

**Recipients of Oberlin College Honorary Degrees
(includes Commencement Speaker*)
and Distinguished Community Service Award
1998 – 2025**

May 1998

Jerry Greenfield '78, H.H.D., Humanitarian in business

Denyce Graves '85, Mus.D., Singer

*The Hon. Damon J. Keith, L.L.D., U.S. Circuit Judge and activist

F. Champion Ward '32, H.H.D., Statesman and educator

Francine Toss, Distinguished Service Award

May 1999

Frederick S. Cross '42, Sc.D., Surgeon and inventor

Robert M. Kingdon '49, H.H.D., Historian

*John J. Sweeney, L.L.D., Labor leader and activist

May 2000

*Oscar Arias Sanchez, L.L.D., World leader and peace advocate

Louis Lane, D.M., Conductor

Eleanor Gould Packer '38, H.H.D., Grammarian and editor

William R. Perlik '48, L.L.D. Board chair, lawyer, and mediator

Roy Church, Distinguished Service Award

May 2001

Richard D. Baron '64, H.H.D., Social justice advocate

Fenner Douglass '42, D.M. (fall 2001), Organist and educator

Franco A. Farina '77, D.M., Operatic tenor

*William H. Gray III, L.L.D., Non-profit leader

Douglas T. Ross '51, Sc.D., Computer scientist

Catherine Plank, Distinguished Service Award

May 2002

Robert Conrad, H.H.D., Philanthropist

Judah M. Folkman, Sc.D., Surgeon and researcher

Tania Leon, D.M., Composer and conductor

Kenneth N. Waltz '48, L.L.D., Political theorist

Charlotte Owens Baker, Distinguished Service Award

May 2003

*Anthony Lewis, D.Humanities, Newspaperman and columnist

Edward Tarr, D.Music, Performer and musicologist

Sylvia Lee, D.Music, Pianist and vocal coach

Romila Thapar, D.Humanities, Historian and social activist

Ruby Jones, Distinguished Service Award

May 2004

David N. Baker, D. Music, Professor of Music (Jazz)

Geoffrey C. Ward, D. Humanities, Editor/author (The Civil War-PBS)

John B. Fenn D. Science, 2002 Nobel Prize in Chemistry

*Honorable Margaret H. Marshall, Doctor of Law Chief Justice of Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts

Delbert D. Mason, M.D., Distinguished Service Award

May 2005

Harrison Birtwistle, D. Music, Musician and composer

Adam Moss, D. Humanities, Journalist and editor

*Rev. William F. Schulz III, D. Humanities, Amnesty International

Ms. Harriett Thomas, Distinguished Service Award

May 2006

Marilyn Horne, D. Music, Musician and performer

*Juan Guzman Tapia, D. Humanities, Jurist and human rights advocate

Dr. Martin C. Weisskopf, D. Science, Astrophysicist

Franz Welser-Most, D. Music, Musician and conductor

Myriam J. Hallock, Distinguished Service Award

May 2007

Nancy S. Dye, D. Humanities, Historian and President of Oberlin College

William E. Cohn, M.D., '82 D. Science, Physician and inventor

*Ms. Connie Schultz, D. Letters, Columnist

Dr. Frederick N. Steiner '46, D. Music, Composer and conductor

Beverly Reep, Distinguished Service Award, Former Oberlin City Schools Superintendent

May 2008

Stuart K. Card, '66, D. Science, Scientist and innovator

Charlene Drew Jarvis, '62, D. Humanities, President of Southeastern University

James McBride, '79, D. Music & Humanities, Author and jazz musician

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, D. Humanities, Intercultural scholar, critic, and educator

*Fareed Zakaria, D. Humanities, Writer and foreign affairs scholar

Jaquita Robinson Willis, Distinguished Service Award, Oberlin community leader

May 2009

*Dr. Richard Haass '73, D. Humanities, Writer and foreign affairs scholar

Bobbie Knable, '58, D. Humanities, Educator

Dr. Martha Lepow '48, D. Science, Medical research pioneer

Rev. Lawrence Jones, '56, D. Humanities, Educator (*in absentia*)

Adam Lewis, D. Humanities, Humanitarian

Dr. Robert Wurtz '58, D. Science, Leader in Neuroscience research

Rev. Mary Hammond, Distinguished Service Award, Oberlin community leader

Rev. Steve Hammond, Distinguished Service Award, Oberlin community leader

April and May 2010

Dr. Camille O. Cosby, D. Humanities; Educator, Author, Philanthropist
Stevland Morris, D. Music, Musician
*Julie Taymor '74, D. Humanities; Director of theater, film, and opera
Anne Krueger, '53, D. Humanities, International Economist
Rev. James Lawson Jr., D. Humanities, Civil Rights leader
Dr. Diane Meier, '73, D. Sciences, Physician
Dr. Peter Molnar, '65, D. Sciences, Professor and Geologist
Robert Spano, '83, D. Music, Conductor and musician
Carol Longworth, Distinguished Service Award, Oberlin Community Leader

May 2011

Stephen Clapp, '61, D. Music, Dean Emeritus, The Julliard School
*Helene Gayle, D. Science, Expert on health, global development, and humanitarian issues
Martin Harwit, '51, D. Science, Astrophysicists, Professor Emeritus, Cornell University
Sidney Mintz, D. Science, Anthropologists, Professor Emeritus, John Hopkins University
Bernice Reagon, D. Music, founder of *Sweet Honey in the Rock*, Professor Emeritus
James White, Distinguished Service Award

May 2012

Martha Bergmark '70, D. Humanities, non-profit public interest attorney
James Burrows '62, D. Fine Arts, television show creator, executive producer, director
Stanley Cowell '62, D. Music, jazz pianist, composer
Margaret Cheney '76, D. Science, scientist, teacher
*Dr. Thomas Frieden '82, D. Science, scientist, researcher
Ntosake Shange, D. Fine Arts, performance artist, playwright, novelist, author (*in absentia*)
Richard Dunn, Distinguished Service Award

May 2013

*Tracy Chevalier '84, D. Fine Arts, historical novelist
Johathan Demme, D. Fine Arts, writer, producer, film director
Norma Percy '63, D. Fine Arts, writer, documentary film producer
David Evans '63, D. Science, scientist, teacher, researcher
Larry Squire '63, D. Science, research scientist
Richard Taruskin, D. Music, American musicologist and music critic
Booker Peek, Distinguished Service Award

May 2014

Christopher Browning, '67 D. Humanities, historian, author
Marta Kutas, '71, D. Science, psychophysicologist and scientific researcher
Dr. Groesbeck Parham, '70, D of Science and Humanities, educator, activist
*Thomas Perez, U.S. Secretary of Labor, D. Humanities
Harald Vogel, D. Music, organist, educator and author
Patricia Holsworth, Distinguished Service Award

May 2015

Jeremy Denk, '90, D. Music, pianist and writer

Thomas Ebbesen, '76, D. Science, research scientist

*Marian Wright Edelman, D. Humanities, founder of Children's Defense Fund

Robert Jervis, '62, D. Humanities, author and educator

Robert Kuttner, '65, D. Letters, economic and political author

*Michelle Obama, D. Humanities, FLOTUS

Allison Vulgamore, '80, D. Music, president and chief executive officer of the Philadelphia Orchestra Association

Helen Taylor, '55, Distinguished Service Award

May 2016

Alison Bechdel '81, D. Humanities, cartoonist and writer

Robert Lemle '75, D. Humanities, humanitarian

*Jessye Norman, D. Music, opera and concert singer

Robert Singer '66, D. Science, biologist

Rev. Frank Chikane, D. Humanities, religious leader and peace advocate

Don '47 and Mary Louise '47 VanDyke, Distinguished Service Award

May 2017

Rosemary Ahtuanguak, D. Humanities, Inupiaq activist, environmentalist

Lonnie Bunch III, D. Humanities, Smithsonian African American Museum Dir.

Eddie Daniels, D. Music, Classical and Jazz musician

Brenda Way, D. Fine Arts, Founder Oberlin Dance Collective

*Darren Walker, D. Humanities, President Ford Foundation

Benjamin K. Ezinga '01, Joshua A. Rosen '01, Naomi M. Sabel '02, Distinguished Community Service Award

May 2018

Roy and Aiko Ebihara, Distinguished Community Service Award

Cary Fowler, D. Humanities, agriculturalist

*David Sedaris, D. Fine Arts, author and humorist

Christoph Wolff, D. Music, Professor Emeritus, Harvard University

May 2019

Joanne Chory, D. Science, climate scientist

*Lisa Jackson, D. Humanities, environmentalist

Robert Krulwich '69, D. Fine Arts, journalist

2020

No Commencement due to COVID-19 pandemic

May 2021

Dr. Renata Adler, D. Fine Arts, journalist and author

*Peter Baker, D. Fine Arts, journalist and author

John Harbison, D. Music, composer and conductor

Dr. Michael Sorrell '88, D. Humanities, President of Paul Quinn College

Gail Wood '70, Distinguished Community Service Award

June 2022

*Josh Angrist '82, D. Science, economist and Nobel Prize winner
Dr. James Anthony '75, Distinguished Community Service Award
John Brombaugh, Mus.D., organist/organ builder
George E. Lewis, Mus.D., composer
Kurt Russell, Distinguished Service Award

May 2023

Christl Donnelly '88, D. Science, epidemiologist
Natasha Katz '81, D. Fine Arts, lighting designer
Eugene C. Matthews, Distinguished Community Service Award
*Richard Powers, D. Humanities, author
Tommie Smith, D. Humanities, activist and Olympic gold medalist
Joe Womack, D. Humanities, activist

May 2024

Kathryn Anastos '75, D. Science, physician and researcher
John F. Gates '72 and Linda Myles Gates '65, Distinguished Community Service Award
*Rhannon Giddens '00, Mus.D., musician, performer, composer, scholar

May 2025

Elizabeth "Liz" Burgess '73, Distinguished Community Service Award
Jennifer L. Morgan '86, D. Humanities, historian
*Sonia Shah '90, D. Humanities, author and journalist
Dr. Timothy M. Uyeki '81, D. Science, physician and scientist