

HONORS CONVOCATION CEREMONY SCRIPT

May 3, 2023 - 7:00 PM

President Reisberg:

Please be seated.

Trustees, Honored guests, Faculty, Parents, families, and student Honorees, and all who are gathered here to celebrate Hartwick's tradition of learning:

Welcome to the Hartwick College Honors Convocation.

Tonight, we gather to celebrate the scholarly success of very talented, very determined, and very accomplished Hartwick College students.

Each student who we honor has excelled in the scholarly enterprise that we claim as distinctly Hartwick.

Each student who we celebrate has distinguished himself in the eyes of his professors and mentors.

Each of our honorees has earned the praise and recognition that we will convey this evening.

There is no ordinary success in this extraordinary time.

So, it is right that we should gather in celebration!

Let us begin.

I introduce to you Dr. Jim Buthman, Associate Professor of Political Science and Faculty Chair, to present the awards for academic achievement in areas of study.

**AWARDS FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN
AREAS OF STUDY J. Buthman**

The individual awards for academic achievement in areas of study will be given out alphabetically by each student's last name. Students, as I read your name, please come forward to the stage, where you will be presented with your award or awards by President Reisberg.

Ashtyn Allen

Excellence in Education Award

Rebeka Alva

Modern & Classical Languages Department Prize; and the Sarah Keyes Bresee Scholarship for Native American, African American, or Hispanic American Students

Ross Arvin

John Clemens Scholarship for Study in Business

Tristan Bachorik

Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society

Nicholas Bantis

The New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants Award for Superior Scholarship in Taxation

Chloe Bartholomew

The Dornburgh Memorial Award

Hannah Bochniak

The American Chemical Society Award

Kaleigh Brady

The Dr. Charles W. Leitzell Music Award

Sierra Brown

The Chemical Rubber Company Press Award

Megan Bryla

The Alfred F. Massari Memorial Language Award

Cody Buchman

The Deborah M Allen Brennan Award

Jake Buchman

The Arkell Foundation Scholarship in Music

Nicholas Cacciola

The New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants Award for Superior Scholarship in Accounting

Samantha Caceres

The Edith M. Lacey Memorial Nursing Scholarship; and the Grace Jones Spain Scholarship

Nicholas Canney

The Alice Dorset Award in Economics; and the Frederick M. Binder H'85 Scholar Athlete Award

Mia Capanna

The Richard K. Meeker Award in Creative Writing

Lauren Carey

The Joan B. Gratz Prize in English; and the John Dewey Award

Nicole Chaora

The David A. Diener Mathematics Achievement Award;
and the Harry “Ed” Dorr ’49 and Joan Ullman Dorr ’51
Scholarship

Seth Cislo

The President Margaret L. Drugovich P’12 Award for
Personal Courage

Patrick Close

The Peter D. Junemann ’65 Memorial Award

Sam Cole

The Departmental Award for Excellence In Computer
Science

Adaline Colligan

The Alice Dornet Award in Political Science

Heidi Collischonn

The Thurston J. Dox Memorial Scholarship in Music

Naomi Cook

The Gladys Brooks Nursing Scholarship

Akshay Dammar

The Departmental Award for Excellence in Computer Science

Michael Demarais

The Dr. Elizabeth V. Lamphere Scholarship

Louis Doherty

The Al Gallodoro Award for Outstanding Achievement in Musical Performance

Oiram Duenas-Valles

The Kenneth Golden Award for Outstanding Design or Technical Achievement

Adrianna Dugan

The Behrend Mehrtens '47 Memorial Scholarship; and the Otto Steinbach Memorial Scholarship in Chemistry

Paige Eaton

The Anna Sonder Prize of the American Academy of Poets (Honorable Mention); and the Sigma Alpha Iota Honor (Scholastic) Certificate

Amberlyn Edens

The Arkell Hall Award in Theatre Arts

Chesachi Chisomaga Emeh

The Duncan B. Smith Award for Exceptional Creativity in Theatre Arts; and the H. Claude Hardy Award

Sofia Escobar

The Anna Sonder Prize of the American Academy of Poets (Winner)

Tatiana Fernandez

The Carol A. Bocher and Earl E. Deubler, Jr. H'91 Scholarship

Elisabeth Fortin

Nursing Alumni Memorial Scholarship

Emma French

The Community Bank N.A. Scholarship in Memory of Linda S. French '85

Sydney Gagnon

The Frederick M. Binder H'85 Scholar-Athlete Award

Bangely Garcia

The Dr. James J. Elting H'13 Memorial Scholarship

Jackson Gilstrap

The Keith A. Youngman '05 Award in Economics

Lucero Gomez

The Duncan B. Smith Award for Exceptional Creativity in Theatre Arts

Mickaela Gulla

The H. Claude Hardy Award

Brynita Jean Haas

The Chemical Rubber Company Press Award; and the Helen & Howard Mayer Scholarship

Lilian Hagy

The Edward Rayher/Richard J. Kohlmeyer Award; and the Outstanding First-Year Student Award in Biology

Kylee Hosmer

The Semenenko Clark Award for Outstanding First Year Art Major

Peyton Humphries

The Dr. David 'Hutch' Hutchison Award

Lindsey Kelly

The Kay Walkingstick Award

Brianna Kempf

The Gladys Brooks Nursing Scholarship

Sarah Kipruto

The Dr. Ronald M. Brzenk Endowed Scholarship

Simi Kishore

The Lewis Henry Morgan Award in Anthropology

Quwayne Lawrence

The Dr. James J. Elting H'13 Memorial Scholarship

Colleen 'Robin' Long

The Peter D. Junemann '65 Memorial Award

James Lukasik

The John & Gertrude Rohrer Award in Mathematics

John 'Jack' Mahn

The Stephen L. Green '59 American Governance Award

Kitzia Rubi Martinez-Rojas

The Omicron Rho Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau Award

Austin Matlack-Grey

The Elizabeth S. Hoopes Memorial Award

Richard Mercurio

The Richard K. Meeker Award in English

Clara Michel

The Barbara F. Wilder H'93 and Phillip S. Wilder, Jr. H'93
Citizenship Award

Katie Miller

The Edith M. Lacey Memorial Scholarship in Nursing

Kaylee Miller

The Alice Dorset Award in Psychology

Angelle Montanaro

The Undergraduate Award in Analytical Chemistry

Kaitlyn Montgomery

The Tammy Linsner '89 Memorial Award

William Napierala

The Chemical Rubber Company Press Award

Victoria Nash

The Thurston J. Dox Memorial Scholarship in Music

Willa Ness

The Lambda Alpha National Scholarship

Joelle Ocheltree

The Robert E. Newnham '50, H'96 Mathematics
Scholarship

Alexandra Owusu

The A. O. Fox Memorial Hospital Excellence in Clinical Practice Award

Libby Parody

The Dr. Robert E. & Mrs. MaryAlice Mansbach Scholarship

Katryn Pilliod

The Edith M. Lacey Memorial Nursing Scholarship

Autumn Pope

The Beta Beta Beta Award

Madeline Pressnall

The Arkell Hall Award in Art History; and the Semenenko Clark Award for Outstanding Junior Art History Paper

Gianny Ramos Maya

The Albert H. Ubert H'79 Scholarship

Camila Ramos-Mercado

The Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society

Roselor Remplets

The Harriet Babcock '46 Nursing Scholarship

Benjamin Roden-Reynolds

The Undergraduate Award in Organic Chemistry

Jaylene Rodriguez

The Arkell Hall Award in Theatre Arts

Ryan Russo

The Alban W. Hoopes H'83 Memorial Scholarship

Chaw Akari San

The Otto Steinbach Memorial Award in Chemistry; the Detweiler Global Fund Award; and the Undergraduate Award for Achievement in Organic Chemistry

Freddie Sanchez

The New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants Award for Superior Scholarship in Auditing

Nuria Santos

The Sanyo Scholarship

Reid Sinkinson

The Arkell Hall Award in Art

Victoria Spina

The Rob Jordan '98 Memorial Scholarship

Sara Staup

The Jaune Quick-To-See Smith Award

Aniyah Stephen

The Dr. Ronald M. Brzenk Endowed Scholarship; and the Mathematics Association of America Membership Award

Michael Suter

The Departmental Award for Excellence in Computer Science

Sasha Taranto

The Sigma Alpha Iota College Honor (Collegiate) Award

Arianna Thompson

The Close Family Scholarship

Jake Thorry

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Membership Award

Leah Tolley

The Linda S. French '85 Memorial Award in Business Administration

Ashley Tricarico

The Diener Fellowship Award in Computer Science

Caitlyn Unger

The E. Perrie Saxton '53 Nursing Scholarship

Gabriel Valenzuela

The Franz Boas Award in Anthropology; and the
Semenenko Clark Award for Outstanding Senior Thesis
Presentation

Kelli-Jo VanValkenburgh

The Edith M. Lacey Memorial Nursing Scholarship

Allison Villalobos

The Edith M. Lacey Memorial Nursing Scholarship

Alani Waites

The John F. Kingston Award in Theatre

Madison Wayman

The Sarah Keyes Bresee Scholarship for Economics and
Business Administration

Joshua Worrell

The Socratic Award

Let's give another round of applause to the recipients of
individual academic achievement awards.

INTRODUCTION OF Gallodoro Awardee J. Buthman

I now am pleased to introduce Louis Doherty, Class of 2023, who has been selected to perform the Musical Interlude tonight as the recipient of the Al Gallodoro Award for Outstanding Achievement in Musical Performance. He will perform Valse Vanité composed by Rudy Wiedoeft.

Abraham L. Kellogg Oratorical Prize S. Navarette

When the College moved to Oneonta in the 1920s, New York State Supreme Court Justice Abraham L. Kellogg of Oneonta, a noted orator, made substantial financial contributions to help fund the College's relocation and to help it through the Great Depression. Kellogg, a charter member of the Board of Trustees and Chair of the Board for 15 years, also offered a prize of \$50 in gold for the best original oration delivered at the College's first commencement exercises. To honor Judge Kellogg, the

College has continued the tradition of recognizing the best orator among graduating seniors, as selected by the faculty and professional staff, with the Kellogg Oratorical Prize.

Seniors are nominated by classmates to participate in a competition that includes several rounds of review by a committee of Hartwick community members, who narrow the field to three finalists from whom you will hear this evening. Faculty and professional staff present tonight will vote in an online poll to select the best orator from among these three speakers to receive the Abraham L. Kellogg Oratorical Prize at Commencement. We thank the seniors who participated in the competition.

Our first Kellogg speaker is Chesachi Chisomaga Emeh. Chesachi is a Theatre Arts and Sociology major.

Kellogg Presentation [Chesachi Chisomaga Emeh]

Good afternoon, everyone.

For those of you who may not know me, my name is Chesachi Chisomaga Emeh. Three facts about my name.

It is of West African origin from the Igbo tribe in Southeast Nigeria. The name “Chesachi” serves as a prayer of perseverance that, when uttered in times of trouble, summons the spirit within you.

Finally, I imagine that most of you—let’s say 80%—cannot say “Chesachi Chisomaga” three times fast.

As complex as it is, I truly love my name. And if you’ve ever met a Nigerian, you know that we take immense pride in our names. And so I take pride in mine:

“Chesachi Chisomaga.” I admire its intentionality, and I revel in its cadences and even sometimes its difficulty.

For most of my life, I have visualized my name as a crown that I wear. And I wear it with pride.

When I came to the United States for the first time on my way to Hartwick College and I handed my passport to the lady at immigration, she tilted her head and said ‘*chachki chimichanga?*’ “*Chachki chimichanga?*”

The audacity.

In this simple exchange, my crown of a name was recast

as a fried burrito: a *chimichanga*. The mispronunciation was no doubt an honest mistake on her part but there was something about that ‘welcome’ that made me shrink in the moment. If you have a name that looks unique, then you understand the subtle awkwardness, even embarrassment, that ensues when it’s mispronounced and you have to—sort of—defend it.

I suddenly feared that I would have to navigate a new country with an unfamiliar name and that each successive exchange would further dull my crown’s luster.

I had, after all, seen Nigerian names become tarnished. Growing up my siblings and I had an aunt we regularly teased because her name was “Onyinyechi” which means ‘gift’ but shortly after moving to the UK, she came to be called ‘chichi.’ I didn’t want to be a “Chichi.”

And yet there I was calling my dad later on the day of arrival in the States, asking for suggestions for a new name.

He vehemently disapproved.

He replied, “Aha aguru mmadu na eso ya. Kwu nye iki kere na aha gi.”

It’s a saying that means: “A name you give yourself follows you, it is your responsibility to speak power to your name.”

This conversation marked a new beginning for me on the power of my name. The decision to go *only* by my true name is one I can look back on with pride, noting that I chose wisely.

Furthermore, it dawned on me that on the day of my arrival in the United States, I was also heading to a town and a campus whose names were as unfamiliar to me as my name would be to the people who lived there.

And this reminder—that the names “Hartwick” and “Oneonta”—were as foreign to me as my name would be to those who would come to care for me.

It reminds me of the deeper meaning to the

saying my dad recited to me that day. “Kwu nye iki kere na aha gi.”

The saying serves as a reminder that when you choose a name, you play a big part in what that name means to you and in the kind of influence it will exercise over others. It is a reminder that you alone can speak power to your name.

Nigerians also believe that people choose new names very precisely in order to identify themselves and sometimes to identify each other collectively as a community. Well, four years ago, out of the three? four? schools that invited me to join their communities, I chose the name, the college and the community, “Hartwick.”

Each of us in this room this evening did so as well.

And in August of 2019, I would have had to make a decision on what I wanted this name to mean to me.

What power would I want the name “Hartwick” to have – for me, if for no one else – when I return to campus as an alumnus, ten years from now, or twenty?

Well, I can't yet say what my future self will think, but at this hour, I can speak about the last four years.

I am proud to say I chose wisely.

Because the name "Hartwick" for me now names far more than what I thought it amounted to in 2019: a school tucked away in the hills of upstate New York. On this evening, May 4, 2023, "Hartwick" is a name that means "home," that means "community." I have spent the last four years piecing together experiences that give a new kind of power to this name that was largely foreign to me in 2019.

"Hartwick" is a name that conjures a rich array of experiences: like

- lounging in hammocks in the summertime; *or*
- fighting for my life on the stairs in the wintertime; *or*
- gaining twelve pounds in my first semester year
 - And then losing four pounds when I lived in Oyaron and had class in Anderson; *or*
 - the endless

support I received from professors in class; *or*

- how I found my lifelong friends flipping burgers at Table Rock.

The point is we don't typically have the chance to choose our own name but we all chose this one.

"Hartwick" is a name that we share in common, and wherever we find ourselves, it will conjure a meaning unique to each of us.

And if we are blessed enough to share a name then we have the responsibility to speak some power to it.

Thank you.

Imeela: *go well.*

**ANDREW B. SAXTON FELLOWSHIPS J.
Buthman**

Thank you, Chesachi.

Each year academic departments are invited to nominate a student for the **ANDREW B. SAXTON**

FELLOWSHIP. These students serve as assistants in their departments and receive a small scholarship. Whether they work as tutors or research assistants, they are viewed by their departments as an important resource.

As I announce your name, please come forward, be greeted by the President. I ask the audience to reserve applause until all of this year's Saxton Fellows have been announced.

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Accounting | Sean Morris |
| Actuarial Math and Economics | Roselyn Dumerville |
| Anthropology | Tianna Wyskowski |
| Art | Ella Van Engen |
| Art History | Gabriel Valenzuela |
| Biochemistry | Chelsea Kotey |
| Biology | Sebastian Knowles |
| Business Administration | Ross Arvin |
| Chemistry | Adrianna Dugan |

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Computer Science | Austin Blair |
| Creative Writing | Sofia Escobar |
| Criminal Justice | Julia Kane |
| Education | Austin Matlack-Grey |
| English | Victoria Nash |
| Environment, Sustainability & Society | Mickey Bracken |
| Geology | Alyssa Schaeffer |
| Global Studies | Tyler Osterhout |
| History | Josephine Becker |
| Mathematics | Tristani Makharashvili |
| Music | Benjamin Hulbert |
| Music Education | Heidi Collischonn |
| Nursing | Megan Harris |
| Philosophy | Makenzie Kensel |
| Political Science | John Reichel |
| Psychology | Riley Gancio |
| Public Health | Samantha Gauthier |
| Sociology | Luisa Siniscalchi |

Spanish

Madilynne Smith

Theatre Arts

Liliana Buettner

Please join me in recognizing Saxton Fellows for 2023-24.

Our second Kellogg speaker is Pauller Awino Musyoka, who is a Psychology and Political Science major.

Kellogg Presentation [Pauller Awino Musyoka]

My experience at Hartwick has been beautiful. I choose this word because it is simple yet accurate. I choose it because beauty is not synonymous with perfection. Scars, for example, can be beautiful. Snow, even when it is cold and biting, is beautiful. People are beautiful, flaws and all. My time here has been especially beautiful because every event, interaction and person has held up a mirror and allowed an invaluable opportunity for reflection. My professors. My fellow students. Staff. Alumni. Even prospective families who are yet to join the Hartwick family but who visit and are part of the Hartwick experience, even

just for one day. I am grateful to have had the time and opportunity to figure out who was staring back at me.

Sometimes, the reflection has been unfamiliar, or more accurately, obscured. One day while I was working at John Christopher's Cafe, for instance, someone said to me, "You're the lady who gives the speeches, right?" As I rang him up for his single espresso shot, I couldn't keep the shock from painting my face. Surely I wasn't grown up enough to qualify being addressed as a lady. And I have *definitely* done things on campus that did *not* involve giving speeches. Contrary to what my roommates or friends might tell you, I do *not* spend all my time delivering monologues designed to hold people hostage, listening to me. This interaction did get me thinking, "Who am I to other people? And, "Who are other people to me?"

Hartwick is a small enough community that we like to say that everyone gets to know everyone else. This notion may be a little exaggerated, but we *do* get to see slivers of each other in our daily interactions. To me, for example, the

person asking if I am the lady who gives the speeches is the skateboarding nursing student who orders single espresso shots. At Hartwick, we are many things, and we encapsulate many selves. We walk around with certain fragments of ourselves being more visible than others. I am indeed the person who gives the speeches. I am also the person who pushed to have a mechanical bull at one of our events, and I have been known to be a person who hates cheese.

Thinking of everyone as a mirror allows us to see the aspects of our experience that are reflected in our shared existence. For example, it takes only one moment to look around and realize that the student athlete in your class is an amazing thespian who also handles your packages at the Copy Center as part of his work study job. A visit to B-side might reveal that your Philosophy professor is also a wickedly talented musician in a band called Jump the Shark. Many of us have discovered that Ms. Kim is not just a barista but also the soother of those suffering through bad days, and an inspirer of laughs.

All of my experiences at Hartwick have helped refine the person who arrived on my first day expecting from myself nothing less than perfection, into someone who can take in the beauty of every moment I am given, and of everyone around me. Our shared Hartwick experience fine-tunes our sense of ourselves and our world: from the alumni who speak fondly about how many more bars there used to be in Oneonta; to the international exchange students who arrive for one semester of study, not knowing what their experience may expose them to. Perhaps our experiences have simply unearthed who we have been all along, like gems that needed the dust brushed off, but it is evident that we have all been impacted. You are here today because the person you met on the first day of orientation week laughed at a joke you made, and this helped you feel less homesick. You are here today because you may once have been crying in the bathroom and someone asked if you needed help. You have seen some part of yourself reflected in the person standing in line for

chicken nuggets at the Commons, just as they may have seen some part of themselves reflected in you as you panic because time is running out: to submit homework; to complete grad school applications; to whip up a creative *and* sexy Halloween costume. I see myself in my supervisor, who makes it a point to tell us when there are pop ups offering free food, just as I see myself in my club advisor, who collects funko-pops and has a messy office. Even the people we do not like serve as a reflection of who we do not want to be, and that's okay.

Everyone at Hartwick is a mirror and a reflection. Some days, the reflection staring back at you is your professor, talking openly about his struggle with depression. Other days you may walk past a happier version of yourself heading to Stack Lounge with their friends, maybe to ride a mechanical bull. Sometimes, you are the helper, giving a first-year student directions to "Shineman," just as somebody once directed you to "Dewar".

We touch each other's lives here in ways that we may never really know. We influence each other in ways that are both profound and unremarkable, and we don't even think about it. We assume our actions are small, maybe even insignificant. But people remember these gestures: they define you by them. That's why every time I hear someone say, "She's the girl who works at Table Rock," I think to myself, "I'm glad to have played a small role in your life, stranger, because you have played a role in mine."

Sharing my life with all of you these past four years has been beautiful, and I will be eternally grateful.

2023-24 WANDERSEE AWARDS

L. Bongiorno

The Winifred D. Wandersee Scholar-in-Residence Award is given in memory of Professor of History Dr. Win Wandersee, who cared deeply about both her students and her scholarship, and who enjoyed a national reputation as an historian of women in the work force. One of her many

lasting contributions was to shepherd the Scholar-in-Residence program later named in her memory.

This award encourages faculty scholarship within the context of a liberal arts college. Award winners work on scholarly or creative projects that promise to contribute significantly to their fields. They are given financial support and some release time to work on their research projects and to inform the campus community of their findings through lectures and other means. Two awards are typically given annually. As I read your name and briefly describe your project, please **stand to be recognized**.

Dr. Katharine Kreisher, Professor of Art, will prepare a retrospective of selected artwork which, throughout her career, has centered on feminist themes. The retrospective will be exhibited at the Yager Museum of Art & Culture and other locations.

Dr. Stephanie Rozene, Associate Professor of Art, will travel to Mexico City and Oaxaca to study traditional clay cooking pots, as part of a broader project to investigate

how culturally specific recipes are informed by traditional cooking tools.

THE 2023 TEACHER-SCHOLAR AWARD

The Teacher-Scholar Award helps us remember that the Hartwick community includes some exceptional teachers who are largely responsible for the academic success of the students we recognize here tonight. Our model of the teacher-scholar rests on the assumption that good teaching begins with good scholarship.

In presenting the Teacher-Scholar award, Hartwick honors a faculty member who has provided intellectual leadership to the campus community as both a teacher and a scholar. This award recognizes a faculty member who enhances teaching with their own scholarship, research, or creative work. The recipient integrates the perspective of seeker and teacher, and strengthens the College's academic climate by demonstrating to students and colleagues the value and excitement of scholarly inquiry.

Current faculty who have won this award are a roll call of remarkable scholars and teachers: Mary Allen, Connie Anderson, Zsuzsanna Balogh-Brunstad, Richard Barlow, David Cody, John Dudek, Laurel Elder, Carli Ficano, Eric Johnson, Steff Rocknak, Stephanie Rozene, and Parker Troischt.

These are the names that Hartwick students and faculty colleagues will remember for the rest of their lives. Please join me in recognizing them.

We now add another name to this list. The recipient of the 2023 Teacher-Scholar Award is **Dr. Stephanie Carr**. Dr. Carr, please step forward to be recognized.

Dr. Stephanie Carr has had the full Hartwick experience: she worked with faculty mentors on her research as a Hartwick student and graduated with a B.S. in Biochemistry in 2006. She earned her Ph.D. in Geochemistry at the Colorado School of Mines in 2013 -- and couldn't get enough of Hartwick College. She returned

here to teach, starting as an Assistant Professor of Biology in 2017. Stephanie teaches the Microbiology of Disease, Bioinformatics, and Epidemiology, and she has mentored students in Biology and in Public Health. She is committed to teaching the whole student and talks with students about how they can improve their “soft skills” like curiosity and engaged communication. She says that she loves introducing students to the wonderful world of microbiology because seeing them realize that their bodies host 10 times more microbial cells than human cells is (quote) “like reading *Horton Hears a Who* year after year. The discoveries we enjoy together are glorious.”

In her time at Hartwick, Stephanie has been awarded two grants from the National Science Foundation and has involved Hartwick students directly in this research. This has included taking them out to sea for oceanographic sampling trips or to nearby geothermal boreholes. Several of the students Stephanie has mentored have been awarded Freedman Prizes, an internal Hartwick grant that recognizes

and supports student and faculty collaborative work. And she has traveled with students – as partners and presenters – to the American Society of Microbiology, where one of the students she has worked with was recognized for an outstanding research presentation. Stephanie is relentless in her efforts to support student research and presentation. She not only builds these costs into her own successful grant applications, but also mentors students to apply for their own grants.

Stephanie has a sign on her research lab door that makes her colleagues and students smile. The sign reads: “It’s not searching, it is called RE-SEARCH. So do it again.” This speaks to Stephanie Carr’s dedication as a serious scientist who celebrates the joy of discovery and accepts the unavoidable tedium – and models this for her students.

Please join me again in congratulating the 2023 Teacher-Scholar awardee, Dr. Stephanie Carr.

My name is Andy Piefer and I'm a professor in the Department of Chemistry. It is my privilege and pleasure to introduce the third of our Kellogg Oratory finalists, Avery Piefer, who is a Sociology major.

Kellogg Presentation [Avery Piefer]

This past J-Term, I participated in one of our study abroad programs, traveling to Central Europe to learn about populism. In the course of our travels, my professor, Dr. Karl Seeley, mentioned something in passing which has remained with me ever since. His memorable comment did not—I will forewarn you--concern populism. We were discussing language and Dr. Seeley shared with us that when students begin a learning journey—say, about language (or about populism or *even* about Chemistry)—they believe that they know *all* they must know in order to succeed. As, however, they push further into their studies, they begin to understand the wealth of information that they have yet to

master. In other words, what they *really* acquire is an inkling of just how much they do not know.

Something *I* learned in Europe is that Dr. Seeley is a master of languages, a polyglot, speaking German, Hungarian and Czech on our trip. And yet, if one of us asked him about whether he considers himself a master of languages, he would always say that he knows only *some* German, *some* Hungarian, *some* Czech, no matter how fluent he seems.

While I'm not joining you this evening to comment on the power of speaking a foreign language, or on Dr. Seeley's endless bank of knowledge—language, economics, music theory, *goulash*—I *am* here to explore, as time permits, this idea of uncertainty.

Most of our lives, beginning when we're children, we are asked questions such as: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" or, as we get older, "Will you be going to college?" When you're little, the answers to these questions seem apparent, because the questions themselves seem

obvious. My fourth-grade self wrote in her fourth-grade English journal: “I am going to have twins, become a lawyer and get married,” to which my teacher responded (in a marginal comment): “Hopefully not in that order.” As we age, the questions may stay the same, but they seem harder to answer: they seem more *real*, more *serious*. And by the time you hit adulthood—you know, at the ripe age of eighteen—*boom*, people begin to expect you to have answers to some of these questions.

So there I was, eighteen years old, graduating from Oneonta High School and beginning to feel the weight of the world on my shoulders. My fourth-grade self still held some sway: everything would be ok because I had a plan. I would attend Nazareth College as a music education major. I’d get my teaching certifications, move out of the house on Hemlock Road, become a high school band director, reunite with my high school boyfriend and get engaged. “Simple goals,” I told myself.

For those who may not know me, a little life update may now be in order. I am graduating from Hartwick College with a sociology degree, working as a barista while being contentedly single. The cherry on top? I have *no* idea what I will do after college, which post-graduate phase of my life is nearly upon me. For years I had been the person with a plan; plans gave me comfort because they eliminated fear of not knowing. But why do we fear being uncertain in the first place? Why is “I don’t know” judged an unacceptable response to questions about our future? Why are we so uncomfortable sharing with others that we aren’t quite certain what lies ahead for us?

I may know less about my future now than I thought I did as a high school graduate—heck, as a fourth-grade diarist—but for the first time since my childhood, I am *content* with where I am. Do I know what I’m going to be doing this time next year, or in five years, or in ten? No. But I *do* know one thing: I am happy. I’ve worked hard these past few years: doing homework, working a part-time

job, spending time with friends and family, and even just existing. I have lived my life for 22 years on my terms, and little of what I have done and experienced has gone as planned. And yet here I am, about to accept a diploma for a degree in a discipline I didn't know I had the least interest in four years ago.

These admissions—about the sideways nature of my college life—bring me to my main point. Our society, our culture, places too much emphasis on knowing, or on being certain that we know what we know, or on pretending to know what we *know* we don't know. I'm sure you've heard the spiel about how “college helps you find out who you really are,” but I'm going to challenge the truth of this so-called truism, because I'm not fully sure yet myself: of who I am, much less of who I *really* am. Think about it: how are we expected to have our whole lives planned out after experiencing only a quarter of a full life?

Feeling confident that you know what you know is great, don't get me wrong; if you knew in high school where you

would be when you graduate from college—and if your plan actually worked, if you actually realized your plan—congratulations, I’m genuinely happy, and maybe even a tad jealous that your ship sailed into port.

But for those of us for whom *discovery* is a daily act, an hourly experience, we have learned to accept and even embrace this idea and this *state* of uncertainty. As Dr. Seeley said, novices may judge themselves to be geniuses according to how much they think they know—convinced they know themselves and the world like the back of their hand—but *truly* experienced people understand that with each new discovery there’s still so much left to learn. Dr. Seeley may have been speaking about a mindset unique to academics, but I challenge you to invite doubt and uncertainty into your lives: to look further and deeper into your life, on this campus and beyond.

I have the advantage over my high school self of four years of life experience on which to draw, and I am only now beginning to realize that I am still learning about

myself. There's so much left to discover. And—as I have said—I am happy with this state of only-just-knowing.

What's the point of stressing over years of whats and whys and hows when you can just let those questions emerge—engage with them; give them air to breathe, room to move in—while being happy with where you are, with *who* you are? I personally only have one established plan for my future: I am going to be happy. And for me, that's enough of a plan for now.

If anything about that idea resonates this evening, I ask you to try something more—try something for me, or better still, for yourself: take a deep breath and confront your inner “I don't know.” Give yourself a second to embrace that slightly uncomfortable uncertainty.

Who knows what the future has in store for us? *I* don't, but I am excited to find out.

FACULTY SCHOLARS

L. Bongiorno

Thank you, Avery.

In 1967, the Board of Trustees established the John Christopher Hartwick Scholarship as the award of highest distinction at the College. Faculty in each department nominate rising seniors, based on academic achievement, leadership and character, for this honor. To be nominated for the JCH Scholarship is in itself a high honor, worthy of College-wide recognition. Students nominated to compete for the Scholarships are named **Faculty Scholars**.

This year's 29 Faculty Scholars, from whom the JCH Scholars were chosen, are an impressive group, all with amazing curricular and co-curricular resumes. Each will receive an honors cord, a specially chosen book, and a leather book weight as reminders of their academic achievement for years to come.

Scholars, as I call your names, please come forward,
greet the President, and receive your award.

Art & Art History;
and Psychology

Melanie Mohn

Biology

Quwayne Lawrence
Emily Madigan
Angelina Maselli

Business Administration
& Accounting

Victoria Spina
Faith Weaver

Chemistry

Michael Demarais

Computer Science

Tristani Makharashvili

Criminal Justice

Noah Hurt

Economics

Madison Wayman

Economics
and Mathematics

Joelle Ocheltree

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Physics | Nicole Chaora |
| Political Science | Victoria Balfe Daviti Meskheli |
| Psychology | Abigail McCleary Lily Sheffler-Naylor |
| Public Health | Brady Cummings |

Please join me in recognizing all the 2023-24 Faculty Scholars.

JOHN CHRISTOPHER HARTWICK AWARDS

From among the 29 Faculty Scholars, all of whom have been recognized as truly exceptional students by their academic departments, six have been selected by the Scholarship and Awards Committee to receive the John Christopher Hartwick Scholarship - the highest distinction the College can confer. I thank the Committee members

for completing the difficult task of selecting just 6 awardees from among the 29 highly accomplished nominees.

Since 1997, each JCH Scholar has received a medallion to be worn at Baccalaureate, Commencement and other appropriate academic occasions, such as this one. The medallions are a gift from former Hartwick Trustee Bill Kitson '86 and his wife, Diane Smith Kitson '87, who was herself a John Christopher Hartwick Scholar.

The names of the Scholars whom I will announce tonight will join those of over 300 previous winners on a plaque – also the gift of the Kitsons – located on the wall just outside the glass entry doors to the Library. In addition, each JCH Scholar will receive a substantial tuition grant, and an honored place among those who stand for the very best of Hartwick College.

I will announce the name of each awardee one at a time. These names are in random order – the list is not alphabetized by last name, first name or major, or by any other discernible pattern. As I read your name, please come

forward, greet the President, and remain at the front of the stage for a group photo.

The 2023-24 John Christopher Hartwick Scholars are:

Tristani Makharashvili

Allison Villalobos

Nicole Chaora

Gianny Ramos Maya

Michael Demarais

Noah Hurt

**REFLECTIONS ON SCHOLARSHIP President
Reisberg**

Students, you may recall your matriculation ceremony on the day that you arrived at Hartwick.

During that ceremony you signed your name to a historic college document, signifying that you were ready

to step-forward to do what was necessary to make your Hartwick experience extraordinary.

You have kept your promise.

In doing so, you honor those who, through their generosity and success, shaped the college's future so that you could have this opportunity.

You have in your hands awards in the names of these presidents, faculty, alumni, trustees, and friends:

Bresee

Clemens

Duffy

Elting

French

Lacey

Semenenko

Wilder

Youngman

And so many others, including, of course,

John Christopher Hartwick

These people paved the path you now walk toward your future.

It is my hope that one day, it will be your name on an award that will tie a Hartwick student to this time.

We expect still greater things from you-

You will be the writer, the entrepreneur, the scientist;
the public health expert, the artist, the activist.
the philanthropist, the teacher, the diplomat, the nurse.

You can be the person who assures that all children are fed.

You can be the person who assures that political divides are healed.

You can be the person who assures that our planet is a healthy and peace-filled place.

I feel certain that there will be a day when we look up to you for inspiration.

Your **best** work is yet to come.

Congratulations honorees.

As we conclude our Honors Convocation, we will sing the Alma Mater. After the Alma Mater, the platform party will lead the recessional, followed by the faculty.

Families, students and guests, please remain seated until the faculty have exited. An electronic “keepsake” booklet which includes the description of awards and student recipients will be available for you to download and print by visiting the Honors Convocation page at Hartwick College’s web page.

After the recessional, students, faculty and families are welcome to come back into the auditorium, or to linger in the Yager lobby, to greet one another and take photographs.

Will you please stand for the singing of the Alma Mater, sung by Karra Koch, accompanied by the Hartwick College Brass Ensemble.

Thank you for joining us this evening.