



ALUMNI NEWS

ISSUE FALL 2021

Introducing the New **Alumni Council 2021-2023**



**Belinda Addo, FNP,
Chair**

School of Nursing, FNP
Class of '15



**Anissa
Muhammad, MPH
Vice-Chair,**

College of Science and
Health, MPH, Class of '16



**Ashanti
Carter, MPH**

College of Science
and Health, MPH
Class of '14



Angela Weaver, MSN

School of Nursing, MSN-ELM
Class of '15



Maria Gaytan, FNP

School of Nursing, FNP
Class of '20



Deborah Christian, PA-C

College of Science and Health,
PA Program,
Class of '94

*Not Pictured: *Dr. Tracie Harvey, Vice-Chair,*
College of Medicine, Class of '92

Message from the Chair of the Alumni Council



It is truly an honor and a privilege to be part of the CDU Alumni Family and represent as the Chair of the Alumni Association for 2021-2023. My journey as a CDU student has led me to numerous opportunities professionally and I am grateful to come back to the University to give my support to my fellow alums and create new opportunities for current CDU students.

I would like to thank the leadership of Dr. Adrienne Martinez, Chair of Alumni Council 2018-2020 and Charles Johnson, Vice-Chair of Alumni Council 2018-2020 for leading the charge in building the Alumni Association; your leadership and commitment is nothing short of exemplary. On behalf of the CDU Alumni Family, we thank you for your support of the alumni community!

As the new Chair, one of our goals is to preserve a mutually beneficial, enduring relationship among alums and with the University. As your representatives, we are constantly seeking meaningful ways to embrace your needs and unite our efforts in the name of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science.

I urge you to become an active alum and share in the exciting activities and opportunities this association has to offer. There are a variety of ways you can show appreciation and play a part in CDU's continued success. This includes attending events, financial support, becoming an alumni mentor, staying connected to each other and the University, and of course, offering your time and gifts to help CDU students.

Wherever you are, at whatever stage of life you are in, there's something here for you. The Alumni Association and I encourage you to share and use this site as one way to engage with the Alumni Association and maintain your personal connection to the University.

Sincerely,

Belinda Addo, FNP,MSN, Chair,
Alumni Council 2021-2023

COM, COSH PA Program Welcomes New Cohorts During White Coat Ceremonies

The College of Medicine's Medical Education Program welcomed 28 students to its Class of 2025 during the White Coat Ceremony on Saturday, August 28. The College of Science and Health's PA Program welcomed 26 students to the Class of 2023 on Wednesday, August 18 during the Short White Coat Ceremony.

The ceremonies, which are considered a rite of passage for those entering the health professions, saw students accept their white coats that symbolize the trust between patient and healthcare provider for the past 100 years. Both ceremonies concluded with students reciting their respective versions of the Hippocratic Oath, a pledge made by health practitioners to signify their commitment to the humanitarian goals of medicine.

To watch the COM White Coat Ceremony, [click here](#).



School of Nursing's New DNP Program Begins

The Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing (MMDSON) is building and continues to raise the bar in the development of emerging nursing leaders by launching the new Doctoral Degree in the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) this Fall 2021. The DNP program offers flexibility, convenience, and diversity. Class offerings are executive model and will include both hybrid and online formats.

This new program comes during a pivotal time in health care as the industry faces an increasing demand for diverse advanced practice clinical nurse leaders. The DNP program supports a nurse's professional experience and career goals by building upon advanced knowledge in systems, as well as develop their ability to think critically and proficiently as expert clinical leaders.

"As nurse educators, we are charged to increase the numbers of practicing nurses that hold a doctoral degree and advance nursing leadership in the health care setting, thereby positioning nurses to meet the call of the Institute of Medicine and the American Nurses Association to advance the nursing profession," said MMDSON Acting Dean Dr. Delia Santana. "Our new DNP program at CDU prepares nurse leaders that will meet the school of nursing vision of excellent nursing care for all in a world without health disparities."

The doctoral-level advanced practice degree emphasizes critical thinking and evidence-based practice, positioning graduate-level nurse leaders for paradigm organizational change, leading to improved process changes, increased efficiency, and better patient outcomes. DNP graduates advance the nursing discipline and practice through research, education, policy, management, and leadership.

"The DNP program is set to advance and prepare nurses leaders to solve complex health challenges such as global pandemics, emerging infectious diseases, health inequities including access and affordability for care most especially amongst our underserved and rising aging population," said DNP Program Director Dr. Juana Ferrerosa.

"Nursing leaders who join the DNP program at CDU will incorporate the values of the profession in positions of influence, and build the knowledge, skills and intellectual creativity necessary for effective leadership and healthcare transformation in diverse settings," said Dr. Tavonia Ekwegh, Assistant Director of the DNP Program.

Dr. Carlisle Issues Tenth Annual State of the University Address



CDU President and CEO Dr. David M. Carlisle issued the tenth annual State of the University Address on Thursday, August 26 via Microsoft Teams. “Despite the ongoing circumstances of the pandemic, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science has continued to thrive and proceed on its upward trajectory,” he began. “The perseverance of our students, faculty, staff, and the entire CDU community in the face of historic challenges and times has lit the University’s collective spirit like a flame-- one that is attracting donations, partnerships, and new avenues of support to grow our university.”

Dr. Carlisle spoke of the increased investment in CDU from entities such as Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Greenwood Initiatives, L.A. Care Health Plan and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Far Western Region. More recently—and perhaps most notably—California Governor Gavin Newsom approved the annual state budget granting the University a one-time \$50 million allocation. Overall investment from valued CDU partners over the past year has totalled nearly \$80 million.

“I am reminded of a very salient phrase from the report issued by the McCone commission, [describing] education as ‘our fundamental resource,’” Dr. Carlisle said. “The inspiring level of funding we have received shows that others believe this to be true [...] I extend a heartfelt ‘thank you’ to everyone whose support moves our mission forward and allows CDU to fulfill our promise and provide this fundamental resource.”

The College of Medicine launched a new Internal Medicine residency program this summer, which is predicted to enroll as many as 24 residents by summer 2024. Since the return of residency training to the University in 2018, the University has retrained and developed nearly 50 residents. The College of Science and Health’s Community Health Worker Academy graduated its first cohort of ten graduates, putting the University “at the forefront of pioneering health education by providing state-of-the-art training opportunities to community health workers.” Dr. Carlisle also reported that all graduates of the Academy have successfully secured permanent employment throughout L.A. County.

The Mervyn M. Dymally School of Nursing launched a new Bachelor of Science in Nursing program this semester, and is preparing for its first Doctorate in Nursing Practice program.

“All together, our recent accomplishments and immediate plans represent a clear marker of progression in our institution’s 55-year journey,” Dr. Carlisle said. “We are taking major strides towards solidifying the legacy of our institution and propelling us beyond our ‘hidden gem’ status to a more significant position on the higher education landscape.”

[Click here](#) to read the full address, or [click here](#) to watch the full address online.



Reminder!

As the University continues to invest in resources to keep the community safe online, we ask all staff, students and faculty to exercise caution when opening all emails, and to be especially wary of opening messages from unknown senders. Should you receive suspicious spam or phishing emails, be sure to:

- **Never** respond to the message
- **Never** click any links or attachments
- **Never** provide any personal information about yourself, your family or your employer

If you believe you may have inadvertently revealed sensitive information such as your University email and password, you should update your credentials immediately. If you have additional questions, comments or concerns, please contact the IT Help Desk at helpdesk@cdrewu.edu or ext. 4990.

4TH ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE RECAP

The 4th annual Professional Development Conference was held on Saturday, September 18, 2021. The event was held virtually with a large attendance from the alumni community. The conference included the official welcome of the new Alumni Council for 2021-2023. The council described their professional background their vision for the council. Following the welcome, the Alumni Association provided workshops on Navigating Burnout as Health Professionals by Kimberly Womack, Case Manager, CDU and Financial Wellness by Jordan King, VP of JP Morgan Chase. The purpose of the conference is to continue to support alumni in their professional careers and personal journey.



Kimberly Womack, Case Manager,
CDU



Jordan King, VP of JP Morgan Chase,

NEW COHORT FOR ALUMNI MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The new cohort for the Alumni Mentorship Program will began on October 7, 2021. The new cohort will include ten alumni and twelve CDU students. The cohort includes alumni from all three of the colleges with diverse backgrounds. The Alumni Association is looking forward to hosting the Alumni Mentorship Retreat on October 23. The mentorship program is a resource to support current CDU students and provide professional development through their academic endeavors.



LA Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas and his wife, Avis, Honored Avis & Mark Ridley-Thomas Wellness Center unveiled at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science



(Photo by David Crane, Los Angeles Daily News/SCNG)t

On Thursday, September 16, 2021, celebrated the completion of a new building on our campus that will house the Avis & Mark Ridley-Thomas Wellness Center for our students and staff as well as an APLA Health facility for the community.

The ribbon cutting was rolled into a celebration of Councilmember Ridley-Thomas' 30 years of public service in elected office and attracted a slew of guests from the political, educational, medical, and corporate sectors.

Councilman Ridley-Thomas has served in varied elected roles, including three terms on the City Council in the 8th district from 1991 to 2002 and on the Board of Supervisors, representing the 2nd District, from 2008 to 2020. He current represents the city's 10th district. He attended L.A.'s Manual arts High and earned a baccalaureate degree in Social Relations and a master's degree in Religious Studies from Immaculate Heart College, as well as a Ph.D. in Social Ethics and Policy Analysis at USC.

The facility will be co-located with a new APLA Health Center in a 10,000-square-foot building. It will provide students, faculty and staff with urgent care, mental health counseling and wellness programs, but will focus on counseling services that help students' emotional well-being and success.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Noreen Zenita Johnson passed away on Saturday, August 28, 2021 in Bryan, Texas at the age of sixty nine. She was the last born of six children to Mr. Fitzroy and Mrs. Irene Johnson, both deceased, of San Fernando, Trinidad, West Indies.

With a meticulous mind and an affinity for science, Noreen graduated with both a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and a Doctor of Medicine from Howard University in Washington, D.C. She completed her residency training in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital/Charles R. Drew Medical School in Los Angeles, California. While there, she fell in love with fellow resident in Family Medicine, Dr. Haywood J. Robinson.

After residency, the newlyweds moved to Bryan/College Station, Texas to begin a thirty eight year journey in their joint private practice, Brazos Medical Associates. Noreen's compassionate heart for humanity led her to undertake medical missions in China and Nigeria. At the beckoning of her mother in Trinidad, Noreen launched Touch Tobago Missions, a twelve year medical outreach servicing underserved communities around the island. Determined to provide the best possible care for her patients, she was a pioneer bringing laparoscopic surgery to Tobago and the first physician to perform robotic surgery in College Station, Texas.

Dr. Johnson lived her life in service to Jesus. She was anchored by her favorite verse in the Bible, "For God had not given her the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7

She is survived by her husband, Dr. Haywood Robinson; and their four daughters, Dr. Kaishauna Robinson Guidry, Udelle Robinson, Dr. Riva Robinson, and Dr. Virginia Smith; three older brothers, Frank Johnson, Rawle Johnson, and Dr. Glen Royce Johnson; one sister, Arlene Thomas; three grandchildren, Javelin, Elisha, and Kailah Guidry. She was preceded in death by her brother, Carl Johnson.



NOTE FROM THE ALUMNI RELATIONS AND CORPORATE GIVING MANAGER

Alumni and Friends,

The fall semester is in full swing and the Alumni Association has exciting announcements underway. Firstly, we are excited to have the new Alumni Council for 2021-2023; this group of leaders are passionate about CDU and bringing back the alumni in a huge way. Secondly, the University is on a growth

trajectory with new developments including the creation of CDU's four-year independent medical school (pending review and approval by LCME); this is truly an exciting time for the University.

Forthcoming, the Alumni Association will launch our inaugural Alumni Scholarship Program. There will be more information on the way for alumni to support current CDU students. At the same time, I would challenge you to think of ways you can give back to the University to whatever degree you are comfortable. And I do not mean just monetarily, though that is, of course, always welcome. There are many ways to give back, from career and academic mentoring to volunteering time at on- and off-campus events to simply attending academic and social events. As you will find, giving back has another benefit: it feels good.

I encourage you to explore all that we have to offer to stay connected and make yourself and CDU stronger.

Sincerely,

Brittney Miller
Alumni Relations and Corporate Giving Manager



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BY BRAYN RICE

Please keep us informed of any new career accomplishments and activities. We would love to showcase the achievements of our alumni community! Send all updates to CDUAlumniAssociation@cdrewu.edu

Stay Connected!

Facebook: @CDUAlumni Association

Instagram: @cdrewualumni