

P R O G R A M



IMANI

GRADUATE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT CELEBRATION '25

Sunday June 22nd 5pm PT
at the Legacy Center



The IMANI Graduation is more than a celebration of academic achievement—it is a sacred moment that reflects the power of Christian faith (Imani) and the beauty of community (Ubuntu).

IMANI, meaning “faith” in Swahili, reminds us that behind every graduate lies a story of belief—belief in themselves, in God’s purpose, in the power of education, and in the dreams of those who came before them. It is faith that fueled their perseverance and carried them through moments of challenge and triumph.

Ubuntu, a South African principle meaning “I am because you are, and because you are, therefore I am,” reminds us that no one walks this journey alone. The success of each graduate is a shared victory. It is the result of prayers whispered by grandmothers, sacrifices made by parents, encouragement from teachers and mentors, and support from their church family. Their accomplishment is a reflection of the strength of the village.

Together, IMANI and Ubuntu shape the meaning of this graduation:

It is a tribute to faith in action and community in motion—a celebration that honors the individual while uplifting the collective.

At COP, we do not just graduate students. We launch disciples of Jesus Christ as leaders. We affirm their worth. And we declare with joy: Because of our faith and our togetherness, the future is bright.

SPEAKERS



Dr. Parnell M. Lovelace



Dr. Aisha Lowe



Dr. Erinn Harris



Dr. Chesarae Hall-Fletcher



Dr. Kimberley Holmes



Pastor Phyllis Towles

ORDER OF CELEBRATION

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Welcome:..... | Dr. Aisha Lowe |
| Statement of Occasion:..... | Dr. Parnell M. Lovelace, Jr. |
| Prayer: | Dr. Erinn Harris |
| Scripture Reading:..... | Dr. Chesarae Hall-Fletcher |
| Lift Every Voice and Sing: | Cedrick Coward and Congregation |
| Inspirational Student Speaker:..... | Ifetayo-Michaela Spencer |
| Praise Dance:..... | Motions of Praise |
| Charge of Encouragement:..... | Dr. Kimberley Holmes |
| Presentations of Graduates:..... | Pastor Phyllis Towles |
| Blessing the Graduates:..... | Dr. Parnell M. Lovelace, Jr. |
| Spoken Word:..... | Adebade Ilori |
| Final Remarks & Dismissal:..... | Dr. Parnell M. Lovelace, Jr. |
| Recessional: | Dr. Parnell M. Lovelace, Jr., Platform Guests, and Graduates |
| Refreshments and Pictures:..... | Social Hall |

“LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING”

by James Weldon Johnson (June 17, 1871 - June 26, 1938)

Originally written by Johnson for a presentation in celebration of the birthday of Abraham Lincoln. This was originally performed in Jacksonville, Florida, by children.

Lift every voice and sing Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty; Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us, Facing the rising
sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died; Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears have been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way; Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, Our God, where we met Thee; Lest, our
hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand.
True to our GOD, True to our native land.



POSSESS YOUR PORTION

Written by Adebade Illori

The earth is the Lord's - its fullness, the world, and all that's in it.

God entrusted us with creation-
It's our time now to make a difference.

You are a child of your Father, created in His image, not an ordinary civilian.
He said to be fruitful and multiply, replenish the earth, and have dominion.
He said that the land is already ours - there's no need to request it.
God has already promised it; it's your responsibility to possess it.

God can do exceedingly and abundantly, even beyond your imagination.
But prophecy requires your partnership -your calling requires your collaboration.

I pray you understand the message I'm conveying to you -
That what God said to His servant Joshua, now He's saying to you.

He brought us out of bondage, the land of Egypt - a passive place.
But stepping into your Promised Land is a process - fueled by active faith.
He's given the earth to the children of men - claim your piece.
God, the Landlord, called you to stewardship - it's time to sign the lease.

To step into God's promise requires a strategy, I come with advice.
Now listen to the words of God to Joshua, and I've made it concise:

God Spoke to Joshua and Us and Said:

Arise, Joshua. Moses is dead. You were made for this - let go of the past.
And enter into the Promised Land with these strategies to do what I ask.

My promises in Christ are Yes and Amen - My Word endures.
Every place the sole of your foot treads upon, I have made to be yours.

I am Jehovah Sabaoth - the Captain of Mighty Armies, Lord of Hosts.
I have made this land your inheritance - toward the sunset shall be your coast.
It's time to claim the territory the world has denied you.
Nobody will be able to stand before you because I stand beside you.

If you dwell in My presence, there's no limit to where I will take you.
My character is faithful and true - I will not fail nor forsake you.
Be strong and courageous - for the people, you're a government leader.
For I made a promise to their forefathers, and I am a covenant keeper.
Obey My commands - turn not from it to the right hand or to the left.



My Holy Spirit will empower you - ensuring every single word is kept.
If you keep My ways - keep obedience as your posture,
Then I will ensure that wheresoever you go, you prosper.

Step into a role of action - day and night, meditate on the script.
This Book shall not depart out of your mouth - let it remain on your lips.
If you decree and declare a thing, I will establish what you spoke.
Meditate on the Book of the Law so you may observe to do what I wrote.

For then you will make your way prosperous and have good success.
Now I have given you the keys - Go, this land is yours to possess.

To All of the Graduates:

This is more than us celebrating your degree.
We're celebrating you stepping into who God called you to be.
We must arise to claim our portion - we cannot sit.
We must stay on the Lord's side - we cannot switch.

There might be obstacles along the way - they come for refinement.
Nothing can hinder your forward progress if you walk in alignment.

Some of you grew up overlooked and underserved.
But with diligence and boldness, you can get what you deserve.
God has given you a portion of the land - He's the Landlord.
But it's your responsibility to take it and make it yours.

We are more than conquerors through Jesus - He's the main reason.
But you cannot step into that victory if you remain seated.
Use the foundation of His Word to center your ways.
Let your heart be tender - let it be the center of praise.

Jesus overcame the world - because He won the battle, you can too.
And if Christ empowers you, there is nothing that you can't do.
Did He not say, "All things are possible to him who believes?"
And if you have the Holy Spirit, you have everything you need.

So today, we celebrate graduation - we celebrate degrees.
Because it brings us one step closer to possessing our piece.

HIGH SCHOOL



Kamiah Baker

Grant Union High School
High School Diploma with Job Honors

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- 4.0 or higher Principal Honor Roll Certificate
- High Achiever Award
- Leadership Award
- BSU Award

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation signifies more than a completion of High School but a celebration of hard work and dedication. It marks a momentous transition into adulthood. It represents growth that was gained from experience, challenges, people who have supported me along the way but most of all God in my life. It allows me the freedom to pursue my aspirations while actively working, attending college, and building a foundation for my future. Mostly it's a symbol of love, faith, hope and possibilities.

Next Steps

Attending Howard University Fall 2024.



Jacen Cannon

Cosumnes Oaks High School
High School Diploma

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Honor Roll

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation to me is the complete culmination of all the hard work I have done and to achieve my Goals.

Next Steps

Enrolling in Cosumnes River JC, transferring to Sacramento State.



Renee Davis

Penn Foster High School
High School Diploma
Public Health

What Graduation Means to Me

I have reached half of my goal....My next two goals are my B.A. then my Diagnostic Medical Sonography Degree.

Next Steps

Strive Community Health Institute



Anissa Faust

Tokay High School
High School Diploma

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation means that I have completed my years of schooling as a child and I'm moving on to my life as a young adult and I'm growing in the gifts and callings that God has for me.

Next Steps

Air Force then college to get my MD.



Noah Lee Hayes

John F. Kennedy High School
High School Diploma

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Captain of the Basketball Team
- Captain of the Track Team

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation means dedication and hard work.

Next Steps

Attending Cosumnes River College



Iyanu Rogers-Beckley

Monterey Trail High School
High School Diploma
Chemical Engineering

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Honor Roll

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation is a transition to the next stage of life. I'm so excited to see what the future has in store!

Next Steps

UC Irvine



Jeremiah Smothers

Penn Foster High School
High School Diploma
Robot Mechanical

What Graduation Means to Me

I have reached half of my goal....My next two goals are my B.A. then Diagnostic Medical Sonography.

Next Steps

Strive Community Health Institute



Trésor Tatum

Natomas Charter School Performing and Fine Arts
Academy
High School Diploma

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Honor Roll

What Graduation Means to Me

To me graduation means a new beginning or chapter in my life. A fresh start in my career, job, and adult life.

Next Steps

Sacramento State University

ASSOCIATE DEGREE



Sunday Isom

Sacramento City College

Associate of Arts in Applied Apparel Studies (Fashion Design)

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Honor Roll

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduating after seven (7) years of adversity is a true testament to God's great love, kindness and patience! He has seen me through cancer, COVID (twice), and other medical issues.

Next Steps

Write my second book.



Zoriya Valencia Denise Kamara

Sacramento City College

Associate of Arts in Law and Public Policy

Associate of Arts in Administration of Justice

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Cum Laude

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation is proof that I can do the impossible. At first I doubted myself because I was young and the classes were hard, but in the end I was able to go much further than expected.

Next Steps

To finish high school, work deeper on my youth college program, attend Howard University and get my Juris Doctorate from Harvard Law.





Latoyah Lowe

American River College

Associate of Arts in Business Administration

Associate of Arts in Interior Design Architecture

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Honor Roll

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation means breaking cycles and leading by example. I'm showing my daughter and others that anything is possible.

Next Steps

Transfer to Sacramento State.



Kaleb Roberts

Cosumnes River College

Associate of Arts in Film & Media Studies

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Summa Cum Laude

What Graduation Means to Me

To me, graduation is a moment of transformation; it bridges the gap between where you were and where you are going. Embrace the unknown with faith, God will liberate you from misery and ignorance.

Next Steps

I will be taking a few more GE courses in the fall, then transferring in the Spring. My top choices are Howard, UC Santa Barbara, USC, Hampton, and NYU.

**Brian Shine**

American River College

Associate Degree in Business Finance

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Athletic Scholarship
- Dean's List

What Graduation Means to Me

The past few years I have dedicated a lot of time to school and it means the world to me not only achieve my dreams, have my loving family supporting me. I am eager to see what the future beholds.

Next Steps

Central Methodist University



BACHELOR'S DEGREE



Ezaiah Akyeem

Excelsior University

Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation is a step forward. It is the representation of new opportunities.

Next Steps

Master's Degree



Tyrus Ambrose

California State University, Sacramento

Degree in Education

Career and Technical Studies

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation means hope and the fact that I am finished.

Next Steps

Master's Degree





Nicholas Beckett

Excelsior University
Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation means pushing through struggles, honoring your growth, making your family proud, and launching into whatever future you dream of.

Next Steps

Strive University
Master's Degree in Social Work



Lisa Bisparte

California State University, Sacramento
Bachelor of Science in Business
General Management

Achievements, Honors, Awards

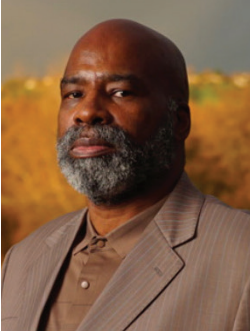
- Honor Roll

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation means self love and completion. It is an investment in myself. Graduation also showcases my strength, courage, tenacity, endurance; all of what my deceased, beloved mother embodied.

Next Steps

Graduate School Spring 2026



Randy Brass

Excelsior University
Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation signifies success and the promise of a bright future. It represents everything you've worked for and all the possibilities that lie ahead.

Next Steps

Master's in Social Work, Strive University



Melody Gallaway

Strive Community Health
Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation means a celebration of your success and dedication on accomplishing your dreams and goals!

Next Steps

University



Vernon Gillam II

Excelsior University

Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Honor Roll

What Graduation Means to Me

This degree means the world to me! I know that my family, in heaven and on earth are very proud of me. That makes me even more proud to stand here today! Stay Butta!

Next Steps

Master's Degree



Kamania Griffin

Excelsior University

Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduating is a step toward breaking barriers as a Black woman in medicine. With faith, I'm ready to serve, heal, and show that no dream is too big to reach.

Next Steps

Attending Ross University School of Medicine.



Aneatra Harvey

Sacramento State University
Bachelor of Arts in Sociology

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Dean's Honor Roll - Fall 2024

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation means I didn't give up, even when it got hard. It's proof that God's grace carried me through every step. I'm walking in purpose — stronger, wiser, and ready for what's next.

Next Steps

Graduate school to pursue my Masters in Sociology.



Bria Shine

University of California, Davis
Bachelor of Science in Human Development
Bachelor of Arts in African and African American Studies

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Honor Roll

What Graduation Means to Me

As a Black woman, college graduation is a testament to resilience and excellence, marking both personal triumph and a powerful legacy in spaces once denied to those who look like me.

Next Steps

I will be pursuing a Masters of Business Administration at the University of California, Riverside.



Ifetayo-Michaela Spencer

Howard University

Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Achievements, Honors, Awards

Miss College of Engineering & Architecture, Dean's List, Howard University Royal Court's MVP, Most Inspiring Student, & Howard University Alumni Association Future Leader Award.

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation is a time to celebrate my journey and give all glory to God. It's a reminder of His faithfulness and the doors He's opening for my future.



Kylea Tanner

Dillard University

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Magna Cum Laude

What Graduation Means to Me

With the help of God and my village, I've built a strong foundation. My degree empowers me to fight injustice and step boldly into my bright future.

Next Steps

Interning at the Capital and then heading to law school.



Anthony Vu

Strive Community Health Institute
Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Cum Laude

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduating means being one step closer to achieving goals I never thought were possible.

Next Steps

Entry-Level Master's Program for Nursing School.



Felicia White Curtis

Excelsior University
Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts
Psychology

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Honor Roll

What Graduation Means to Me

This 30+ year goal has been achieved but by the grace of God! I am here!

Next Steps

Master's Degree

MASTER'S DEGREE



Adebade Ilori

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
Masters of Science in Biomedical Science

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Summa Cum Laude

What Graduation Means to Me

Jesus saw me through. I was on the verge of breaking, but I was kept by the power of God (1 Peter 1:5). This was not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord (Zechariah 4:6).

Next Steps

Masters in Public Health



Herman Shepard

Western Governors University
Masters of Science in Curriculum and Instruction

Achievements, Honors, Awards

- Philanthropy

What Graduation Means to Me

Graduation represents being a role model for my daughter and my students. It means striving to be my best in everything I do and fulfilling a lifelong goal.

Next Steps

Career Advancement

DOCTORAL DEGREE



Jay'Riah Thomas-Beckett

Virginia University of Lynchburg
Doctorate Degree in Healthcare Administration

What Graduation Means to Me

An opportunity to change the world.

Next Steps

Start a school.



CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES



Bishop Parnell M. Lovelace, Jr., PhD, DMin
Founding and Senior Pastor

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