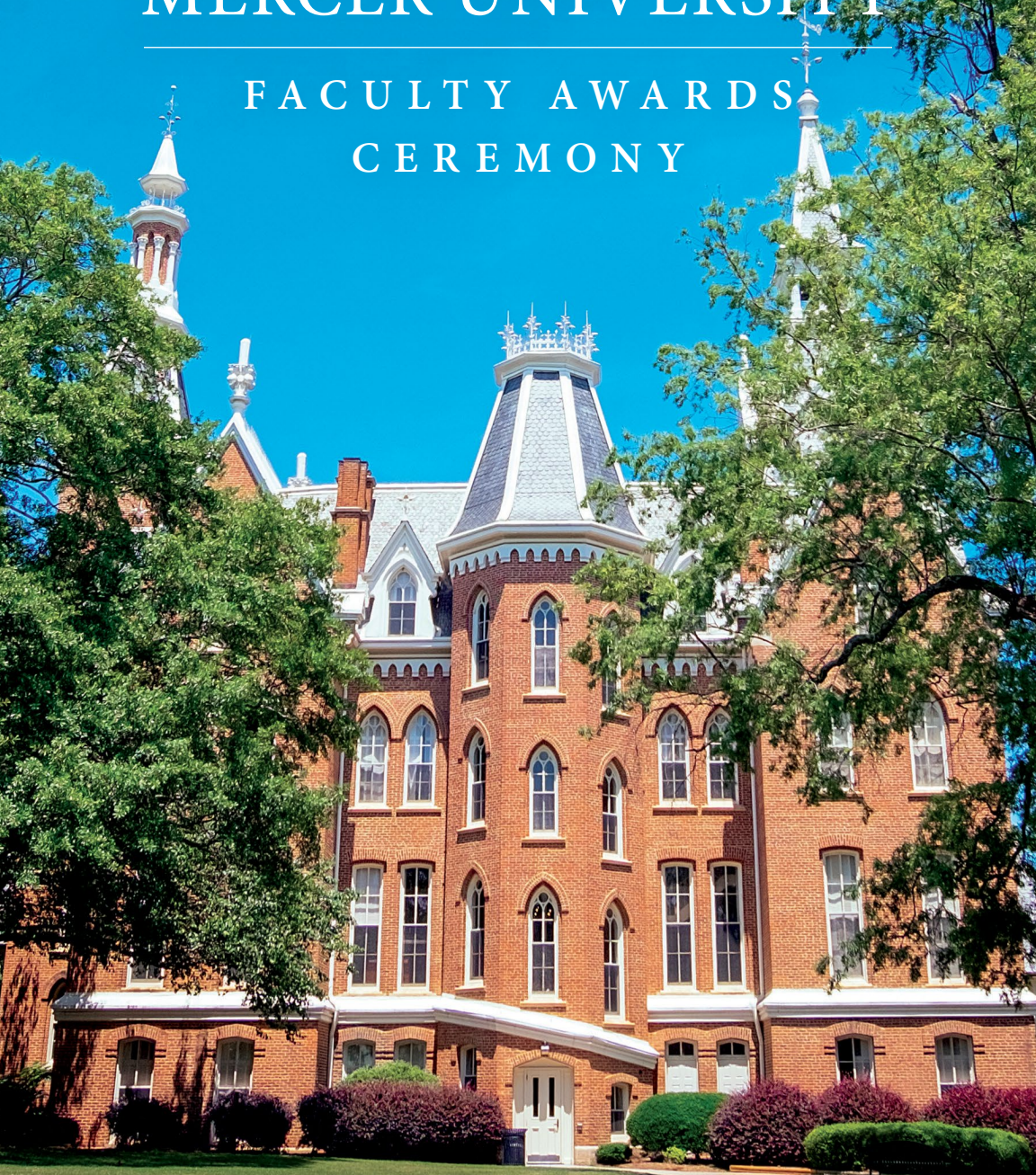


2025

MERCER UNIVERSITY

FACULTY AWARDS CEREMONY



*The mediocre teacher tells.
The good teacher explains.
The superior teacher demonstrates.
The great teacher inspires.*

WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD



MERCER UNIVERSITY

FACULTY AWARDS CEREMONY

MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2025 | 3:00 P.M.
PRESIDENTS DINING ROOM, UNIVERSITY CENTER, MACON CAMPUS

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Penny L. Elkins, *Executive Vice President*

PRESENTATIONS

- Innovations in Teaching Award..... Dr. Penny L. Elkins
*Co-Sponsored by the Vulcan Materials Company,
Georgia Independent College Association and Mercer University*
- Spencer B. King, Jr., Distinguished Professor Award..... John Thomas Scott
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Judge Clyde Reese Board of Visitors’ Excellence in Teaching Award..... Karen Sneddon
Dean, School of Law
- College of Pharmacy Educator Award..... Pamela Moye
Interim Dean, College of Pharmacy
- Distinguished Faculty Award..... Julie Petherbridge
Dean, School of Business
- Clayton R. Paul Teaching Excellence Award Laura Lackey
Dean, School of Engineering
- Catherine Futral Excellence in Teaching Award Thomas R. Koballa
Dean, College of Education
- Distinguished Faculty Member of the Year Award Tammy D. Barbé
Dean, College of Nursing
- Award for Excellence in Teaching Priscilla R. Danheiser
Dean, College of Professional Advancement
- Outstanding Faculty Award Gary G. Gerber
Dean, School of Music
- Excellence in Teaching Award Lisa M. Lundquist
Senior Vice Provost and Dean, College of Health Professions
- 2024-2025 Excellence in First-Year Student Advising Award Tony Kemp
Associate Vice President of Events and Special Programs

2024-2025 INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING AWARD

*Co-sponsored by the Vulcan Materials Company,
Georgia Independent College Association and Mercer University*

Andrea Winkler, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of History

Dr. Andrea Winkler earned her Ph.D. in medieval history and M.A. in cultural anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin. She joined the College of Professional Advancement in 1983 and teaches a wide range of courses both in person and online, including medieval Christianity, late medieval Books of Hours, the Reformation, the French Revolution, and the Harlem Renaissance. She is a leader in curriculum and format improvement and in the implementation of high-impact practices that result in engaged learning in general education and major history courses.

Using a variety of effective and innovative strategies like virtual reality, immersive exhibits, and social annotation software, Dr. Winkler brings history to life and imparts strategies for historical thinking for Mercer's post-traditional students. She adopts these technologies to craft course experiences that enhance student learning and foster the value of studying history. Dr. Winkler led the College in designing and incorporating the ePortfolio within the liberal studies major. Furthermore, she has adapted the ePortfolio template to include student research projects, Mercer On Mission trips, Study Abroad programs, and the Georgia Coastal Research Project. She has worked with colleagues on a National Endowment for the Humanities grant that features the ePortfolio as an integral feature and measure of student learning.

Dr. Winkler specializes in late medieval religious history, particularly that of the Mendicant Orders, and her research has centered on the use of exempla in creating the norms and practices of the early Dominican Order. She has published articles in several journals and proceedings.

One of her students wrote, "Andrea Winkler has gone above and beyond in multiple classes that I have had with her to not only make sure that I understood concepts but to encourage me to go further in my research and understanding. She challenged me to think outside of the standard and cheered me on when I did!"



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
2024-2025 SPENCER B. KING, JR.
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR AWARD

Tennille Shuster, MFA

Professor of Art

Tennille Shuster is the 2025 recipient of the Spencer B. King, Jr., Distinguished Professor Award in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Professor Shuster earned her BFA in graphic design from James Madison University and practiced professionally as a designer and illustrator for over a decade before returning to academia to complete her MFA in graphic design, specializing in letterpress printing and book art, at Florida Atlantic University. Her limited-edition artist's books have been widely exhibited and reside in prestigious private and public collections, including the Smithsonian Artist's Book Collection, the Library of Congress, and the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art. Before joining Mercer University in 2019, Professor Shuster taught at Nova Southeastern University for 11 years.



At Mercer, Professor Shuster serves as Chair of the Department of Art and Design and directs the graphic design major. Her teaching emphasizes cross-disciplinary collaboration and the integration of digital technology with service-learning methodologies while engaging students in real-world projects that promote civic responsibility. She has presented with her students at the Gulf-South Summit on Service Learning and Civic Engagement and has guided 30 graphic design students to achieve a four-year winning streak in the national GDUSA Awards competition. Most recently, Professor Shuster illustrated *Toby's Campus Tour: Explore Mercer University with Mascot, Toby the Bear*, published in fall 2024 by Mercer University Press.

SCHOOL OF LAW
JUDGE CLYDE REESE BOARD OF VISITORS'
2024-2025 EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Gary Simson, J.D.

Professor of Law

Gary J. Simson is this year's recipient of the Judge Clyde Reese Board of Visitors' Excellence in Teaching Award from the School of Law.

Professor Simson received a B.A. *summa cum laude* from Yale College, where he majored in Spanish literature and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and a J.D. from Yale Law School, where he was an editor of *The Yale Law Journal*. After clerking in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, he began his teaching career at the University of Texas School of Law and was later promoted to full professor.

Professor Simson taught and held administrative positions at Cornell Law School and Case Western Reserve University School of Law before becoming Dean of the School of Law and Macon Chair in Law at Mercer University. He served as Dean until being appointed in 2014 to the university leadership position of Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Scholarship. He held that position until deciding in 2018 to return to full-time teaching.

Professor Simson has taught Constitutional Law, Conflict of Laws, Religious Liberty Clinic, Statutory Law and Analysis, and seminars on freedom of religion and other constitutional law topics. His constitutional law scholarship has addressed such issues as school vouchers, Supreme Court appointments, same-sex marriage, the death penalty and religion, and single-sex schools. He is also the author of a leading conflict of laws casebook and various articles in the field.



COLLEGE OF PHARMACY
2024-2025 COLLEGE OF PHARMACY
EDUCATOR AWARD

Angela Shogbon Nwaesei, Pharm.D., BCPS

Clinical Professor of Pharmacy Practice

Dr. Angela Shogbon Nwaesei, Pharm.D., BCPS, is a Clinical Professor of Pharmacy Practice at Mercer's College of Pharmacy and an Internal Medicine Clinical Pharmacist at Emory Decatur Hospital. Her passion for student learning, critical thinking development, and innovative teaching strategies have earned her the Excellence in Teaching Award.

With a background in internal medicine pharmacy and extensive experience in both didactic and experiential education, Dr. Nwaesei is deeply committed to equipping students with the clinical reasoning, problem-solving, and evidence-based decision-making skills necessary for pharmacy practice. She integrates patient case-based learning, active discussions, and critical analysis of literature into her teaching, ensuring that students move beyond memorization to practical application and real-world patient care scenarios.

She has been actively involved in preceptor development programs in Nigeria, professional service to the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) and the American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP), and pedagogical research focused on evaluating effective teaching and learning strategies. Her impact has been recognized through multiple awards, including the Mercer University College of Pharmacy Distinguished Educator Award and the AACP Pharmacy Practice Section Distinguished Educator Award.

Dr. Nwaesei's philosophy centers on lifelong learning, mentorship, and student success. She strives to inspire future pharmacists to think critically, apply knowledge effectively, and grow into competent and compassionate healthcare professionals.



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

2024-2025 DISTINGUISHED FACULTY AWARD

Dr. Ehsan Ahmadi, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Management Science

Dr. Ehsan Ahmadi earned his Ph.D. in industrial and systems engineering from Ohio University. He holds an M.S. in industrial management with a concentration in operations research and a B.S. in industrial engineering. Before transitioning to academia, he worked as an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project manager and business process specialist across various manufacturing, distribution, and financial companies. He joined Mercer University in 2021 as Assistant Professor of Management Science. Dr. Ahmadi's research interests focus on optimization models, supply chain management, data mining, and machine learning methods applied to healthcare and manufacturing systems. He has published numerous articles in top-tier peer-reviewed journals, including *Computers and Operations Research*, *Applied Soft Computing*, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, and *IIE Transactions on Healthcare Systems Engineering*. His work is widely recognized in the field, accumulating over 1,000 citations to date.



His teaching philosophy focuses on engaging students actively, promoting experiential learning, and incorporating real-world applications into the classroom. A student described his teaching: "Professor Ahmadi has consistently demonstrated deep knowledge of the subject matter and an engaging teaching style that encourages student participation. His dedication to ensuring that complex topics are well understood is evident through explanations and a willingness to answer questions. Overall, his passion for teaching and commitment to student success is greatly appreciated." Dr. Ahmadi is currently serving as the program director for the Master of Science in Business Analytics.

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
2024-2025 CLAYTON R. PAUL
TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD

Kevin Barnett, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Engineering

Dr. Kevin Barnett is the recipient of the Clayton R. Paul Teaching Excellence Award in the School of Engineering. Dr. Barnett earned his undergraduate degrees in physics from Morehead State University and electrical engineering from North Carolina State University. He earned his MSEE from the University of Tennessee and Ph.D. from Clemson University. He has worked as an engineer at Harris Corporation in Melbourne, Florida, and as a consultant to the Mercer Engineering Research Center in Warner Robins.

Dr. Barnett joined the faculty of the School of Engineering at Mercer University in fall 1993 as a Visiting Assistant Professor. He is currently an Associate Professor and Department Chair of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department. His research and teaching interests are in digital signal processing, image processing, and analog filters. He has taught and/or developed nine undergraduate and six graduate courses during his time at Mercer. He commonly teaches courses in Electrical Circuits, Signals and Systems, Digital Signal Processing, and Analog Filter Design.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
2024-2025 CATHRYN FUTRAL
EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Dr. Susie Morrissey, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Education

Dr. Susie Morrissey is Associate Professor of Education and Scarborough Chair in Education in the Tift College of Education where she has taught for seven years. She earned her Ph.D. in mathematics education from the Illinois Institute of Technology. Previously she taught high school mathematics and worked in the field of computer science, leading to her interests in providing effective, accessible math and computer science education to all students.

Dr. Morrissey's research topics include effective teaching strategies and brain development misconceptions, which are both related directly to research conducted in her courses, and computer science education as related to ongoing grant projects.

Students of Dr. Morrissey appreciate her willingness to work with them on finding solutions to problems. Inside and outside the classroom, Dr. Morrissey listens to her students and values their feedback, as evidenced in this quote from an undergraduate student: "I admire you for your willingness to always listen to everyone's ideas and meet them where they're at instead of talking over them — what a beautiful gift to give someone, to allow their thoughts to be fully heard and honored."



COLLEGE OF NURSING

2024-2025 DISTINGUISHED FACULTY

MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sonique Sailsman, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Nursing

Dr. Sonique Sailsman, Assistant Professor of Nursing, is the recipient of the Georgia Baptist College of Nursing Distinguished Faculty Member of the Year Award for her achievements as an educator. She earned a Ph.D. in nursing from Nova Southeastern University, MSN from Drexel University, and BSN from the University of Miami. Prior to joining the Mercer faculty in 2021, she was an assistant professor at Barry University in Florida.

She has been a nurse specializing in acute care pediatrics for over 24 years. As a certified nurse educator, Dr. Sailsman has taught across undergraduate and graduate programs in the College of Nursing. Her research focuses on the social determinants of health (SDOH) and their impact on healthcare outcomes in minority adolescents. She participated in the National League for Nursing Social Determinants of Health and Social Change Leadership Academy where she developed a community initiative to improve health literacy among Latino adolescents. She is currently exploring medication adherence among African American adolescent males and recently published a manuscript exploring nursing educators' knowledge and attitudes regarding SDOH in nursing curricula. She actively mentors junior faculty and is a faculty advisor to the Georgia Baptist Association of Nursing Students.

Dr. Sailsman's students appreciate her commitment to high-quality teaching. One student recently commented, "Professor Sailsman is an exemplary educator, embodying honesty and clarity. Her straightforward lectures effectively guide understanding, leading to improved test performance. Beyond instruction, she demonstrates exceptional approachability and guidance."



COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT

2024-2025 AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Hollis Phelps, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies

Dr. Hollis Phelps, Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, is the recipient of the College of Professional Advancement Award for Excellence in Teaching. Dr. Phelps joined Mercer's faculty in 2017, having earned his Ph.D. degree in Theology, Ethics, and Culture at Claremont Graduate University, the M.T.S. degree at Duke Divinity School, and the Bachelor of Arts in Religion degree from the University of Mount Olive. He completed a certificate program, Psychedelics: Mind, Medicine, and Culture, at the University of Exeter. Dr. Phelps has published five books and is the author of over 30 peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and referred symposia. He is a Fellow with the Westar Institute.



Students who nominated Dr. Phelps for the award, many of whom study with him in fully online classes, note his respect for and interest in students, his deep engagement with them, and his ability to encourage a variety of perspectives. Students recognize his dedication to student success and commitment to ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the material. He is known for constructive and timely responsiveness to student work, queries, and concerns. Students see him as a mentor, skilled at using real-world experiences to make learning relevant and engaging. At the end of the semester, he meets with each student individually to discuss what they learned in the course.

One student commented, "Dr. Phelps provided a wonderful learning experience with coursework but also was very considerate as a fellow human being. Because of his sensitivity and encouragement, I was able to complete this course and enjoyed my time doing so."

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

2024-2025 OUTSTANDING FACULTY AWARD

Stanley L. Roberts, DMA

Arthur Lowndes Rich Professor of Choral Conducting and Associate Dean

Dr. Stanley L. Roberts is in his 30th year of teaching in the School of Music where he is the Arthur Lowndes Rich Professor of Choral Conducting. In this position, he conducts the Mercer Singers and the Mercer Women's Chamber Choir, while teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in conducting, choral literature, and techniques. Choirs under his direction have sung on numerous programs for the Georgia Music Educators Association, American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), and the National Association for Music Education (NAfME). With Mercer Singers, he has led 10 highly successful international tours of Great Britain, Eastern and Western Europe, Russia, and Japan with performances in St. Paul's (London), Ely Cathedral (Ely), King's College (Cambridge), St. Vitus (Prague), St. Peters (Vatican), Matthias Church (Budapest), Christ Church (Oxford), Hibiki Hall (Kitakyushu), Cappella Hall (St. Petersburg), and the 80th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy, France. Most recently, Dr. Roberts led Mercer Singers and the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings in their second performance at Carnegie Hall in New York. Highly regarded as a conductor and clinician, he has conducted all-state choirs, honor choirs, and festival choruses throughout the U.S., England, Europe, and South Africa as well as workshops in universities, colleges, churches, and schools.



Dr. Roberts has served in numerous leadership capacities for both the ACDA and NAfME. He is a co-editor of the hymnal *Celebrating Grace* (2010) and currently serves as Minister of Music at the First Baptist Church of Christ in Macon. In 1994 he became the founder and director of jubilate! — a mass choir singing and touring experience for church youth choirs across the southern United States. Dr. Roberts is also a proud alumnus of Mercer University.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS 2024-2025 EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

Mary Beth McCullough, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology

Dr. Mary Beth McCullough, Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology, is the recipient of the 2025 College of Health Professions Excellence in Teaching Award, presented to the faculty member who demonstrates sustained contributions to teaching and learning within and outside the College. Dr. McCullough joined the faculty of the Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) program in 2022 and currently serves as the Assistant Director for Clinical Training for the PsyD program. A dedicated and innovative educator, she demonstrates a multifaceted commitment to teaching and learning, spanning curriculum development, innovative pedagogy, student mentorship, and scholarly activity. As co-PI and clinical supervisor for the HRSA-funded Chronic Pain Management Program, she co-developed a comprehensive, interdisciplinary curriculum focused on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for chronic pain, demonstrably improving patient outcomes and student competency. Dr. McCullough has mentored numerous doctoral students in various roles, including teaching assistants, dissertation students, and research assistants in her behavioral medicine lab. One PsyD student noted, "Whether it's finding internships, connecting students with research opportunities, or offering personalized career advice, Dr. McCullough is always advocating for her students' growth and success," while another added, "Dr. McCullough's rare combination of teaching excellence and genuine investment in her students' personal and professional development makes her exceptional."



ACADEMIC AND ADVISING SERVICES
2024-2025 EXCELLENCE IN FIRST-YEAR STUDENT
ADVISING AWARD

Jeffrey Hugdahl, Ph.D.

Professor of Chemistry

Dr. Jeffrey Hugdahl is a Professor of Chemistry in the Mercer University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. A born and bred Wisconsinite, Dr. Hugdahl earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside and a Ph.D. specializing in organic chemistry from the University of Texas at Austin. Following postdoctoral appointments in the UT-Austin Botany Department and the Center for Light Microscope Imaging and Biotechnology at Carnegie Mellon, he joined Mercer's Department of Chemistry in 1997. His research has included collaborations with his Mercer colleagues in chemistry and pharmacy.

Dr. Hugdahl has twice served as the Chair of Chemistry and since 2005 has served as the University's NCAA Faculty Athletic Representative.





TO TEACH, TO LEARN, TO CREATE, TO DISCOVER,
TO INSPIRE, TO EMPOWER AND TO SERVE.

MERCER
UNIVERSITY

MACON | ATLANTA | SAVANNAH | COLUMBUS | VALDOSTA

Douglas County, Henry County, Warner Robins