



SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE OF CALIFORNIA
2021 Black Student Convocation
Speaker/Presenter Bios

Dr. Zahra Ahmed is a scholar-activist who has worked in higher education and other community-based educational spaces for over 20 years. She is experienced in the fields of policy advocacy, civic engagement and community organizing. Dr. Ahmed earned her Masters degree in Social Work from Georgia State University with a focus on community partnerships and her PhD in Political Science from the University of California, Irvine with a focus on civic and community engagement. She currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Politics at Saint Mary's College of California where she integrates restorative justice and contemplative practices into her teaching as a means of supporting the mission of social justice movement building. Her academic research focuses on contemplative justice and pedagogical practices that support political mobilization among students and people of color.

Dr. Desirée Anderson was born in San Diego, California. She earned her B.A. and Master's from the University of Louisville and her Ph.D. from the University of New Orleans. Having worked in higher education for over 13 years, Dr. Desirée Anderson has committed her energy to address issues of bias and hate on college and university campuses. Before coming to serve as the Associate Dean of Diversity and Student Affairs at the University of New Orleans, she worked as the Director of the Intercultural Center at Saint Mary's College of California and previously held positions at Tulane University and Texas State University. Desirée occasionally serves as an adjunct instructor and a Restorative Justice Trainer and Facilitator. Dr. Anderson has also released a book chapter in *Colorizing Restorative Justice* by Living Justice Press. In her free time, she enjoys reading, singing, dancing, and watching an unnecessary amount of TV.

S. Jamila Buckner is the Chief People Officer at Accion Opportunity Fund where she served at the direction of the Chief Executive Officer and President of this non-profit financial services organization in the areas of Strategic Planning, HR Management Transformation, and she also leads a team of HR professionals. She is an experienced Business Leader with 30 years of Human Resources and Talent Management expertise. Prior to joining Accion Opportunity Fund, she worked in higher education for almost 10 years, she has worked in large scale telecommunications, financial services, apparel manufacturing, professional services companies, and public entities. Her expertise is in Senior HR Management, Talent Acquisition, Talent Management, Organizational Design, and Organizational Development. Ms. Buckner graduated from Saint Mary's College of California with a BA in Organizational Communications and received her M. S. in Human Resources Management from Golden Gate University. She enjoys working on community projects to enrich the lives of youth and assist her greater community in achieving economic parity. Ms. Buckner currently resides in San Ramon, California with her two children.



Dr. Evette Castillo Clark serves as the Dean of Students at Saint Mary's College. Dr. Clark has worked in Student Affairs since 1993 at the University of San Francisco, UC Berkeley, CSU East Bay, San Diego State University, Tulane University, and was on the faculty at the University of New Orleans. Dr. Clark served on Boards for NASPA, the National Academic Advising Association, ACE NorCal Women's Network, and was a Trustee at St. Joseph Notre Dame High School in Alameda. She received her Bachelor's in Sociology from UC Irvine; a Master's in Student Personnel Administration in Higher Education from NYU; and a Doctorate in International and Multicultural Education from the University of San Francisco. Her areas of interest, publications, and speaking concern college students of color; creating a pipeline of undergraduate students to careers in student affairs; strategic planning; Asian and Pacific Islander women leadership; and leader character in transforming higher education.

Troy Clark is an innovator, mentor and entrepreneur. Mr. Clark is the co-founder of Golden Leaf Energy (GLE), a renewable energy and chemicals company focused on the development and production of renewable chemicals that successfully displace the petroleum-based products that we use in our daily lives. As CEO of Golden Leaf Energy, Mr. Clark successively built a biodiesel manufacturing facility and developed a line of bio-lubricants that GLE later manufactured and marketed. Leading R&D and business model development teams, Mr. Clark has developed a project that will manufacture renewable polyurethane and PVC. Mr. Clark graduated from Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, earning a BS in Chemical Engineering and began his career as a process engineer for Applied Materials. Mr. Clark enjoys reading and mentoring young African American entrepreneurs.

Derrick Crayton graduated from Saint Mary's College in 2008 with a degree in Business Administration. He is originally from Houston, TX and currently lives in Los Angeles, CA. Immediately after graduating, Derrick worked in the Insurance industry and then Sales before getting back to his passion in the Tech industry as a software developer. He currently works for a construction materials company on a team that manages and develops their web-based interfaces both customer facing and internal. He also serves as a member of their Inclusion and Diversity Committee to create initiatives that make all employees feel valued. As a student at Saint Mary's, he was very active on campus working with Intramurals and the Registrar for work study. Derrick also hosted a radio show on KSMC and served as both President and Vice President for the Black Student Union. Derrick has been a member of the Saint Mary's Alumni Board for the past 3 years.

Dr. Sonja G. Daniels is the Associate Vice President for Campus Life at San Jose State University. In this capacity, she oversees University Housing, Student Involvement, Pride and Gender Equity Centers, MOSAIC Cross-Cultural Center, Student Conduct and Ethical Development, Associated Students, Inc. and the Student Union, Inc, which includes Campus Recreation, Intramurals, Club Sports and the Event Center. Prior to San Jose State, Dr. Daniels served as the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at CSU Dominguez Hills; Associate Director of Student Development and International Programs at CSU Northridge; and the Director of Student Life Programs at CSU East Bay. She began her career in



residence life at Tulane University, UC Santa Barbara and UC San Diego, Thurgood Marshall College. As an avid world traveler, she has sailed on two voyages with the Institute for Shipboard Education's Semester at Sea Program and has served on the SAS Diversity Task Force. She received her Bachelors in Business Administration from Texas Christian University, her Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration from New York University, and her Doctor of Education from the University of Southern California. She has also served on the faculty in the Masters Counseling Program at CSU Northridge and in the USC Rossier School of Education Doctoral Program.

Juliana Davis, Class of 2022, is a current Psychology Major with a concentration in Behavioral Neuroscience. Juliana is currently working on her undergrad research looking at implicit bias response and police brutality in the media. Juliana is a member of many programs at SMC including the BSU, ASL club, Residential Advisors, and the Honors Program. Once finished with undergrad, she intends on graduating from medical school as a psychiatrist. Ultimately, working to change the way punishment is viewed in the US, in turn making strides to dismantle the School- to- Prison pipeline and truly rehabilitate those who are incarcerated. Being a Colorado native her favorite activities when she is not in class, are hiking and tubing.

Dr. James A. Donahue became the 29th President of Saint Mary's College of California on July 1, 2013. From 2000 to 2013, he was president of the Graduate Theological Union, located in Berkeley, CA. Prior to his presidency at the GTU, President Donahue served 15 years at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., as professor of theology and ethics, dean of students and vice president for student affairs. He also held faculty and administrative positions at Boston College and Santa Clara University. President Donahue holds a B.A. degree from the College of the Holy Cross, earned his MDiv degree from Princeton Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in religious and social ethics from the Graduate Theological Union. President Donahue is committed to the public role of ethics and theology; his primary research and teaching interests include professional ethics, religion in public life, and the issues of organizational and professional ethics. In addition to producing a multitude of articles, papers, presentations, and speeches, he is the co-author of *Ethics across the Curriculum: A Practice-Based Approach*, and the co-editor of *Religion, Ethics and the Common Good*.

Collin Fisher, Class of 2023, is a sophomore transfer student of Saint Mary's College of California. Collin is working on his split major of Ethnic Studies and Counseling Psychology with a minor in Dance. Collin is the Internal Community Outreach Coordinator for Saint Mary's Black Student Union (BSU). When being a student here at SMC, you will find Collin "fitted up" with his friends, in the studio creating strong and expressive choreography, or walking to the cross to clear his mind and ease his thoughts. In the spring 2021 semester, you will find him performing in the spring musical *Gather 'Round*. Lastly, one of Collin's favorite memories while being here at SMC was performing in the fall 2019 production *This Is Modern Art* as the lead role. The reason being unknowing to him that it would bring about many blessings and connections that would shape and mold him into the person he is before you today.



Eric George attended Saint Mary's College from 1995-1999 and majored in Biology. He was a scholarship student-athlete for Men's Soccer. He attended Samuel Merritt University and earned a MS in Nursing Case Management and worked in the neuro ICU at John Muir Hospital. He also earned a MS in Nurse Anesthesia. Eric is a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). CRNAs are board certified anesthesia providers and deliver anesthesia. CRNAs perform 80% of the nation's anesthesia. Eric George is married with 2 kids (6 and 8 years old) and coaches them in soccer and still plays as well.

Sherie Gilmore-Cleveland was born and raised in Oakland, California. Sherie earned a B.S. in Business Administration and an M.S. in Organization Development from the University of San Francisco. Shortly after completing her undergraduate degree, she began working as an admissions counselor for her alma mater. She continued her commitment to serving students as the Assistant Director of Admissions and Coordinator for Diversity Recruitment and Retention for California College of the Arts. At Mills College, Sherie held positions as the Associate Director of Admissions, Senior Associate Director of Admissions, and Director of Admissions. During her tenure at Mills College, Sherie oversaw the implementation of the first transgender admission policy by a women's college, test-optional policy, a new CRM system, and multiple partnerships with school and community college districts and community-based organizations. She also worked with campus partners to establish policies and processes that removed barriers that prevented students from enrolling, retaining, and persisting through college. Sherie currently serves Saint Mary's College of California as the Dean of Admissions, focused on utilizing Saint Mary's College's Lasallian heritage as a lamp for access to education for all students.

Rushell Gordon is the founder/owner of Oceanside's premier tea room, Bliss Tea & Treats. A strategic, action oriented operational leader of change with significant results in project, financial and organizational management. Demonstrated successes in gaining executive approval and funding for high-value, global start up operations and change programs, with the leadership discipline of getting the right things done as a result of many people working together. Strong people leader who attracts and maintains A players. Rushell's strengths include:

- * Designing programs, processes, and tools to meet business and customer needs
- * Structuring startup operations to create strong customer communication/support programs
- * Evaluating and providing sound, data-based go/no-go advice to executive management
- * Overcoming roadblocks to manage large cross-functional global teams to achieve common goals
- * Leveraging business intelligence to define, implement, and evaluate process improvements.

Maurice Harper is an educator with over 40 years of experience as a teacher, counselor, coach, activities director, campus minister, dean, administrator. A Bay Area native born in Berkeley, California, Mr. Harper graduated from Saint Mary's College of California with both his BA and MA along with two credentials in Counseling and Administration. He is an active



member and leader of Saint Columba Church, Catholic Charities, Knights of Columbus, and Knights of Peter Claver. Over the span of his career Mr. Harper has amassed many accomplishments, to highlight a few of those accomplishments, Mr. Harper was drafted by the Golden State Warriors in 1975, inducted to the Hall of Fame for both SMC Athletics and Saint Mary's High School.

Dr. James H. Johnson Jr. is the Director of Educational Technology and IT Support for Events and Conferences for Saint Mary's College. He received his PhD in Mass Communications and Media Arts from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale and his BS and MAEd from California State University, Long Beach. He is a Bay Area native who grew up in Richmond, California and attended Salesian High School as a scholar-athlete. Professionally, he has over 15 years of experience in information technology, mass media, higher education and instructional design. He has held supervisory and leadership roles specializing in strategic planning processes and collaboration on the evolving needs and growth of educational technologies for colleges and universities (e.g. University of New Orleans), school districts (e.g. Los Angeles Unified School District and Vallejo Unified City School District) and businesses (e.g. JHJ Media). In addition to his technology roles, Dr. Johnson is also a subject matter expert on the topic of online dating and human-computer-interaction (HCI).

Dr. Margaret Kasimatis currently serves as the Interim Executive Vice President at Saint Mary's College of California. In that role she oversees all day-to-day operations of the College, working directly with all members of the Cabinet. Dr. Kasimatis came to Saint Mary's from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, where she served as Vice Provost for Strategic Planning and Educational Effectiveness for more than 11 years. In this role, she provided leadership in the areas of academic program planning and review, strategic planning, academic policy, faculty development, student learning assessment, student success, and continuing education programs. Dr. Kasimatis has published journal articles and book chapters on a variety of topics related to social cognition, including social-cognitive theories of motivation, the relationship between emotion and cognition, and the impact of gender terms on perception. More recently her scholarly work has focused on strategic planning, assessment, and culture change within universities. Prior to LMU she served in academic administration at Harvey Mudd College and California State Polytechnic University and has held full-time faculty positions at Harvey Mudd College and Hope College. Kasimatis has also served as the Vice Chair of the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) and regularly serves as a WSCUC evaluator. She earned an undergraduate degree in psychology from Loyola Marymount University and both her master of science and doctoral degrees in social psychology from Purdue University.

Frank Anderson Knight III - Educator, coach, motivational speaker and entrepreneur Frank Anderson Knight III was born and raised in Oakland California. He is currently the Head Men's Basketball Coach and social science teacher at Moreau Catholic High School in Hayward California. Frank is also the President and Founder of Knight Basketball Academy a 501(c) 3 non-profit club basketball team that services youth from 3rd grade to 12th grade in the Tri-City



Alameda County area. Known for his ability to reach inner-city youth Frank earned his Bachelors of Arts degree from St. Mary's College of California, and went on to complete his teaching credential and post graduate studies at Holy Names University in Oakland. Over the years Frank has developed a passion for social justice and is highly sought after for his remarkable ability to reach broad spectrum audiences and is known for empowering others academically, socially and financially.

Dr. Kathy Littles is the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Senior Diversity Officer at Saint Mary's College. Previously, she was at the California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS), where she served as dean of the School of Consciousness and Transformation and director of the Transformative Inquiry Department. Her tenure of experience also includes faculty positions at the University of California at Davis, Berkeley City College, and the College of Marin. Prior to her academic career, she served as the arts education coordinator for Monterey County, as well as the Cultural Funding Program coordinator for the City of Oakland. An alumna of Saint Mary's, Littles possesses a strong commitment to the Lasallian Catholic liberal arts mission of the College. Throughout her career, Littles' work has been characterized by a focus on the education of the whole person, as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Dr. John Mosby serves as the 7th President of Highline College. Founded in 1961 as the first community college in the King County area of Washington State, John Mosby is the first person of color to hold the position as President and has more than 26 years of higher education experience. His professional history includes rich experiences across a variety of higher educational settings serving in undergraduate and graduate admissions, outreach and recruitment, advancement and residential life. His research interests are rooted in the belief of servant leadership, social justice, and equity. In addition, President Mosby is an Adjunct Instructor for the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at San Francisco State University. President Mosby holds a Doctorate in philosophy in Leadership/Higher Education Administration from the University of San Diego, a Master's degree in Educational and Counseling Psychology from the University of the Pacific and a Bachelor's degree in English from Saint Mary's College.

Kulia Osborne is a third year student at Saint Mary's College of California. Kulia is from Monterey, California. Kulia is the youngest daughter in her family and the last one to go to college. She was raised by her single mother, who holds a doctorate in psychology, and grew up alongside her sister who is a Production Coordinator at Global Brands Group. She is an Anthropology major with a minor in Communications. She is the current acting student chair of the Black Lives Matter committee and the Black Student Union (BSU) representative. Kulia is a member of the BSU executive team and is the Vice President. Kulia is also a Resident Advisor and does community outreach and recruiting for the Student Coalition against Abuse and Rape. In addition, Kulia works as a Liaison for Athletics. Kulia Osborne is a big fan of artists like Coffee, Buju Banton, and H.E.R. She has a special interest in learning about other cultures. Her mother and sister come from Saint Kitts and Nevis. Her current plans include learning more about her Caribbean ancestry and doing well in her classes.



John Rawlins III is a Student Affairs professional with 15 years of experience. A native of the Washington, DC Metro area, John earned his Bachelor of Science from Cornell University and his Master of Arts from Johns Hopkins University. John's career in Student Affairs has taken him from Ithaca College, to Johns Hopkins University, to even serving as the first Director of Leadership Development and Training at the Corporate Headquarters of his fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Currently, he serves as the Director of the Black Student Center and Special Assistant to the Chief Diversity Officer at California State University San Marcos, nestled in the suburbs of San Diego, CA. John is also an established and noted recording artist in the and has performed on national and international stages with the likes of GRAMMY Award winners Wynton Marsalis and Kirk Franklin.

Arisika Razak, MPH, Professor Emerita, and former chair of the Women's Spirituality Program at the California Institute of Integral Studies, is a core teacher at the East Bay Meditation Center. Her teachings incorporate diverse spiritual traditions, multicultural feminisms, and contemporary diversity theory. For over twenty years, Arisika served as an inner-city midwife, providing birthing care to women from over 70 countries. She has facilitated spiritual, healing, and empowerment workshops for over thirty years, and performed nationally and internationally as a spiritual dancer. Arisika is a contributor to several books, and journals, and presents at numerous conferences on the subjects of womanism, diversity, women's health and healing, and embodied spirituality and movement. Her film credits include *Alice Walker Beauty in Truth*; *Fire Eyes* (the first full length feature film by an African woman on female genital cutting) and *Who Lives Who Dies* (on health care for the indigent).

Lloyd Schine received a B.S. in Accounting, an M. A. in Educational Leadership, an M.A. in Teaching, a teaching credential and an administrative credential from Saint Mary's College. He is the former Saint Mary's College Alumni Director. He founded the SMC Black Alumni Chapter and also served as the SMC BSU advisor. He is a former member of the De La Salle High School Alumni Board of Directors and Board of Trustees. After leaving SMC Lloyd taught Middle and Elementary School for 5 years in Oakland, Antioch and Richmond. In 2015 he accepted the position of Director of Alumni Relations at his alma mater, De La Salle High School. In 2018, he started Diablo Valley Tutoring Services. Lloyd has been a ballroom dance instructor for twenty years. He is a member of the Saint Mary's College Alumni Board of Directors and is the Chair of the Diversity Committee for the Civic Action Commission of Pleasant Hill, where he resides with his wife Cri and their twin sons, Kaleb and Kaden.

Dr. Brian Stanley oversees Finance, Human Resources, Grants Management, and IT/Knowledge Management at Energy Foundation, ensuring proper staffing, efficient operations, and the establishment and implementation of accurate systems and departmental goals and objectives. He is responsible for organizational risk management and the facilitation of work processes between the Operations, Program, and Strategic Partnerships teams. Brian's most recent role was COO at Hamilton Families, a non-profit whose mission is to end family homelessness in the San Francisco Bay Area. He led daily operations and strategic initiatives for an organization with a staff of more than 150 employees. He also oversaw nationally



recognized programs that serve 800 families annually, as well as operational units, including finance. In previous roles, he served as Executive Director of the Oakland Public Education Fund, Director of Programs for the San Francisco Education Fund, and as Director of Black Student Programs at Saint Mary's College of California. He graduated from Saint Mary's College of California and has a Doctor of Education from Mills College in Oakland. He lives in West Oakland with his wife and two adorable children.

Roxelle Thomas, Class of 2022, a junior currently at Saint Mary's College of California. Roxelle is a JCL (Justice, Community and Leadership) major on the MSTE education track. She is working to become an upper elementary school teacher. Originally from Houston, Texas she has moved out to California for her college education. She is a part of the SMC women's rugby team and hopes to further her training to make a professional team in the future. Currently she is enjoying her teaching program and learning as much as she can about the profession.

Marcus D. Weemes has served as Director of Campus Housing at Saint Mary's College since July 2015. He is originally from Fort Wayne Indiana and completed his bachelor's degree majoring in Political Science and Theatre from Ball State University. He earned his Project Management/Business Masters degree from the University of Wisconsin Platteville. He has served as a housing professional at UW-Platteville, the University of Michigan, Wayne State University and the University of Illinois at Chicago prior to moving to the Bay Area. Marcus has enjoyed being an advisor to several residence hall organizations over the years. He served as an advisor to the Great Lakes region of the National Association of College and University Residence Halls for almost 6 years and served as an Executive in Residence for the 2017 NACURH Conference.

D. Mark Wilson is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology Department at Saint Mary's College, where he has taught Introduction to Sociology, Race and Ethnic Relations, Social Problems, Music and Social Change and The LGBTQ Community. He earned his B.A. from Howard University, his Masters of Divinity Degree from Harvard Divinity School and Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Michigan. Dr. Wilson also enjoys singing and performing solos with the Cantare Con Vivo Chorale, Directed by David Morales. He is an ordained African American Baptist clergyman, the former Senior Pastor of McGee Avenue Baptist Church (Berkeley), where he served for twelve years, and was the Bay Area's first African American Baptist Pastor to "come out" and be accepted by his congregation as a gay man. He is a mentor to Queer Youth as Former Youth Program Manager at the Pacific Center for Human Growth (Berkeley).