and lifetime learning. That commitment is just one thing that sets us apart from other universities. With our Laker Lifetime Learning

Commitment, we are always ready to help you meet your goals. And we can't wait to see what's next!

You are always welcome on campus, so come back often. You are part of the Grand Valley community.

Congratulations, Lakers!

Sincerely,

Philomena V. Mantella  
President

OFFICERS OF THE UNIVERSITY

Philomena V. Mantella, Ph.D. ....	President
Jesse M. Bernal, Ph.D. ....	Chief of Staff to the President and Vice President for Inclusion and Equity
Thomas A. Butcher, J.D. ....	Vice President and General Counsel
Maria C. Cimitile, Ph.D. ....	Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
Karen M. Loth, M.A. ....	Vice President for University Development
Matthew E. McLogan, M.A. ....	Vice President for University Relations and Secretary, Board of Trustees
Gregory J. Sanial, Ph.D. ....	Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer, Board of Trustees
Miloš Topić, Ph.D. ....	Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Digital Officer
B. Donta Truss, Ed.D. ....	Vice President for Enrollment Development and Educational Outreach

Dear Graduates,

Congratulations on reaching this significant milestone in your lives. You should be very proud of your achievements and academic success. The completion of your Grand Valley degree is not a sign that you are finished, but indicates that you are prepared for what comes next; you are a lifetime learner. The world needs you more now than ever as you have the unique liberal education knowledge and skills to improve the lives of so many people. On behalf of your very proud faculty

and staff, congratulations. We thank you for letting us take part in your educational journey.

Sincerely,

Maria C. Cimitile, Ph.D.  
Provost and Executive Vice President  
for Academic and Student Affairs



GRADUATION HONORS

The cords, stoles, sashes, and flags of different colors worn by some of the graduates are part of a special commencement tradition. They represent honors distinctions and recognize academic excellence or achievements in leadership. Some of the honors are based on grade point averages; other honors involve meritorious scholarship in fields of study or notable work for a particular organization.

Whether the distinction comes as part of a national honor society or is specific to Grand Valley — such as graduating from the Frederik Meijer Honors College — the colors of the garb have special meanings. Garb awarded by national academic organizations are generally the color attributed to a particular discipline. Those awarded by the university and nonacademic organizations generally represent a level of achievement and are unique to the university.

All of the garb signifies the students' dedication and hard work during their time at GVSU — attributes that will, no doubt, play a significant role in their future as well.

For the spring 2021 graduates who may qualify for the honors distinction once final grades are posted, the designation of “honors candidates” has been granted.

Honors will be awarded as follows:

*Summa cum laude* — 4.00

*Magna cum laude* — 3.898–3.999

*Cum laude* — 3.809–3.897

A list of honor societies, awards of distinction, and recognition can be found at [gvsu.edu/commencement](https://gvsu.edu/commencement), under “honors recognition.”



**1979**  
The 1970s closed with a noteworthy addition to the campus: a football stadium, named Lubbers Stadium after President Lubbers.



**1984**  
The Great Laker, team mascot



**1996**  
A public broadcasting pledge drive took place in 1996. WGVC — later WGVU — hit the airwaves in 1973.



**2000**  
The Richard M. DeVos Center opened in 2000, giving GVSU visual significance in downtown Grand Rapids.



**2001**  
The Grand Valley community mourned together on September 11, 2001, around the Cook Carillon Tower.



**2004**  
Anishinaabek (Dance and Feast) was sponsored by Grand Valley's Native American student group.



**2010**  
Grand Valley celebrated 50 years of shaping lives!



**2011**  
The Laker for a Lifetime initiative strengthened the Grand Valley connection for students and alumni.

## GRAND VALLEY'S MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

### Mission

Grand Valley State University educates students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies. The university contributes to the enrichment of society through excellent teaching, active scholarship, and public service.

### Vision

Grand Valley State University demonstrates its commitment to providing an inclusive learning environment where all students can explore new directions, find their niches, and develop skills for life and productive careers. Grand Valley is known for increasingly innovative and outstanding teaching, recognized scholarship, significant community engagement, and excellent stewardship of its resources. Our university inspires and equips students to be active lifelong learners and global citizens. Grand Valley strives to be a model public university shaping leaders for success.

### At Grand Valley, we value:

#### Excellence

Grand Valley State University values excellence in all aspects of its enterprise.

#### Integrity

Grand Valley State University values honesty, fairness, and openness in its actions, transactions, and communications.

#### Inquiry

Grand Valley State University values inquiry, which encourages the lifelong pursuit of knowledge to improve the human condition and expand our understanding of the world.

#### Inclusiveness

Grand Valley State University values all identities, perspectives, and backgrounds and is dedicated to incorporating multiple voices and experiences into every aspect of its operations.

Learn more about Reach Higher 2025 – Grand Valley’s inclusive and iterative approach to establishing a new strategy to propel the university forward over the next four years at [gvsu.edu/reachhigher2025](https://gvsu.edu/reachhigher2025).

#### Community

Grand Valley State University values its connections to, participation with, and responsibility to local communities, West Michigan, the state, the nation, and the world.

#### Sustainability

Grand Valley State University values the guiding principles of sustainability in helping to meet the current needs of our faculty members, staff members, and students without compromising the needs and resources of future generations.

#### Innovation

Grand Valley State University encourages and appreciates innovation. We value the products, systems, and services that contribute to improvements in the well-being of individuals and our world.



## Welcome to the Alumni Family!

Congratulations and welcome to the next step in your journey.

As a Laker for a Lifetime, you continue to have access to Grand Valley resources and support - from social and professional development events and networking with fellow alumni to the university’s Laker Lifetime Learning commitment.

Visit [gvsu.edu/alumni](https://gvsu.edu/alumni) to learn more!

**GVSU Alumni**  
*Laker for a Lifetime*



**2014**

Students and faculty worked with Van Andel Institute to improve early detection of cancer and disease.



**2015**

In April 2015, Dale Boedeker became the 100,000th person to be awarded a degree from Grand Valley.



**2017**

New students pose for their first class photo.



**2019**

President Haas took his first selfie with President-elect Philomena V. Mantella, Grand Valley’s fifth president.



**2019**

During Big Splash Week, students and staff kayaked the Grand River as part of the Making Waves Initiative.



**2020**

“A Grand New Era” was the theme for the 2020 Presidents’ Ball.



**2021**

Women’s basketball plays to a crowd of fan cutouts.



**2021**

Winterfest brings students together on campus.

Today's graduates join more than 128,000 Laker alumni in being a force for positive change. We celebrate all of you and your accomplishments and wish you well as you make your mark on West Michigan, our state, and beyond.

Together, you are leaders, problem solvers, entrepreneurs, and advocates who will shape the future. You are the Laker Effect!

And don't forget – as a graduate, you are eligible to take advantage of the Laker Lifetime Learning (L3) commitment for career support, alumni networking, and financial resources set aside for you to reduce the cost of your next badge, certificate, or degree earned at Grand Valley.

Visit [gvsu.edu/L3](https://gvsu.edu/L3) to learn more.

**Congratulations to our 2021 graduates!**



**GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

[www.gvsu.edu](https://www.gvsu.edu)

Grand Valley State University is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution. It encourages diversity and provides equal opportunity in education, employment, all of its programs, and the use of its facilities. It is committed to protecting the constitutional and statutory civil rights of persons connected with the university. 4/2021

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