

*Welcome to
The Bagwell College of Education*

2021

**BAGWELL SCHOLARS
HONORS RECOGNITION**

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OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR AWARD

Each year, faculty in the

Clarice C. & Leland H. Bagwell College of Education select

outstanding students from our programs to receive the

Outstanding Scholar Award

based on distinguished achievements in the major field including an exceptional GPA, and notable accomplishments in extracurricular, civic, or professional activities.

OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR AWARD

Students who receive the *Outstanding Scholar Award* select one faculty member to honor who has had a significant impact on their academic experience.

This honor provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their respect and appreciation for faculty who have influenced their learning in ways that will inspire their careers for years to come.

OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR AWARD

An Honors Celebration is held during the spring of each year in which the *Outstanding Scholar Award* recipients

and their chosen faculty members are honored.

Due to the pandemic, we were not able to have an event on campus this year; therefore we have prepared a

presentation to honor

each of these exceptional scholars.



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OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR AWARDS

Bachelor of Science [B.S.]

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Leslie Sain

B.S., Early Childhood Education
Birth - Kindergarten

Leslie Sain made the Dean's List each semester and has already enrolled in our M.Ed. in Special Education program. She enjoys writing poetry and music, singing, volunteering with the Girl Scouts, and spending time with family.

She selected **Dr. Yanghee Kim** as her faculty honoree because "she challenged me to expect more of myself." She described Dr. Kim as patient, respectful, and an effective communicator who is honest and fair with her students.

Ms. Sain said, "As a non-traditional student who has started over three times, this recognition solidifies the drive in me to keep going. Being recognized for what feels natural to me confirms that I am where I am supposed to be in this life."

Emily Davis

B.S., Elementary Education

Emily Davis graduated Summa Cum Laude. She was nominated to be KSU's representative for Academic Recognition Day and for the Outstanding Student Teacher Award for spring 2021. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, hiking, and volunteering in camps, churches, and sporting facilities that serve children in her community.

Dr. Scott Ritchie is her faculty honoree because he teaches engaging and unique teaching strategies. His continued support "has allowed me to believe in my own abilities," and she feels the impact his teaching had on her will be evident in her own teaching.

She sees this honor as "a reflection of the dedication and passion that I have for the teaching profession."



Tori A. Morgan

B.S., Elementary Education

Tori Morgan graduated Magna Cum Laude and was on the Dean's List every semester that she was enrolled in the education program. She is also the winner of the 2021 Outstanding Student Teacher Award.

She selected **Dr. Sohyun An** as her faculty honoree because "she made me realize my true potential as an educator." She said that Dr. An takes the time to get to know her students personally and teaches them how to integrate social studies into other content areas.

Her most memorable experience at KSU was student teaching during the pandemic. Ms. Morgan said that it taught her "the ins and outs of teaching and how each day brings a new challenge." Further, it showed her "teaching is definitely not for the weak, and that I can do anything I put my mind to." Ms. Morgan enjoys crafting and making new creations to use in her classroom.



Layne Wood

B.S., Middle Grades Education

Layne Wood was a Hope Scholarship recipient who was nominated for Outstanding Student Teacher and made the Dean's List and the President's List. She enjoys spending time with her family, reading, baking, and volunteering in children's ministries.

Her faculty honoree is **Dr. Bryan Gillis** because he gave her opportunities to grow and better herself as a teacher. "He had a significant impact on my academic experience and influenced my learning in ways that will inspire my career for years to come," she said.

Student teaching was her most memorable experience at KSU. "Through learning about each individual student and the common needs of middle schoolers, I learned a lot about my personal and professional strengths, as well as areas in which I can improve to better support my students."



OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR AWARDS

Master of Arts in Teaching [M.A.T.]
and
Master of Education [M.Ed.]

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Ashlyn Ross

M.A.T., TESOL

Ashlyn Ross graduated Summa Cum Laude from the M.A.T. in TESOL [Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages]. A regular on the Dean's List, this KSU graduate's interest in teaching began in high school where she started a tutoring program for elementary students.

She selected **Dr. James Gambrell** as her faculty honoree. "He has been extremely helpful and encouraging during my schooling ... and gives me fantastic feedback that I can learn from and apply to my teaching," she said.

Ms. Ross enjoys outside activities like hiking and playing tennis. Reading is a favorite pastime, and she has a library in her home.

"I desire to grow and learn how to best conduct my classroom and teach my students, setting them up for success, which is what this program has taught me throughout my time here," she said.





Erin Tinnell

M.Ed., Early Childhood Education

Erin Tinnell graduated Summa Cum Laude and taught fulltime while enrolled in the M.Ed. Program. Frustrated with the lack of diversity in her students' reading materials, she established a donor program in her classroom this year and raised almost \$2,000 to purchase books that her students could better identify with.

She selected **Dr. Sohyun An** as her faculty honoree. Dr. An taught Ms. Tinnell as an undergraduate and graduate student. "Dr. An changed my life," she said, "and in return, I want to change hundreds of children's lives." Dr. An taught her about the importance of students "being seen" in the classroom, on posters, and in reading materials.

Ms. Tinnell also loved the experiences she had with turtles in South Georgia, wolves in Yellowstone, and presenting at the 2019 NCUR conference as part of her learning experiences.

Ong Thao-Hur

M.Ed., Instructional Technology

Ong Thao-Hur graduated Summa Cum Laude with a perfect 4.0 GPA. She returned to school to obtain her master's degree after teaching 20 years and was up for the task of working and studying during a pandemic. She finds peace in gardening and reading and enjoys time with family and friends.

Dr. Tiffany Roman is her faculty honoree. "Dr. Roman is knowledgeable, caring, and a supportive leader within the ITEC program," she said.

Her most memorable experience at KSU was meeting new friends and colleagues and acquiring new and innovative tools that will support her teaching career in the years to come.

Ms. Thao-Hur said it is an honor to be recognized for her educational accomplishments and that the knowledge she gained throughout the program will continue to help lead and support her students and colleagues. She said when her students succeed, she succeeds.



Chelesse Alicia Edwards

M.Ed., Reading

Chelesse Alicia Edwards is a Summa Cum Laude graduate with a perfect 4.0 GPA. Ms. Edwards is a proud member of Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society, which is instrumental in creating a network of support for educators. She is also a member of Golden Key International Honor Society and a published author of three works of poetry and four children's books.

Ms. Edwards is honoring **Dr. Sanjuana Rodriguez**, who provided her with counseling and advice during her academic journey. "Dr. Rodriguez shared her wealth of knowledge of reading education in an exciting and innovative way," she said.

Her most memorable experience at KSU took place before she enrolled. A former faculty member asked her to be a vendor at the 2019 KSU Annual Literature Conference where she met several faculty members and was impressed with their caring nature. In the fall of 2021, she is returning to KSU to pursue an Ed.S. degree in Instructional Technology.



Ali Katz

M.Ed., Special Education – General Curriculum

Ali Katz graduated Summa Cum Laude with a perfect 4.0 GPA. She was a recent recipient of the **Power of One Inclusion Award**, which honors those who have made a positive impact on people with disabilities in the Atlanta Community.

She selected **Dr. Melissa Driver** as her faculty honoree because “whenever I needed support, Dr. Driver was a quick email, call, or text away... I was able to use the skills she taught me in her coursework to become a Graduate Research Assistant for Dr. Driver and Dr. Kate Zimmer,” she said.

Personally, she was fortunate to make a lasting friendship with a colleague in the program, and they plan to support each other’s teaching and further education.

Ms. Katz is honored to receive this recognition. Because her program was 100% virtual, she was nervous that her hard work might go unnoticed, but that was not the case. She knows she was a valued student at KSU.





Rita Howard

M.Ed., TESOL

Rita Howard graduated Magna Cum Laude from her undergraduate and graduate programs. A former Teacher of the Year at Rock Spring Elementary School, she enjoys reading, studying cultures and languages, and attending trivia events with friends.

Dr. James Gambrell is Ms. Howard's faculty honoree because he taught her how to be more involved with the families in her school community. "He is so knowledgeable about TESOL and advocating for students and families," she said. He was always available to answer questions.

Her most memorable educational experience at KSU was conducting the teacher inquiry research project, which she will carry over into her career because it helped her grow as a teacher and helped her students be more successful. "TESOL is an area of education that is so close to my heart and this award is validation that I am in a career that suits me professionally and personally," she said.



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OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR AWARDS



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Education Specialist [Ed.S.]

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Dieldra Griffin

Ed.S., Educational Leadership

A Summa Cum Laude graduate, Dieldra Griffin was recently chosen as a 2021 Shining Start Teacher by the State Charter Schools Foundation of Georgia. She encourages the educational growth of her students through effective collaboration for educational change.

She selected **Dr. Mark Lang**, her leadership candidate coach, as her faculty honoree. “His coaching throughout the program created an environment for relevant reflection and synthesis of knowledge for practical application,” she said.

Her most memorable experience at KSU took place in Foundations of Leadership, taught by Dr. Arvin Johnson. He led meaningful conversations that created a collaborative space for creative solutions and relevant application of course content.

“I am humbled by this recognition,” Ms. Griffin said.

Rosie Riquelme Antunez

Ed.S., Instructional Technology

Rosie Riquelme Antunez is a Summa Cum Laude graduate. She is the orchestra teacher at Collin Hill High School, and her orchestras have been selected to perform at state and national conferences. Ms. Antunez enjoys hiking, Salsa dancing, paddle boarding and traveling.

She selected **Dr. Laurie Dias** as her faculty honoree, even though they have never met in person. “I could tell that she supported her students and was there to make sure that they were successful,” she said. The pandemic and other issues were a distraction, but Dr. Dias inspired her to keep going.

After growing up in a “one size fits all” educational setting, Ms. Antunez is very passionate about teaching students in a variety of ways through technology – channeling the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles. Receiving this award inspires her to keep reaching as many students as possible through their many learning styles.



OUTSTANDING SCHOLAR AWARDS

Education Doctorate [Ed.D.]

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Joshua Pittman

Ed.D., Educational Leadership



Dr. Joshua Pittman graduated Magna Cum Laude and will always remember fondly that he had a front-row seat at the KSU graduation ceremony. He has a reputation for increasing high school graduation rates by huge amounts in short periods of time. Most recently, he was responsible for increasing the graduation rate from 47% to 73% in two years at A.Z. Kelsey Academy.

Dr. Pittman selected **Dr. David Buckman** as his faculty honoree. He said that Dr. Buckman “spent countless hours of his time guiding my work and answering questions.” Dr. Buckman was his dissertation chairman and methodologist for his study of the influence of student discipline on teacher job satisfaction.

Dr. Pittman was a member of the 2019 Griffin RESA Next Emerging Leader Cohort, and he has presented at statewide education conferences. He enjoys jogging, weight-lifting, watching Netflix and sports, and spending time with his family.

Stephanee Stephens

Ed.D., Instructional Technology

Dr. Stephens maintained a 4.0 GPA and graduated Summa Cum Laude while serving in a full-time position as director of the Bagwell College of Education iTeach Unit. She left KSU this year to work for Microsoft in a role that supports education nationally. Dr. Stephens enjoys hiking, traveling, and cheering for her kids at sporting events.

She selected **Dr. Jo Williamson** as her faculty honoree because “her feedback always came from a place of seeing something in me that was beyond my view. ... She pushed me, supported me, and remained one of my favorite humans during a stressful time in my life,” she said.

When asked what this recognition means to her, she said, “Such an honor, one that comes from those you love and respect so deeply, is hard to justify with words,” adding that she will always love this college and its’ tremendously talented and caring staff and faculty.



Lakina Casandra Freeman

Ed.D., Secondary English Education

Dr. Freeman holds the distinction of being the only 2021 Bagwell Scholar who obtained each of her four degrees, from bachelor's to doctorate, from KSU. She has served as a part-time instructor of English at KSU since 2017, and currently works for the Cobb County School District as an English teacher at the new Cobb Online Learning Academy.

Dr. Daren Crovitz is her faculty honoree because of his dedication to helping his students succeed academically, professionally and personally. She considers Dr. Crovitz a role model and is grateful for his guidance throughout her career.

Her most memorable experience at KSU was engaging in meaningful research throughout her dissertation experience. Dr. Freeman was honored to receive this award. "This recognition serves as an affirmation of my perseverance and dedication to fulfilling my academic and professional goals," she said. She is honored to serve as an example to her nieces and nephews of what they can also achieve.



Congratulations to
DR. OSMAN KHAN
who received the
**2021 OUTSTANDING
DISSERTATION AWARD!**



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Dr. Osman Khan



Dissertation Title: *Experiences with and Conceptions of School Discipline and PBIS Implementation: A Phenomenography of 15 Students with Disabilities in One Title 1 Middle School*

“This recognition will hopefully encourage others to explore the voices of students with disabilities, who are frequently sent to spaces of isolation [in school] as a result of harmful and ineffective punitive disciplinary measures. In my study I celebrated the voices of 15 students with disabilities, asking them to reflect on their experiences, which led to discovering student suggestions for school improvement.”

Dr. Melissa Driver was Dr. Khan’s Dissertation Chair, and he describes her as “an inspiring mentor and scholar who provided him with endless motivation and support.”

THANK YOU FOR HONORING THE

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