



*Women's
Executive Council*

Presents the 50th Annual

*Women's
Achievement
Awards*

October 13th, 2022

at the Citrus Club

*Empowering and Embracing
Women to Serve Central Florida*

Program Host

★ **Yarmmys Vargas**

President

Women's Executive Council

Master of Ceremonies

Eryka Washington Perry

Director of Communication at

The Reedy Creek Improvement District
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Ambassador

Awards Program

Welcome

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*Thank You to Our
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CARIBE ROYALE
ORLANDO

Welcome Special Guest

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer



As Mayor, Buddy Dyer is focused on shaping Orlando into a community where collaboration and unity are the keys to helping every resident thrive. Since his first day in office in 2003, Mayor Dyer has increased partnerships between Central Florida's government organizations, businesses, non-profit groups and residents, helping Orlando become a vibrant, inclusive community with an unmatched quality of life for those who call The City Beautiful home.

Mayor Dyer is determined to ensure that all residents are treated equally, are equally protected and have equitable access to opportunities that help them thrive. Recent City of Orlando actions to support that mission include expanding successful youth programs like the Parramore Kidz Zone and My Brother's Keeper Orlando so academic support, mentoring and career training can be offered to more young residents. Under Mayor Dyer's leadership, a Community Response Team was created so trained behavioral health professionals responding to some non-violent 911 calls instead of law enforcement officers, connecting those in need to treatment and support.

Mayor Dyer is leading the efforts to diversify Central Florida's economy and create a new breed of high-wage careers in cutting-edge industries like life sciences and technology. Innovation hubs have been created at Medical City in Lake Nona and in downtown's Creative Village, a 68-acre site with the UCF Downtown, Valencia College Downtown campus and the new Orlando studio of Electronic Arts.

Prior to being elected Mayor, he served in the Florida Senate. Mayor Dyer earned his undergraduate degree in Civil Engineering from Brown University and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Florida College of Law. He was born in Orlando and raised in nearby Kissimmee. Mayor Dyer is married to Susie and is the proud father of two sons, Trey and Drew, and a beloved dog, Sammie.

Proclamation

CITY OF ORLANDO - OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

- WHEREAS,** the vision of Dot Ellis and other women leaders of Central Florida came to fruition in 1972 with the formation of the Women's Executive Council to inspire the women of Orlando and provide an outlet to make visible improvements for residents; and
- WHEREAS,** the working women of Central Florida desired to play a more prominent role in the community to unite their sisters in their collective desire to improve the community aesthetic, identify voices of change, and make a difference in the lives of women; and
- WHEREAS,** the Women's Executive Council was founded on the basic principle that women were worth investing in; and
- WHEREAS,** throughout history, women have served as leaders at the forefront of every progressive social movement in our nation and in Central Florida; and
- WHEREAS,** the investment in the education of women is critical to nurture the economic, cultural, and social success of women in our community; and
- WHEREAS,** the Women's Executive Council is celebrating its 50th anniversary and has awarded 50 scholarships this year as part of its celebration; over the years, the organization has raised more than \$760,000 and provided 431 scholarships to women seeking to advance their education; and
- WHEREAS,** the Women's Executive Council is playing a key role in our community's efforts to create an environment that advances opportunities for women to achieve their dreams; and
- WHEREAS,** the City of Orlando and our residents are grateful for the Women's Executive Council's 50 years of service and thank the Council and its members for their compassionate role in building a stronger community for all who call The City Beautiful home;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Buddy Dyer, Mayor of the City of Orlando; do hereby proclaim October 13, 2022, as

"Women's Executive Council 50th Anniversary Day"

in the City of Orlando.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto have set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Orlando to be affixed this 13th day of October, 2022.



Buddy Dyer
MAYOR

Special Thanks To



Eryka Washington Perry

Director of Communication at The Reedy Creek Improvement District
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Ambassador
WEC "Best in Communication" Award Winner

Eryka Washington Perry is the Director of Communication at The Reedy Creek Improvement District, where she is leading the Diversity and Inclusion initiative to increase representation in local government. Ms. Washington Perry is a familiar face in the central Florida community. Before joining Reedy Creek, she served as a spokesperson and Director of Communications for The States Attorney's Office however she is best known in Central Florida as an Emmy Award-Winning journalist and on-air reporter for two of the top news stations in Orlando – WKMG News 6 and WESH 2 News.

Eryka has championed countless causes and is passionate about amplifying the voices of underserved individuals in the community and helping to tackle systemic problems. Throughout her distinguished 20-year career, Ms. Washington has worked tirelessly to inspire those in need through fundraising, empowerment, awareness, and advocacy. She was honored to receive the City of Orlando's Citizenship Award. Eryka is an active member of the National Association of Black Journalists, a board member for Central Florida Women's League and a current Volunteer and Mentor with TGI- Girls Camp.

1972 Society

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- Brigham Young*

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- Anne Frank

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TOVE ROSENGREN



ECONOMICS

"This scholarship means everything to me, as it gets me closer to getting the degree I always dreamed of."

Tove Rosengren is an international student from Sweden, currently pursuing her bachelor's degree. At Rollins, she is representing the women's golf team, which means everything to her. She has played golf her whole life, and the sport keeps teaching her valuable lessons, such as the importance of always working hard, never giving up and that going out of your comfort zone is something desirable. Other than developing through her sport, she has in college become more multicultural than ever. At Rollins she daily gets the opportunity to interact with people from other cultures, which she believes is very important, and something that helps her further grow. Tove's goal is to pursue a career within the field of finance as she enjoys working with numbers and investments at the same time as she believes the field needs more female representation.

JACLYN GRECO



ECONOMICS

"WEC is a great step forward for women. This scholarship helps others like me complete our studies and help our community."

Jaclyn Greco has been interested in the interworking's of the economics world since she was little. Being raised by business owners had always allowed her an inside look into the business world. She loved to help her parents in their business ever since she was young, from cleaning tables to creating an excel formula to build a budget for the business. She is also an active member in her community as a volunteer basketball coach at her local church, distributing flyers about upcoming projects in her neighborhood and much more. She hopes to help people in her community and local organizations with her college degree. Jaclyn's long-term goals include pursuing a career in economics to help advocate for small businesses in her local community. She is grateful for this scholarship, which will help her achieve all her life-long goals.

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SAMANTHA KRESAL

VALENCIA COLLEGE



BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

"I've dreamed of getting my degree for over fifteen years. This scholarship is quite literally making my dreams come true."

Samantha Kresal is a non-traditional & first-generation student finally getting her Bachelor's a decade later than originally planned. She's achieved a career of fifteen+ years as an Executive Administrative/Project Assistant. After attaining an Associate's degree, she landed a dream job within the defense/aerospace sector. She's supported high-level engineers of mission-critical programs. She is a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt and leads Engineering-Week's flight simulation activities with youth. She's made such a name for herself that her VPs have already made promotion plans for her – as soon as she graduates, she'll officially begin her new career as a Project Engineer. This scholarship has made all the difference, and will literally be what allows her to complete -her final semester! After establishing herself, she plans to go for her double-Master's in Business and Engineering Management.



LETICIA ESTHER MAGALHAES CRUZ



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

"I'm so honored to be part of something great that embraces and empower women to reach their goals."

Born in Brazil, Leticia is a student pursuing her second degree after having previously studied Law in Brazil where she was valedictorian. Her passion for global citizenship, problem-solving, cultural enrichment, and human rights made her pursue this degree. She worked as an intern for the Amnesty Commission for Brazil's Ministry of Justice, where she maintained highly involved legal responsibilities to support Brazilian citizens who suffered significant injustices during Brazil's period of dictatorship. This experience made her realize she wanted to do something meaningful with her life. Her father, Ricardo, passed away this February and shared the family's dream to see her graduate from an American University. Leticia, as well as her mother Ceiça and her younger sister Larissa, are overwhelmed with gratitude for the Women's Executive Council scholarship because it allowed Leticia to continue with her studies in this challenging time of their lives.

Rollins

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Congratulations to the 2022 WEC Scholarships Recipients!



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Amber Finch
2022 WEC Scholar

“Holt has allowed me to pursue my dreams of becoming a mental health counselor. The WEC scholarship has allowed me to relieve some of my financial stress in order to continue my educational goals.”

Rollins

HAMILTON HOLT SCHOOL
PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
& GRADUATE STUDIES

Scholarship Recipients

MELINDA GERARDI



ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

"This scholarship means everything to me, as it gets me closer to getting the degree I always dreamed of."

Melinda Gerardi is a rising senior who is earning her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education through the Pathways Program. She is a happily married mother of one in her fifth year as a paraprofessional for OCPS. She plans to use her Elementary Education degree to become a classroom teacher at Water Spring Elementary. She is finally accomplishing her lifelong dream of being a teacher and loves working with students of all ages. Melinda's current elementary school has supported her journey toward getting her degree. The incredible administration team at Water Spring Elementary has given Melinda every opportunity to work with students and gain in-classroom experience. Melinda enjoys reading, cooking, camping, traveling, and spending time with her family. Melinda is also very excited about her future as an educator. She is thankful for everyone who is helping her achieve this goal.

KIM D. HUYNH



ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

"I am so grateful for this scholarship. It will help me to focus on my passion for teaching and education."

Kim D. Huynh was born in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and speaks three different languages. She is presently working in the Orange County Public School System in Exceptional Education as a Paraprofessional for the past ten years. Ms. Huynh loves seeing children learning and growing to their fullest potential. In her spare time, you can find her outside kayaking, running or gardening. She is also passionate about volunteering in her local community such as the food pantry, Habitat for Humanity or helping out in Vietnamese communities with various events.

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AMAIYA BROWN



HEALTH INFORMATICS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

"This scholarship will lift some of the financial burden so that I can accomplish my goals of going to college as a first generation student."

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY

Amaiya Brown is a freshman at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. In High School, she served as was heavily involved in various groups, extracurriculars and sports. During her time as a volunteer she put in more than 650 hours teaching kids essential life skills. In addition to volunteering she spent her time organizing a self-initiated service project called Jacquell's Project which focuses on raising funds and awareness for youth with cancer. It was started because of Amaiya's experience of having family battle cancer. She used her experience to honor those she has lost and all youth battling cancer. Jacquell's Project has raised over \$200 through fundraising, made 50 goodie bags, and donated books for the kids in the Oncology department at Nicklaus Children's Hospital. Once Amaiya graduates college with her bachelor's degree, she plans on working in a hospital as a Health Informatics and Information Management as a technician or specialist.



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AMIYAH MURPHY-ALLISON



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL FLORIDA



MASTER IN SOCIAL WORK

"This scholarship is important to me because it amplifies that regardless of what has been written for you by others, you are the author of your own story."

Amiyah Murphy-Allison is a graduate student at the school of Social Work. She is a current graduate assistant at the University of Central Florida for Housing and Residence Life. Amiyah has interned with Parramore Kids Zone where she has helped enhance children's health and wellness through resource brokering, partnerships, and providing support to the Parramore community. She is also very active in her community as a Lead Peer Advocate for a wellness promotion center that promotes wellness by increasing awareness of student health issues to UCF students. Her passion for helping others is rooted from her own journey of overcoming hardships and adversity which ultimately led her to pursue Social Work.

Amiyah enjoys helping others succeed and is currently interning at Maynard Evans High School helping students, families and teachers overcome physical, emotional, or economic problems as a MSW Clinical Intern. Amiyah plans to continue her journey in the social work field after her anticipated graduation in May 2023 with intentions of pursuing her PhD in Social Work or Public Affairs in the future.

**DAN
NEWLIN**
INJURY ATTORNEYS

*Scholarship
Recipient*

**REBECCA
LOPEZ**



LAW (J.D.)

Rebecca Lopez is a Juris Doctor candidate at FAMU College of Law in Orlando, Florida. She is a first-generation college graduate and has returned to legal studies after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts from Flagler College in 2012. Due to financial limitations, she initially pursued a career in librarianship. Inspired by the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Rebecca decided in 2020 to ultimately return to the law. As a queer Latina, her passion lies in fighting for a system that recognizes and honors individuals of all backgrounds. Her hope upon graduating from FAMU Law is to become a public interest attorney and work to ensure "liberty and justice for all" truly means all. She currently serves on the FAMU Law Review and as an executive board member for the FAMU Law ACLU. She recently completed an internship at Serene Harbor, a domestic violence shelter in Brevard County, under the Injunction for Protection Project. Rebecca and her wife reside in Palm Bay, Florida with their two dogs and two cats and can often be found at the beach.

FLORIDA **A&M** UNIVERSITY

"Through the generosity of this scholarship program, I am finally able to pursue a legal career and work towards creating a society that truly embodies the diversity and equity that our country stands for."

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JULIANNA DIAZ



UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL FLORIDA



INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING

"I am truly grateful for this scholarship as it allows me to continue to pursue my dreams of becoming an engineer."

Julianna Diaz is a sophomore pursuing a Business Administration minor and an Engineering Leadership Certificate. Julianna is a proud Floridian, descending from Hispanic parents from the island of Puerto Rico. Julianna started her journey dual-enrolling at Valencia College. During high school, she explored numerous different career opportunities but landed in the career field of engineering, specifically systems and industrial engineering. She loves the excitement and problem-solving aspect of engineering. As a Hispanic woman braving the engineering waters, she hopes to encourage other young girls to pursue their dreams and become the best problem-solvers this world needs. When Julianna is not studying, she loved to volunteer at Give Kids the World and at her local children's ministry at church. Julianna has a heart for the younger generation and is excited to see what they will do in the future. Julianna is excited to see what her future holds as a future engineering.

**“An investment in knowledge
pays the best interest.”**

-Benjamin Franklin

We are proud to support the Women's Executive Council
in its mission to recognize and inspire Central Florida's
women leaders and students.

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MAUREEN NAMUKASA



**AVIATION
SCIENCES (PH.D.)**

**"I am especially
grateful that I get to
focus on preparing for
my exams rather than
worrying about my
financial needs."**

Maureen is a Ph.D. student in the Aviation Sciences program specializing in Human Factors. She is passionate about human interaction in man-machine systems and desires to enhance human performance in today's increasingly technology-driven society. Maureen is a teaching assistant for the Urban Air Mobility course, a domain in which she recently co-authored a publication aiming to understand the information requirements of novel cockpit systems. These roles enable her the opportunity to mentor undergraduate and graduate students and learn how to best serve fellow learners. Some of her other academic achievements include membership with the exclusive Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi and winning an honorable mention for her team's design of an Unmanned Aerial System. Maureen enjoys welcoming guests or new members to her church as well as community development through activities including cleaning the beach, refurbishing housing facilities for the less privileged, and helping senior citizens.

Great leaders inspire us

Leaders engage us, allow us to take chances, unite our voices, and focus our ideas into action.

We congratulate this year's honorees for the **2022 Women's Achievement Awards** and salute the **Women's Executive Council of Orlando** and its mission to recognize and develop women in our community.

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CRISTINA VASQUEZ BOERO

Rollins
EST. 1885



ECONOMICS & BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

"It is an honor to have been awarded this scholarship that will allow me to continue embarking on my personal, academic, and professional, successful journey."

Born in Peru, Cristina is a rising sophomore pursuing a double major. She graduated valedictorian and was chosen as House Captain of the school. At nine, she joined a ballet academy and discovered her passion for dancing. She has trained intensively as a ballerina and competed internationally. As a child, her interests were totally immersed in business. In 2019, she co-founded Kámua company for Peru's Junior Achievement contest. Their app prototype connected users with professional home-service workers and placed in the top 10. Her dream is to become a businesswoman to inspire other girls to succeed in a competitive male dominating sector. She hopes to work in the financial or consulting industry after finishing college and plans to pursue a master's degree. Coming from an undeveloped country, Cristina is very passionate about discussing greater systemic education inequalities; that is why she joined a NGO to teach English to children with limited resources. She started her Business career by doing an internship at Scotiabank this summer. Cristina's career is slowly opening a shining path where she is embarking on a journey she hopes one day to be recognized.



◆ 1972 ◆ SOCIETY ◆

In 2013, the Board of Directors created the 1972 Society to reflect the heart of the Women's Executive Council - *Embracing and Empowering Women to Serve Central Florida.*

Scholarships will be awarded in the amount of \$1972.00.

1972 Society Donor Opportunities:

Donors may give and present a **\$1972 scholarship** in your name or the name of a loved one to a scholarship recipient in a field/major of your choice. This donation qualifies you as a 1972 Society Diamond Member.

Join the **1972 Society Giving Circle** and donate a **one time payment of \$197.20** or **ten-monthly payments of \$19.72.**

Gather nine friends or family members and you will be able to award one scholarship in your group's name.

Any donation of \$197.20 or more qualifies you as a member of the 1972 Society.

Thank you for making a difference and investing in the lives of women in Central Florida - one scholarship at a time.

Visit wecorlando.com/1972-Society for more information.

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Eliana Jacobs | Ashley Laubach Scholarship



Sociology &
Interdisciplinary
Studies

Eliana Jacobs is a senior pursuing a dual degree in Sociology and Interdisciplinary Studies on a Pre-Medical track. Since the 5th grade, Eliana developed an interest in becoming a physician. She was inspired to increase the representation of African American physicians. Eliana's interest in medicine grew into a passion when she was diagnosed as a Type 1 Diabetic in 8th grade. Her diagnosis inspired her to want to treat and advocate for other children who have autoimmune diseases. Eliana is now conducting her undergraduate honor thesis on African Americans from an epigenetic perspective. In her free time, she is a staff writer where she writes articles on lifestyle and wellness. She also volunteers at Nemours Children Hospital and plans to apply to medical school to pursue an MD/MPH.

"Being awarded this scholarship will allow me to continue pursuing my goal of becoming the first physician in my family."

Nazliyan Issakgul Duman Ashley Laubach - UBS Financial Scholarship



Business
Administration

Nazliyan Issakgul Duman is a freshman pursuing her Bachelor's & Master's degrees through the Advanced Management Program. In her Senior year of high school, Nazliyan was accepted to the Bonner Leaders program. Since being introduced to the National Honor Society, she found a passion for service. She served as Chairman of Pineapple Cove Classical Academy's National Honor Society for five years. Nazliyan has always longed to support those in poverty and protect the environment. Through partnering with nonprofits in the Bonner Leaders program, Nazliyan is eager to gain the skills and knowledge to tackle these issues affecting our society. With her degree, she hopes to create innovative and sustainable companies, combining her love for service and environmentalism.

"This scholarship alleviates the financial burden and allows me to pursue my career. Truly, thank you for this prestigious award."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Idil Kilic | *George Woodward Scholarship*



Idil Kilic is currently a third-year undergraduate student at the Burnett Honors College with minors in Mathematics and French. She has volunteered with many local organizations, ranging from pet shelters to libraries. Within her university, she has participated in various events to clean parks and lakes around campus and is also a member of American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Since she was little, Idil has had the opportunity to work closely with airplanes and airwings. She is currently interning at a prestigious aerospace company through UCF. From this, she hopes to commercialize global travel to all social classes so that everyone can have equal opportunities to visit destinations around the world. She hopes to normalize flying internationally while lowering the cost of airplane tickets and minimizing the amount of fuel used.



Aerospace
Engineering

"I would like to thank the WEC for supporting me throughout college – I am one step closer to my dream."

Alexandria Grace Sulich | *Craig and Carina Borkon Scholarship*



Alexandria Grace Sulich is a freshman who is pursuing a double major in Performing Arts and Biology; a recent Windermere graduate with a 4.7 GPA. Alexandria Grace was a member and president of her high school's chapter of Rho Kappa (Social Studies NHS) with additional memberships including National Honor Society, Science National Honor Society, English National Honor Society, and National Art Honor Society. Alexandria was selected to represent Windermere High School at the National Student Leadership She was honored to be an AP Scholar Award recipient for 2021 and 2022, the Orange County Seal of Biliteracy Award for 2022, and the Windermere High School Spanish III Honors Award for 2022. Alexandria Grace has over eleven years of ballet training and professional company performance experience, training and volunteering with the Orlando Ballet since 2017. After her time at Rollins College, Alexandria Grace hopes to attend medical school.



Biology &
Political Science

"Thank you very much for this opportunity. Through the means of education, we will be able to set our futures ablaze."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Isabella Whedbee | *Collette Wilson Scholarship*



Isabella Whedbee is a freshman student at the Burnett Honors College pursuing a bachelor's degree. Her passions involve communicating messages on all mediums. She graduated high school with a 4.0 GPA and has volunteered over 300 community service hours with nonprofits such as the American Red Cross and UNICEF. Her role as president of her school's Red Cross Club inspired her to begin a program to train volunteers in managing a nonprofit organization and creating engaging club content, thus increasing member rates. Her goal is to ultimately become an advertising professional for businesses and charities. She also hopes to utilize her leadership skills to support nonprofits in increasing their outreach and fundraising efforts. She is excited to learn about how storytelling marketing can positively impact the world.



Advertising &
Public Relations

"The support of WEC will greatly encourage me to pursue my goals throughout my college journey."

Sarah Clemons | *Joan S. Buning Scholarship*



Sarah Clemons is a junior with a minor in Neuroscience. She started her college path at Eastern Florida State College where she was placed on the President's List during all semesters, joined Phi Theta Kappa, participated in undergraduate research, and graduated with her Associate in Arts degree with honors. Sarah's professional goal is to have a career caring for patients as a Physician Assistant in a pediatric specialty. She has been interested in medicine for many years from personally seeing the healthcare system. She is currently a Public Health intern for the Arthritis Foundation Florida, researching ways to boost outreach. In her free time, she volunteers at Advent Health for Children on the oncology/hematology and bone marrow transplant units, working with Child Life to provide playroom and bedside activities for patients.



Biochemistry /
Molecular Biology

"I'm so excited to have received this scholarship that will help me accomplish my dream of impacting the future of healthcare!"

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Delaney Bennett | *Deborah Kelly Scholarship*



Delaney is currently pursuing her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Florida and recently obtained her Master of Science in Clinical Psychology from FIT in conjunction with her doctoral program. Her focus is on military psychology, which encompasses various areas of practice as well as neuropsychology. She was recently commissioned into the US Army as a Second Lieutenant and will be helping active-duty service members through therapeutic practice and trauma treatment in two years on internship. She has been determined to reach this moment and pursue her dreams of serving in the U.S. military. She is incredibly grateful for the Women's Executive Council members and donors who made this scholarship possible.



Doctorate in
Clinical
Psychology

"This will allow me to embark on specialized practicum experiences that would not have been possible without this opportunity."

Eyana Dixon | *Deborah Kelly Scholarship*



Eyana Dixon is minoring in Healthcare Management. Since high school she has always wanted to pursue a career in the medical field while also having interest in business and management. She graduated high school with honors while also being in the top 10% of her class. She is very passionate about learning and hopes to get her Doctorate of Public Health after she graduates. Eyana plans to one day start the "Dixon Foundation" which will provide service, community, and scholarships to young black women pursuing higher education. Her heart to encourage and motivate others has allowed her to use her social media platforms to create a space that is welcoming to all. She is currently a Christian content creator with goals to start her own podcast, write a book about leadership, wisdom, and integrity as well as shining a spotlight on her faith and growing into the woman God called her to be.



Business
Administration

"I can continue my passion of learning at the #1 HBCU in the nation, where I can pave the way for the young women after me. To God be the glory!"

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Sierra Higgins | *Deborah Kelly Scholarship*



Sierra Higgins is currently a freshman. She is planning to major in Health Sciences and then earn a master's degree in occupational therapy, to become a pediatric occupational therapist. She was inspired to pursue this career track because as a child she benefited first-hand from occupational therapy. She clearly remembers having fun as a patient and how it helped her and now wants to experience the other side of the career and impact the lives of children that were in her situation. Sierra is gaining applied experience through a clinical internship with LifeSkills Sensory Integration Specialists in Maitland, FL, the same practice where she was a patient many years ago! While pursuing her education, Sierra also plans to continue her work with several local volunteer organizations, finding creative ways to impact the lives of others.



Health Sciences

"I'm extremely grateful to be selected for the WEC Scholarship. It allows me to pursue my dream of helping others."

Tianka Pharaoh M.S., PPS | *Margaret D. Jennings Scholarship*



Tianka Pharaoh is a third-year doctoral student in the Counselor Education and Supervision program. The majority of her clinical experience has been serving as a Professional School Counselor for the K-12 school system and post-secondary institutions. Throughout Tianka's career, she has remained committed to issues of diversity, equity, and access. As a doctoral student, she served students and families by providing play therapy services and wellness and self-care workshops. Tianka will be dedicating her time over the next year examining the impact of the use of the n-word among Black youth. She will conduct a qualitative research study utilizing groundbreaking methods to identify the support systems students need regarding the impact of racial slurs used in schools. This scholarship will support Tianka's passion for helping students and families and assist her with obtaining the necessary resources during her time as a doctoral student.



Counselor
Education and
Supervision
(Ph.D.)

"It is such an honor to be recognized and supported by the Women's Executive Council. I am inspired, hopeful and grateful."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Alessia Francesca Prenda | *Edna Trimble Scholarship*



Alessia Prenda is a freshman minoring in Social Entrepreneurship. She's always had a passion for the performing arts and has performed at Carnegie Hall in their International Protégé program. Earlier this year, she was one of five in her home county nominated for the Kravis Center Dream Awards in the Lead Actress division for her performance. At this event she was the runner up to go to the Jimmy Awards. This inspires her to continue pursuing a career, but what drives her the most is her desire to provide children in the foster care system and abusive homes with healthy, creative coping mechanisms. She hopes to one day develop a program that's free and accessible to all who need a space to be themselves, create something beautiful with like-minded people, and confide in adults who can keep them safe and help them shine.

Rollins
EST. 1885

Theater and Social
Entrepreneurship

"This scholarship helps me afford an education that will bolster my efforts to protect children in the arts."

Lauren-Ann Graham | *Tony Martin Scholarship*



Lauren-Ann Graham is entering the final year of her graduate degree in mechanical engineering. Her goal of becoming an astronaut has propelled her to chase opportunity. During her undergraduate studies, she interned as a jet propulsion engineer for 2.5 years at Larsen Motorsports. She also hosted a NASA HUNCH educational program and was the lead of manufacturing for her school's NASA robotics team. Fast forward to her graduate studies, she held a NASA internship working in the microgravity lab at the Kennedy Space Center. Following this, she interned for a contractor at KSC supporting the Ground Systems team for the Artemis missions. Now she works full-time for the Ground Systems team as a Ground Integration Engineer for NASA's Mobile Launcher. She gives thanks to the council for selecting her as a recipient, and to her family and friends who have constantly supported her.

FLORIDA TECH

Masters,
Mechanical
Engineering

"This provides me the financial stability to complete my degree while continuing to chase my dreams! Thank you so much for the support!"

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Jena Saleh | Susan Murphy Scholarship



VALENCIA COLLEGE

Health Sciences -
Physical Therapy

Jena Saleh is a freshman at Valencia College and recently graduated high school. She was a member of National Honors Society and was able to graduate a year and a half early. Jena earned over 170 hours of community service and has been a volunteer at Aisha School for five years. She enjoys working with children and being involved in her community. She attends Valencia College and is working on completing her AA degree. Due to her love of helping others and athletic training, she has decided to major in Health Sciences and work towards a degree in Physical Therapy. Her goal is to make a positive influence in the world and put her best efforts in school. She is extremely appreciative of the academic opportunities given to her, and plans on giving back to the same community that helped her.

"I am beyond grateful to be awarded this scholarship as it will open up many opportunities and allow me to accomplish my academic goals."

Kenyatta Connelly | Ina Courtney Revis Scholarship



FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY

Elementary
Education

Kenyatta Connelly is a graduating Elementary Education student. Born and raised in Tallahassee, Kenyatta always had a passion for children. She believes that early education is fundamental in determining a child's success. Her dedication to education and mentorship has given her opportunities including being the resident assistant and house manager for the Southern Scholarship Foundation and president of Phi Delta Kappa. She is currently completing her student internship, which will be her final requirement for the process of becoming a teacher. She is also working as a daycare teacher's assistant who helps to facilitate the learning process. When she is not working, she enjoys giving back to the community and volunteering with her alma mater Rickards High School. Kenyatta aspires to become an impactful elementary teacher and eventually become a school counselor.

"This scholarship will allow me to focus on my studies instead of worrying about how I will make ends meet."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Ashley Sawyer | Julie Koves Family Scholarship



Ashley is a junior at Rollins College majoring in Psychology with a dual minor in Chemistry and Neuroscience. Upon graduation she plans to attend medical school and pursue a MD/PhD degree. Ashley graduated from Florida State University School magna cum laude. While in high school, she won several language competitions. Now at Rollins, Ashley is a Wellness Ambassador which specializes in providing resources for students to maintain a healthy lifestyle. She has also been involved in student government and increasing the number of women and minorities in STEM fields. This past summer Ashley was selected to complete a research internship at Vanderbilt University working in the Memory and Alzheimer's Center. This Fall Ashley was chosen to be a peer mentor for first year students as well as a Biology Teaching Assistant.

Rollins
EST. 1885

Psychology
(Pre-Med)

"I am extremely grateful for this scholarship and hope that I can be a role model for other young women."

Kate Rumisek | Kelly Family Cuidiú Foundation Scholarship



Kate Rumisek is a junior pursuing a bachelor's degree with a minor in Leadership Studies. She is a member of President's Leadership Council where she holds the position of Retreat Coordinator. As Retreat Coordinator, she oversees the hosting of four retreats for the members of PLC. Kate is also involved and many other organizations on campus including Women's Student Union and Knights Pre-Law. In her free time, Kate can be found volunteering with multiple organizations including Seminole High School and with the LEAD Scholars Program. Kate can also be seen performing one of her hobbies gymnastics where she enjoys challenging herself to learn new skills. Upon graduation at UCF, Kate plans to attend law school. This scholarship will allow her to focus on school while staying highly involved with campus organizations and community service projects.



Political Science
Pre-Law

"This scholarship has allowed me to continue my studies and pursue my goal of attending Law school."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Gabrielle Phillipps | *Kelly Family Cuidiú Foundation Scholarship*



Gabrielle Phillipps is a senior in the concurrent ASN-BSN nursing program. She is involved in the Student Nurses' Association, where she leads as a peer mentor to first and second-semester nursing students and contributes to the monthly SNA newsletter. Gabrielle also participates in the Student Health Advisory Committee, engaging in discussion with administrators on the services and programs that the Student Health Center offers to students and volunteers on campus. She is a progressive care student nurse intern at Orlando Health South Lake Hospital. After graduating, she hopes to work in an ICU and advance her knowledge in critical care by earning a CCRN certification. She hopes to further her education by pursuing a graduate degree in nurse anesthesia and completing a fellowship in advanced pain management.

SEMINOLE STATE COLLEGE
OF FLORIDA



Nursing

"I am incredibly grateful to be a recipient of the WEC Scholarship, as it will allow me to fully focus on my studies."

Jalynn "JJ" McDuffey | *James & Laura Lynn Scholarship*



Jalynn McDuffey is a bright leader from South Miami. She is an awarded community service leader who uses her love for Art, History, and Education to create a more truthful, inclusive, and genuine world. A YoungArts 2021 winner, Scholastic National Silver medalist, Presidential Scholar of the Arts and a 2022 GUCCI 'changemaker' scholar, McDuffey uses her mixed media work to share raw storytelling pieces sharing hidden nuisances of the Black Diaspora. In her personal life she has worked to create 'Hearts for Art', a service project used to teach art principles and mental health benefits in low-income POC communities. Jalynn's goal is to become a Culture journalist, media lawyer, and non-profit owner to amplify arts education and college preparedness through culture exploration, allowing others to use their history and explore the contribution it has on the world, making art more inclusive.

FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY

Broadcast
Journalism

"This is important to me because it proves education matters. Every success helps me prove my education, and my life, is worth fighting for."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Libbey Shellenberger | *Fred & Gerry Scheer Scholarship*



Libbey Shellenberger is pursuing a Spanish minor. Business Management interests her because of its diverse specializations and teamwork aspects. Libbey studied Spanish in high school and it has continued to be a passion for her. Libbey enjoys finding ways to help her community through campus programs such as The Rotaract Club and Kappa Delta Sorority. Libbey was also highly involved with her community in high school through her church youth group and The National Honor Society. Through these programs, she tutored elementary students, volunteered at The Winter Special Olympics, and participated in Feed My Starving Children. This summer Libbey obtained her Life Insurance license so that she can help families during unforeseen events.

Rollins
EST. 1885

Business
Management

"I am thankful to WEC for this scholarship that will further my enrollment at a college devoted to service."

Stephanie Valladares | *Joan S. Buning Scholarship*



Stephanie Valladares has always been interested in Web Development and be part of technology's evolution through time. She aspires to start a fundraiser for women in STEM to promote woman empowerment and provide opportunities that will make them achieve their goals in life. She has always dreamed of being able to create equal opportunities for her people in Honduras and opening up a worthy education with the end goal of providing a better future for them. Her biggest accomplishment has been creating a COVID-19 statistics program that has been used by several professors to extract specific data(COVID cases, recoveries, deaths) from certain countries. She is currently a senior and is planning to master in Cyber Security. Her goal is to become a software engineer and create new technologies that will increase worldwide efficiency and make the world a better place to live in.

Rollins
EST. 1885

Computer Science
& Economics

"This allows me to continue my career and have access to technological improvements and opportunities that will help me accomplish my goals."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Robin Jones | *Cornita Riley & Friends Scholarship*



Robin Jones is currently working as a legal intern at the Attorney General Office in Jacksonville. Robin is certified as a County Court Mediator by the Florida Supreme Court. She is a volunteer Child Welfare Advocate for the Florida Guardian ad Litem Office. Robin is passionate about family law, child welfare, and juvenile defense. Her career goal is to create nonprofits to assist women who suffer from domestic violence and helping children who are victims of neglect and abuse. Her goal is to be able to help victims of abuse receive the necessary resources they need to be successful such as housing programs, food programs, education assistance, and counseling programs. Her career aspiration is to become a juvenile and family court judge and make a difference in the lives of abused women and children.



Law (J.D.)

"The WEC Scholarship has helped me acquire the educational opportunities necessary to build myself into a successful leader."

Kirsten Tague | *Trish Waters Scholarship*



Kirsten Tague is a current University of Central Florida student working towards her master's degree in Criminal Justice. In the future, Kirsten hopes to work for the government to help protect the community in which she lives and make the country overall a better place. In her free time, Kirsten enjoys working out, skating, and going to the beach. She also enjoys going on long walks and binge watching crime shows with her dog, Abby. Kirsten is also a member of Phi Theta Kappa, Tau Sigma, and the Florida Sheriff's Organization. She would like to thank the members of the Women's Executive Council for their generous contributions to this scholarship and supporting young women attending central Florida colleges. This scholarship will allow Kirsten to pay for her final semester of graduate school without worrying about the financial complications of graduate school.



Master of
Criminal Justice

"This allows me to pay for my final semester of graduate school without worrying about the financial complications."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Aisha Barber | *Nora Buning & Karen Willis Scholarship*



Aisha Barber is a senior pursuing a bachelor's degree. As a child learning how to read was difficult for Aisha, but she was determined to overcome any obstacles. Having a phenomenal support team of both teachers and parents, her weakness turned into strengths. Because of that determination, she wanted to help students who experience similar struggles and motivate them just like she was motivated. Aisha has worked hard to accomplish her goal of becoming a teacher. Ms. Barber has been a part of the education system for the past seven years and will continue to do so with the level of excellence the WEC organization inspires. Aisha is honored to be a recipient of such a prestigious award, she would also like to thank her remarkable parents and son for being supportive throughout her journey.

Rollins
HAMILTON HOLT SCHOOL
PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
& GRADUATE STUDIES

K-6 Elementary
Education

"I'm honored to be awarded the WEC scholarship, the scholarship will help alleviate financial burdens as I pursue my degree."

Vanessa Martinez | *Shelly Ferrone Scholarship*



Vanessa Martinez is a junior at Rollins College, majoring in Political Science. She is Editor-in-Chief at Her Campus Rollins, a magazine focused on college women. Her writings focus on news and current social issues. She held the Communications Chair position at Amnesty International Rollins, raising awareness on human rights issues globally and in her community. The former ties in with her anti-human trafficking efforts on a campaign she started on campus, called "Stop the Trafficking Project." To learn more and grow in the field she is most passionate about, Vanessa took on a Campaign Intern position over the summer with Representative Anna V. Eskamani from the Florida House of Representatives. Vanessa is also studying abroad in the Fall semester of 2022 in the South of France and hopes to become an International Lawyer in the future.

Rollins
EST. 1885

Political Science

"This will aid me in my college career, as well as provide me with a network of women who bring about change in their communities."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Hope Kern | Shirley Horsey Scholarship



Hope Kern has volunteered with organizations such as the Spina Bifida Association of Central Florida, Redefining Spina Bifida, & the Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida. Her brother was born with Spina Bifida which has affected her family greatly. This year, her family welcomed a foster teen into their home and a few months later her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Although Hope's parents both work hard, medical expenses max out every year. These challenges and triumphs inspired her to help others so she works full-time to help pay expenses and provide for her new puppy who she is raising to become a future service dog. Hope believes she can be an advocate for both children with disabilities and complex medical conditions like her brother was born with, or her mother was recently diagnosed with.

VALENCIA COLLEGE

Nursing

"This eases the worries of finances while I focus on my education and career to help children who have a disability like my brother."

Zakaria Smothers | Shirley Horsey Scholarship



Zakaria Smothers is minoring in health sciences. She received her associate degree from Valencia while earning her high school diploma from Apopka High School. While in high school, she also received her CNA certification from Orange Technical College. She has been heavily involved in her community by volunteering at the East Altamonte Boys & Girls Club, participating in events in support of breast cancer research, and attending events hosted by the Florida Economic Consortium Inc. Her goal is to become a registered nurse and to continue her education to become a nurse anesthetist. She has a strong desire to ensure every person feels comfortable while in the hospital, despite the stressful atmosphere hospitals can have. She is passionate about building trust within every patient she encounters and giving them the best care possible. In this way, she hopes to make medical care more accessible and less frightening, one patient at a time.



Nursing

"This award will help offset the cost of college and help me in achieving my goal of earning my BSN degree."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

ToCarra Jordan

Women's Achievement Awards Honorees Scholarship



Educational
Leadership, Higher
Education (Ed.D)

ToCarra Jordan is a Doctoral Candidate in the Educational Leadership, Higher Education Track program. ToCarra currently serves as Program Manager for the Division of Student Learning and Academic Success and the College of Undergraduate Studies. Prior to entering the academy, she hoped to become a criminal defense attorney, but shifted her focus to working in academia. ToCarra has gained invaluable experience working in various departments and teaching first-time in college students and transfer students. ToCarra is passionate about educating and advocating for students and their families and mentoring and supporting women and staff. ToCarra is looking forward to continuing her work in higher education through advancing into an administrative role with a focus on women, minoritized groups, and staff development.

"As a woman in academia, this scholarship helps me to know that I matter, and I am supported by my community."

Akesia Brown | Women's Executive Council Scholarship



Biology, Molecular
and Cellular
Biology

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Akesia Brown is a first-generation college student pursuing a bachelor's with a concentration in Molecular and Cellular Biology at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. Her interests in the medical field were sparked from a young age when she read "Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story." At every chance she got, she was either checking out a book from the library related to the field or searching it up online. During her junior year of high school, she acquired a certification to become an Emergency Medical Responder to gain knowledge and experience in treating patients. Akesia's goal is to become a neurosurgeon because there is no greater feeling than to impact someone's life for the better. In her free time, she enjoys baking, painting, and volunteering at her local Boys and Girls Club.

"I am grateful for me this scholarship because it is allowing me to continue to pursue my dreams academically."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Faith-Christina Duncan | *Women's Executive Council Scholarship*



VALENCIA COLLEGE

American Sign
Language
Interpreter

Faith-Christina Duncan is a sophomore who has made the President's Honors list every year since starting college and is a member of Phi Theta Kappa. She puts this knowledge to use at her part time job and makes an impact in her community by volunteering with several organizations affiliated with individuals with intellectual disabilities: Best Buddies of America, Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida, & Down Syndrome Foundation of Florida. Faith-Christina wants to show that any one can go to college, whether there is a disability or not. She wants to use ASL to help bridge a gap within the Deaf community and hearing world, but also work in Praise Worship ministries. Faith-Christina wants to become a motivational speaker and has already been a Keynote speaker on numerous occasions, telling her life story.

"I am thankful to be able to continue my dream of becoming an ASL Interpreter and have the burden of finances for tuition relieved."

Shauna Fensler | *Women's Executive Council Scholarship*



Rollins
EST. 1885

Pre-Engineering

Shauna Fensler was born and raised in Orlando, Florida. She is pursuing a bachelors in Pre- Engineering at Rollins College. Since middle school, she has been interested in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fields. In addition, she engaged in STEM classes at her high school. Shauna graduated High School in the top 10% of her class. She values her education and strives to be a great role model for the younger generations. This young lady hopes to influence the younger generations by showing them the numerous opportunities offered in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math fields. Her most outstanding achievement in High School was earning three certifications in Microsoft Offices Word, PowerPoint and Excel. With all her hard work she was able to earn multiple scholarships, including this one. She will be doing many remarkable things in the near future.

"I am grateful to be a recipient of the Women's Executive Council Scholarship. Thank you for helping me to further my education."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Amber Finch | *Women's Executive Council Scholarship*



Rollins
HAMILTON HOLT SCHOOL
PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT
& GRADUATE STUDIES

Psychology

Amber Finch is a senior and one of her many goals is to provide counseling services to her community during challenging times. Amber has begun her role as a peer mentor to incoming freshman at the Hamilton Holt School where she serves as a guide for students to all the resources and events Rollins offers. Amber spends her time volunteering with Seminole County Public School program. She is a single mom and strives to be a role model for her to accomplish her goals despite having obstacles. Amber chaperones her daughter's school trips and helps with her sporting events. For her future goals she plans to further her education and obtain her Masters in mental health counseling after graduating with her bachelor's in psychology. She intends to have her own practice to provide counseling services in underserved communities.

"This scholarship allows me to complete my bachelor's degree and move forward in my aspirations of continuing to get my masters."

Jasmine Garcia | *Women's Executive Council Scholarship*



 UNIVERSITY OF
CENTRAL FLORIDA

Clinical
Psychology

Jasmine Garcia is originally from Miami and came to Orlando with a goal to not just acquire a degree, but make an impact in her community. Jasmine volunteers at local organizations such as Harbor House and Straight Street and being a Resident Assistant at UCF, offering personal and academic resources, guidance, and conflict resolution. As a first-generation student and American, Jasmine's dedication to her goals goes hand in hand with her commitment to her people. She intends to become a specialized family therapist operating closely with minority demographics, including immigrant families and their unique struggles. Jasmine is in the Burnett Honors College, composing an undergraduate thesis and is a Research Assistant on UCF's Sandford/Lake Mary Campus. Jasmine's professional goal is to become a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and earn her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology.

"This scholarship alleviates my most significant expense, allowing me time to focus on my professional endeavors."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Daniela Golob | *Women's Executive Council Scholarship*



Daniela Golob is pursuing a minor in Sexuality, Women, and Gender Studies. She has always held a great interest in mental health and greatly values advocacy for marginalized communities. She currently serves as Student-Coordinator for the EMBARK program, which is designed to support students of underrepresented identities as they transition into college. Daniela is also the President of Spectrum, the LGBTQ+ and ally student organization and serves as a Rollins Diversity Envoy. Through her own journey in mental health, Daniela witnessed the inequities many face in their attempts to receive mental health treatment and support. In 2021, Daniela took a medical leave to prioritize her mental health and focus on recovery as she recognized she must advocate for herself as much as she advocates for others.



Psychology

"The scholarship will assist me in my educational journey to making the mental health community inclusive and equitable."

Joan Kimani | *Women's Executive Council Scholarship*



Joan Kimani is 21 years old student, who was born and raised in East Africa, Kenya until the end of 2017, when she came to the United States of America and did her junior and, senior year in high school, and now attends Valencia College West Campus. Her desired major is Biology, for she has been interested in sciences since she joined high school and is pursuing to be a cardiologist in the future. Such a major allows Ms. Kimani to play to her strengths of being great with sciences and enable her to help others, which is also a passion she has obtained. Ms. Kimani has also obtained a nursing assistant certificate in her education journey which extends her determination to help. Ms. Kimani was also nominated as the honors vice president at Valencia College and her outstanding academic performance got her into both the dean and presidents list. Ms. Kimani's goal is to be a great role model to her younger brother and make her family proud.

VALENCIA COLLEGE

General Studies:
Biology

"Lack of funding should never limit anyone from aiming for higher. God will always make a way where there seems to be no way."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Fabiana Rojas | *Women's Executive Council Scholarship*



Fabiana Rojas is a Valencia College Honors Student preparing to transfer into the University of Central Florida in order to obtain a Graphic Design Track BFA. She moved to the United States on '16, after spending her childhood in Venezuela. Fabiana values knowledge, teamwork, justice, honesty and empathy, this is why she plans on implementing these as a powerful guide to help her pave the way for a better tomorrow. As a graphic designer she aims to create designs that send a message. She strives to use such visual information as a platform to diminish our ignorance and heighten our ability to care for other. Creating awareness and bringing to wrongdoings to the eye. Most importantly, Fabiana wants to remind people of the beauty of life and how important it is to live, laugh, and love and through the journey.



Graphic Design

"Significantly helping the financial hardship and proving the necessary support for me to keep going after my dreams means the world to me."

Nydia Roman | *Women's Executive Council Scholarship*



Nydia Roman will be attending Florida A&M University this fall 2022 in hopes of getting a new experience and learning more about her culture. Throughout her entire school career, she always excelled in the sciences and math's and always maintained her 4.0GPA causing her to be with the top of the class. School wasn't her only priority though as she also participated in sports, volunteer work, and even a job on the side. Balancing these activities made Nydia realize she liked being busy. While journeying through high school, she found her love for helping and understanding people which is what inspired her to want to become a therapist or work in the social field. This coming year she plans to study psychology while also obtaining her real estate license on the side.



Psychology

"It takes just one step at a time for us to reach our unified goal and I am so grateful to have been given the chance to be a part of this community."

2022 Scholarship Recipients

Fatima Abdullahi Sani | *Women's Executive Council Scholarship*



Fatima Abdullahi Sani is pursuing double minors in English and Creative Writing. Fatima is a part of the Bonner Leadership Program, an organization that provides her with prime opportunities to volunteer at multiple partnerships in her community. She works as a Teacher's Assistant at the Winter Park Day Nursery. It was through working with the teachers at WPDN that Fatima decided to begin plotting her career path. Fatima now aspires to write a collection of short stories that will be dedicated to WPDN before she graduates. She hopes to one day be a Children's speech therapist after pursuing higher education with a concentration in Developmental Psychology. Fatima is grateful that a community as empowered and empowering as the Women's Executive Council of Orlando is welcoming her into their collective of awe-inspiring women.

Rollins
EST. 1885

Psychology

"This scholarship is important to me because it is a testament to how much I can achieve with the guidance of such incredible women."

Grace Sweetak | *Women's Executive Council Scholarship*



Grace Sweetak is pursuing two minors in mathematics and computer science. Post-graduation, Grace plans to attend graduate school and receive a PhD in Theoretical Astrophysics. Currently, Grace is completing research through the Student-Faculty Collaborative Research Program at Rollins College under Dr. Christopher Fuse, exploring and classifying isolated spiral galaxies. She is presenting her findings in January at the 241st Annual American Astronomical Society Meeting in Seattle, Washington. Outside of academics, Grace is an athlete on the women's lacrosse team at Rollins College, a nationally ranked competitive program. Grace would like to thank the Women's Executive Council for not only the scholarship, which will relieve the burden of financial costs, but also for being an empowering force for the young women in Central Florida to achieve their goals through the financial aids.

Rollins
EST. 1885

Physics

"I am very honored to be recognized by a committee that supports empowering women and granted a scholarship that will allow me to continue to achieve my academic goals."

*Congratulations to All 2022
Women's Achievement Awards Nominees*

Arlene Blake
Lauren Roderick Brusca
Kelly Cohen
Donna Dowless
Faith-Christina Duncan
Brittnie Faine
Sarah Grafton
Carol Holladay
Melanie Jankun
Barbara Leach
Tammy Lutz
Heather Maloney
Casandra Matej
Cherlette McCullough

Vanessa Morgan
Josie NeJame
Jennifer O'Mara
Mia Poinsette
Wendy J. Roundtree
Sasha Watson Sankey
Lisgelia Santana
Elizabeth Starr
Mel Taylor
Usha Tewari
Dr. Ilene Wilkins
Chiquita Wright
Colleen Zaharakes

Congratulations to Our 2022 Women's Achievement Awards Honorees



Casandra Matej
Woman of the Year



Donna Dowless
Arts & Culture Honoree



Carol Holladay
Business Honoree



Dr. Ilene Wilkins
Education Honoree



Judge Elizabeth Starr
Government / Public
Service Honoree



Cherlette McCullough
Health & Wellness
Honoree



Josie NeJame
Non-Profit Honoree



Kelly Cohen
Professional Honoree



Wendy Roundtree, APR
Rising Star Honoree

2022 Arts & Culture Honoree



Donna Dowless

XOXO MEDIA

After three decades of working in the sports, arts, and entertainment industry, Donna Dowless has cast her efforts toward developing her own Arts and Entertainment consulting Company, XOXO Media Group based in Orlando, Florida.

Her firm specializes in developing strategic alliances and identifying growth and development opportunities for Arts and Entertainment Clients. She also continues to focus on the development of her artistic career as an Award winning mixed-media artist and was selected by Orlando Magazine as the city's No.1 local artist. Her desire to create is continuously fed by her encounters with many inspirational artists, entertainers and sports legends, each of whom have left indelible impressions on her over the years. Her muses include Andy Warhol, who encouraged her by voicing..."If you are an artist in your heart, so be it."

She has been an active member of the International Association of Venue Managers (I.A.V.M.) serving as Director at large for arenas, Chairperson of the Arena Committee, the Committee for Programming and Planning and has been a panelist at both district and national levels, as well as being a member of the founding Board of Regents and an instructor for the I.A.V.M. Venue Management School and served on the Board of Directors for the I.A.V.M. Foundation. Venues today named Dowless one of the top 5 most influential women in sports & entertainment business.

She currently serves on the Board of the Downtown Orlando Arts District, the Board of the After School All Stars, Orange County Public Art Review, and is an Honorary Trustee for the Maitland Arts Center. Donna also serves as a member of the Full Sail Entertainment Business Advisory Board and is a guest lecturer for the degree programs. In 2007 because of Donna's inspirational efforts to spread love through art and culture, Mayor Buddy Dyer and City of Orlando appointed her Orlando's official "Ambassador of Love".

2022 *Business Honoree*



Carol Holladay

Owner, The Pinery Orlando

After 28 years working in the hospitality industry, Carol Sizer Holladay finally fulfilled her lifelong dream of owning and running her own restaurant when she opened The Pinery in 2021.

Nurturing a curiosity to learn more about her native city, Carol set out on a massive history lesson- diving deep into the Florida archives- and the concept of The Pinery was born. Located on beautiful Lake Ivanhoe on the first floor of The Lake House, The Pinery celebrates Orlando's unique past and growing future. Now a mainstay in the Lake Ivanhoe community, and a Michelin-recommended restaurant, The Pinery seeks to bring crafted cocktails and a unique spin on traditional southern foods.

Carol believes hospitality and a successful business go hand in hand, and extends her hospitality by giving back to our community in ways big and small, by supporting various charitable and social organizations, including the Women's Executive Council, Orlando Ballet School, American Cancer Society, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Orange County Animal Services, Parkinson Association of Central Florida, Runway to Hope, Equality Florida, Orlando's vibrant LGBTQ+ community, and, of course, the brood of ducklings that have taken up residence outside of The Pinery.

With wide-ranging restaurant experience across the south – from Boone, NC to Charleston, SC to New Orleans, LA – she is thrilled to now be rooted in Orlando as she continues to grow her business. She is a proud resident of College Park, where she is raising her two young children, Jackson and Shelby Ruth and an ever-growing menagerie of accidentally adopted pets.

2022 Education Honoree



Dr. Ilene Wilkins

UCP of Central Florida

2010 Central Florida Woman of the Year by the Women's Executive Council

Dr. Ilene E. Wilkins joined UCP of Central Florida in 1995 and has been the President and CEO of the organization since 2002. Prior to taking on her current roles, Dr. Wilkins was UCP of Central Florida's Center Director. She has been instrumental in growing the agency's capacity to serve from 150 children to over 3,500 children with and without disabilities in Central Florida

She received her Bachelor's from New York University, her Master's in Public Administration from Suffolk University, and her Doctorate in Exceptional Education from University of Central Florida.

Dr. Wilkins continues to be a national and statewide leader in the field of disabilities. She was appointed by the governor as Chairman of Florida Inter-Agency Coordinating Council for infants and toddlers with disabilities for children's medical services, regional chair for the United Cerebral Palsy Association Southeast Region, heads various policy task forces, and is a current member of the Early Learning Coalition of Osceola County.

Dr. Wilkins was previously recognized as 2016 CEO of the Year Award by the Orlando Business Journal, 2018 Kathleen O. Maul Leadership Award by UCP National, 2021 Dr. Phillips Leadership Award by Dr. Phillips Charities, 2021 Top Women Business Leaders by Orlando Family Magazine, 2021 Brave Women of Orlando by Jewish Federation of Greater Orlando, and received the 2021 New York University Alumni Changemaker Award.

Dr. Wilkins has also been a foster parent for ten years, fostering over 150 children and teens. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, roller coasters and reading.

2022 Government / Public Service Honoree



Judge Elizabeth Starr

Orange County Court Judge Group 8

Elizabeth Starr is an Orange County Court Judge, having been appointed by former Governor Rick Scott in 2015 and being reelected last month to serve another 6 year term beginning in 2023. In 1999, following law school, Judge Starr became an Assistant State Attorney in Miami-Dade County. She continued her commitment to public service by working as a Senior Assistant General Counsel to the Office of Financial Regulation where she prosecuted securities fraud and financial fraud related crimes. For over a decade she served under three Florida Attorney Generals as the Orlando Bureau Chief, responsible for litigating consumer fraud related and racketeering cases across Central Florida.

In addition to her 23 years of public service, Judge Starr held seats on the board of the Healthy Start Coalition of Orange County and the Orlando Rotary Club where she chaired the Youth Services Committee. She is a 2013 Central Florida Partnership Political Leadership Institute graduate.

Judge Starr enjoys spending time with her husband, Monte Starr, a partner with Holland & Knight, and their two children, Miley and Jake. As a cancer survivor, Judge Starr is committed to healthy living, nutrition, and fitness. She also loves cooking, painting, and practicing yoga in her spare time.

2022 Health & Wellness Honoree



Cherlette McCullough, PLMFT

Center Peace Couples and Family Therapy

Cherlette McCullough, a mental health counselor who is passionate about destigmatizing mental health counseling and helping individuals recognize the importance of taking care of themselves both emotionally and mentally.

Cherlette McCullough, a mental health counselor who is passionate about destigmatizing mental health counseling and helping individuals recognize the importance of taking care of themselves both emotionally and mentally. Cherlette is known for her keen insight on unraveling the human experience as it relates to mental health. Cherlette's work is guided by one simple idea: most things seem complicated, but they are actually just hard. She helps people, groups and organizations accomplish hard things.

Cherlette is an active member of the Women's Executive Exchange, she serves on the Mental Health Association of Central Florida's Executive Board as well as the Board of Governors at the Citrus Club of Orlando and the Executive Board for the Faine House a nonprofit program that provides services for young adults who have aged out of foster care.

Cherlette has been featured as a Mental Health expert on Cox media- WFTV-9, WESH-2 News, Spectrum News 13, and WMFE/NPR radio. She keynotes at multiple national conferences across the country and co-hosts as an exclusive Mental Health contributor on the LIVE with Candice & Kris show on Afrotainment shown on Comcast and Xfinity networks. She is the author of an Affirmation journal as well as a relationship guide called, "W.I.N.K: After the Breakup" which is her best seller. She is passionate about helping individuals rewrite their personal narrative and create a life of wholeness and fulfillment.

Cherlette is happily married to a sworn Deputy and is a devoted mother to 3 wonderful bonus children ages 15, 18, and 21. In addition to living as a servant to others, she enjoys watching comedy, traveling the world, and spending time with her family.

2022 Non-Profit Honoree



Josie NeJame

Runway to Hope

Twelve years ago Josie and her husband Mark had a vision to create a charity that benefited children with pediatric cancer in the Central Florida area. With a commitment to helping others and being aware of the blessings that her family had realized, especially having two healthy daughters, Runway to Hope was born.

Through much hard work and the support of many, Runway to Hope has become the largest charity gala in Central Florida, now raising over one million dollars each year. Since inception, RTH has raised approximately 10 million dollars. In recognition, Runway to Hope has been voted or recognized a staggering 13 times as Best Charity Event in Central Florida. Josie and her husband Mark have been awarded Excellence in Fundraising by a Non-Profit, Philanthropists of the Year, and Lifetime Achievement Award in Philanthropy.

Briefly, some of Runway to Hope's contributions include providing funding for Arnold Palmer Children's Hospital's Pediatric Brain Tumor program, inaugural to Central Florida; providing seed funding for a palliative care program at the Florida Hospital Children as well as assisting with funding for the expansion of the pediatric oncology unit, which now includes new equipment, a playroom and larger patient rooms; and to Nemours Children's Hospital, funding was provided to the Community Children's Oncology Program, which is a database that improves access to leading-edge therapies and resources throughout Northern and Central Florida. RTH has also helped fund the equipment for the Pediatric Interventional Radiology Program and the Microwave Ablation equipment its Survivorship program.

Josie is loved and supported by her husband Mark. They have two remarkable and beloved daughters, Valentina and Alessandra, who have adopted their parents genes and hearts for service. In addition, the family includes two crazy Frenchie's , Moon and Cosmo...and two pet pigs, Cocoa Chanel and Louis Crouton. Josie's other passions include fashion and design, traveling the world, and wellness living and lifestyle.

2022 Professional Honoree



Kelly Cohen

The Southern Group

Kelly Cohen is a lobbyist and strategist whose work building partnerships between government and businesses in Florida has made her a perennial figure on the state's "Most Powerful" lists.

Opening The Southern Group's first regional office in 2005, Kelly is known for ensuring that clients including Fortune 500 Companies, start-ups, global corporations, non-profits and trade associations receive high-level, personal attention and insightful guidance that strategically position them for victory. She is immersed in her community engaging in projects of regional importance like Sunrail, Major League Soccer, Medical City at Lake Nona and advancement of Autonomous Vehicles.

Prior to joining the firm, Kelly practiced law. Her passion for public policy led her to become a Democratic strategist and fundraiser beginning with her role as statewide finance director for Buddy Dyer's Attorney General campaign. She remains actively involved in campaigns and is currently the Finance Chair for the transportation sales tax -Moving Orange County Forward.

Kelly has been recognized for her leadership and business acumen. In 2021, Florida Trend named her one of the 500 Most Influential Business Leaders in Florida. She has been recognized in the 100 Most Influential People in Politics by Influence Magazine. Over last 11 years, she has consistently been ranked in Orlando Magazine 50 Most Powerful list.

A dedicated member of her community Kelly serves on numerous boards, including the Orlando Economic Partnership, and is an active angel investor. She lives with her husband, Scott and rescue dog Oliver in downtown Orlando.

2022 *Rising Star* Honoree



Wendy J. Roundtree, APR

Jarel Communications

Wendy J. Roundtree, APR is the Founder and Lead Strategist of Jarel Communications, an award-winning social impact agency that works with world-changers to amplify their stories. The agency's clients are on the frontlines of education, public health, affordable housing, community development, and race and gender equality.

A sought-after expert on strategic communication, Wendy has offered commentary to national and international media outlets, including PR News, CommPRO and Canada's CBC News. She currently serves as President of the Orlando Regional Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, as well as a board member and volunteer for the Joe R. Lee Boys and Girls Club in Eatonville, Fla.

She earned an MBA from the Crummer Graduate School of Business at Rollins College and a B.A. in Mass Communications from Bethune- Cookman University, which named her a "40 Under 40" honoree. In 2021, she was also named to the Orlando Magazine's Women of the Year list. Wendy resides in Mount Dora with her husband Sirdarious, and their son, Mason.



Uniting professional women
by **creating** opportunities to
recognize and **inspire** women
leaders and students to **serve**
our Central Florida **community**.

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2022 Woman of the Year



Casandra Matej

**President & Chief Executive Officer
Visit Orlando**

Casandra Matej is the president and CEO of Visit Orlando, the official marketing organization for America's most visited destination and Theme Park Capital of the World. She leads the branding, marketing and selling of the destination on a global scale, representing over 1200 member companies across Orlando's tourism landscape.

Since joining Visit Orlando in February 2021, Matej's efforts have focused on spurring recovery of Orlando's tourism industry, which, pre-pandemic, drew 76 million visitors annually to Central Florida generating \$75 billion in economic impact. Under her leadership, the organization launched a first-of-its-kind new global brand, "Unbelievably Real" in collaboration with the Orlando Economic Partnership to tell one comprehensive brand story for Orlando to reach all audiences including leisure, meetings, site selectors and perspective talent. Her focus on collaboration has resulted in a series of powerful partnerships with brands including Orlando Health, Michelin and TripAdvisor.

Matej is the first female CEO in the nonprofit organization's 37-year history. She has been named one of the 50 Most Powerful People by Orlando Magazine, a Game Changer by the Orlando Business Journal, and recognized as one of the Top 25 Women in the Meetings Industry by Meetings & Conventions Magazine.

Prior to joining Visit Orlando, Matej spent 10 years as president and CEO of Visit San Antonio achieving record highs in convention sales and marketing programs and developing one of the largest tourism ambassador programs in the country. She has also held leadership roles at VisitDallas, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide and Hyatt Hotels.

*Special thanks for the time, talents, and dedication of the
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