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William & Mary Law School Commencement Exercises (May 20, 2023)

William & Mary Law School

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WILLIAM & MARY
LAW SCHOOL

Commencement

COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Processional

Grand Marshal

Sylvanna Gross '23
Student Bar Association President

Presentation of Colors

Langley Air Force Base Honor Guard

National Anthem

Matthew McConnell '23

Welcome

A. Benjamin Spencer, Dean and Trustee Professor

Student Commencement Speakers

Andra Tofan LL.M. '23
Suceava, Romania

Sylvanna Gross '23
Suffern, New York

Presentation of Awards

Walter L. Williams, Jr. Memorial Teaching Award

John Marshall Award

Lawrence W. I'Anson Award

George Wythe Award

Thurgood Marshall Award

Introduction of Commencement Speaker

Dean Spencer

Commencement Address

The Honorable John Charles Thomas

Conferring of Degrees

Dean Spencer

LL.M. Degree

Catherine Stahl
Director of LL.M. Programs and Professor of the
Practice

J.D. Degree

Michael J. Ende
Associate Dean

Conclusion

Dean Spencer

Presentation of the Mace

Stephen Steward '24
2023-24 Student Bar Association President

Recessional

THE HONORABLE JOHN CHARLES THOMAS



John Charles Thomas is a retired justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia and a retired Senior Partner of the law firm Hunton Andrews Kurth. A native of Norfolk, VA, he attended the segregated public schools of that city until 1965 when he enrolled at the formerly all-white Maury High School under what was called the Freedom of Choice school desegregation plan. He finished Maury as an honor student and entered the University of Virginia in September 1968 as one of three African Americans in the entering class of 1,400 students; at that time the University of Virginia was still all males. Thomas finished UVA in 1972 earning his BA with distinction. Thomas next enrolled in the law school at UVA which he finished in 1975.

In August of 1975 he became the first African American lawyer hired by the formerly all-white Richmond law firm Hunton Williams Gay and Gibson. He started work at the firm as a Public Utilities lawyer as part of the group of lawyers representing the state's largest power company. Later Thomas became a lawyer in the firm's litigation section where he represented major corporations in trial court and on appeal. On April 1, 1982, Thomas made partner at Hunton and Williams making him the first African American lawyer in American history to "go up the line" from associate to partner at a formerly all-white Southern law firm.

On April 11, 1983, Governor Charles Robb appointed Thomas to the Supreme Court of Virginia, thus making Thomas the first African American and, at 32 years of age, the youngest Justice in the history of Virginia. In late 1989 a medical problem caused Thomas to leave the court. In November 1989, Thomas returned to the Hunton law firm as Chief of the Appellate Practice group. He remained at the firm until his retirement in 2021.

Thomas has served on the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the American Arbitration Association. Since 2004 he has been a judge of the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, which rules on violations of the World Anti-doping Code for all Olympic sports, for the Tour de France, and for FIFA.

Thomas served on the Board of Visitors of William & Mary from 2006 to 2017. He has lectured at the Interim University Center in Dubrovnik, Croatia on "Enforcing Interim Arbitral Awards Under the New York Convention"; he has twice delivered the Constitutional Law lecture to the Firsties at the United States Military Academy at West Point. He has also delivered the "First-Day, First Year" lectures at the University of Virginia School of Law and William & Mary Law School. He has taught Appellate Advocacy at the University of Virginia School of Law. In 2019 he was the "Jurist in Residence" at the Gonzaga Law School in Spokane, WA. Thomas is an honorary Trustee of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation that owns and operates Monticello. He is the author of "The Poetic Justice," his memoir, which was published in October 2022.

GRADUATES

LL.M.

Turki Albalawi *
Saira Y Arzu-Gonzalez
Wafa Ali Asiri
Yutian Dai
Geraldine Barisuleka Ezinwa Esq. *
Chenghua Guo
Samaher Hakami *
Haoyu Han *
Zhiliang Li
Xinyi Lin *
Peng Liu *
Xiao Liu
Hang Qi
Jiahong Sun
Andra Tofan *
Gozdenur Ur
Xing Xiong
Zhao Xu *
Peng yu Yao
Gohar Zaman
Zhang Jiayi
Lu Zhang
Yue Zhang *
Yumin Zhang
Guochen Zheng
Mi Zheng
Ting Zhu *

J.D.

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Steven Calogero Amendola
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Erik Jason Askea 3
Francesca Jane Babetski
Anna Meredith Bailey 3
Preston Wagner Ball
J. Scott Bauer *
Eric Joseph Beinhart *
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Ashim Bhandari
Cara Blatter
Sharon Lee Blevins *
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Devin Chase Carter *
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Andrew Armstrong Coccoli *
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Maxfield Benning Daley-Watson
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Michael Bryan Davis *
Sarah Depew
Vincent J. DiDonato *
Alexandru Pontes Doncea *
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Matthew Steven Dorritie 3*
Claudia Marie Dubay 1

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Ghalia Estaiteyeh *
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Elizabeth Ann Farschon
Lauren Elena Fernandez
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Karlin C. Foor
Carlton Lee Fowler *
Ana C. Franzoni
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Aaron Benjamin Hale
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Alexa Diana Halkias *
Kathryn Elizabeth Halkias 1*
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Andrew J. Heiser
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Rachel Hill
Daniel C. Hillshafer *
Hunter Hyde Hoffer
Shelby R. Horner
Andrew R. Huntsinger
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Anna Therese Jacobeen *
Eliza V James Unrein 2
Gerald P. Jamison 1*
Madeline Olivia Jatczak *
Leo P. Jobsis Rossignol 1
Madison Clare Jones 1
Ruth Ann Jones 3*
Kaitlin Justison 1
Emily Jolene Kabalin *

GRADUATES

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David C. Keyes 2
Charles Hanson King
Charleigh Claire Kondas *
Cameron S. Krause
David William Kriebel *
Kevin Christopher Kuczynski
Carly Cecile LaForge 1
Thomas Lyons Lascara
George F. Leahy
Charity Lehmann
Cason R. Liles
Ruolan Lin *
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Logan Joseph Losito
Noah Spenser Lowe
Megan Marie Lucci
Andrea Macchiavello
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Marcel Alexander Massarani *
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Can Sarihan
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Jaeseok Shin
Kelsie Nicole Shipley *
Emma Grace Shoemaker
Connor John Skelly *
Joseph E. Slattey
Rachel Toni Sleiman *
Ian L. Slingsby 2
Scott Marcum Sloan 3*
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Mohammad Sajjad Soltanmohammadi
Amanda Ellerine Stevenson *

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Robert Glenn Tucker III
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Kelsey Jordan Vita
Cooper John Vorel *
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Yue Wang 3
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Rebecca C. White *
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Jason Winston 1
Shae Anna Woodburn
Kayla Marie Worrall
Caichen Xu 3
Chelsea Lynn Yedinak
Donghai Yu *
Weston J. Zielke *
Alanna Zunski *
William J. Zurborg *

Summa Cum Laude 1
Magna Cum Laude 2
Cum Laude 3
Public Service Recognition *

