



VASSAR COLLEGE

Convocation 2023

Wednesday, August 30, 2023

Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that Vassar stands upon the homelands of the Munsee Lenape, Indigenous peoples who have an enduring connection to this place despite being forcibly displaced by European colonization. Munsee Lenape peoples continue today as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community in Wisconsin, the Delaware Tribe and the Delaware Nation in Oklahoma, and the Munsee-Delaware Nation in Ontario. This acknowledgment, however, is insufficient without our reckoning with the reality that every member of the Vassar community since 1861 has benefited from these Native peoples' displacement, and it is hollow without our efforts to counter the effects of structures that have long enabled—and that still perpetuate—injustice against Indigenous Americans. To that end, we commit to build and sustain relationships with Native communities; to expand opportunities at Vassar for Native students, as well as Native faculty and other employees; and to collaborate with Native nations to know better the Indigenous peoples, past and present, who care for this land.

FALL CONVOCATION

Wednesday, August 30, 2023

Academic Processional

(All standing)

led by **Benjamin Lotto**

*College Marshal and Professor and Chair
of Mathematics and Statistics*

Prelude for Organ in F Major

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805-1847)

Gail Archer, Organ

Invocation and Land Acknowledgement

Rev. Samuel H. Speers

*Associate Dean of Religious and Spiritual Life
and Contemplative Practices*

The Convocation Choir

Christine Howlett

*Associate Professor
and Director of Choral Activities*

Afternoon on a Hill

Music by Eric Barnum (b. 1970)

Poetry by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950), Class of 1917

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down!

For a list of participating choir members,
please visit: go.vassar.edu/ChoirListing



Welcome

Elizabeth H. Bradley
President, Vassar College

Remarks

Carlos Alamo-Pastrana
Dean of the College, Vassar College

Alumnae/i Association of Vassar College (AAVC) Award Presentation

Brian Farkas '10, *AAVC Vice President and AAVC Trustee*
Stephanie Goldberg '14, *Alumnae/i Recognition Committee.*

2023 Young Alumnae/i Achievement Award Recipient
Priya Nair '15

Remarks

Olivia Gross '24
President, Vassar Student Association

2023 Faculty Endowed Chairs Presentation

Elizabeth H. Bradley
President, Vassar College

Tobias Armborst, *Professor of Art*
The Isabelle Hyman Chair

Kathryn Libin, *Professor of Music*
The Mary Conover Mellon Chair

Colette Salyk, *Associate Professor of Astronomy*
The Maria Mitchell Chair

William Hoynes, *Dean of the Faculty
and Professor of Sociology*
The Jane Baker Nord '42 Chair

Laura Haynes, *Assistant Professor of Earth Science*
The Mary Clark Rockefeller Chair

Molly McGlennen, *Professor of English*
The Anne McNiff Tatlock '61 Chair
in Multidisciplinary Studies

Ming-Wen An, *Professor of Mathematics and Statistics*
The Elizabeth Stillman Williams Chair



Convocation Address

Campus: Space and Place

Yvonne Elet

Professor of Art History

Closing

Rev. Samuel H. Speers

*Associate Dean of Religious and Spiritual Life
and Contemplative Practices*

Gaudeamus Igitur

(All standing)

Arr. Geer/Bartholomew

Christine Howlett

*Associate Professor
and Director of Choral Activities*

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| All | Gaudeamus igitur, iuvenes dum sumus!
Gaudeamus igitur, iuvenes dum sumus!
Post iucundam iuventutem,
Post molestam senectutem
Nos habebit humus,
Nos habebit humus. | Let us rejoice, therefore,
While we are young.
After a pleasant youth
After a troublesome old age
The earth will have us. |
| Choir | Vivat academia, vivant professores,
Vivat academia, vivant professores,
Vivat membrum quod libet,
Vivant membra quae libet,
Semper sint in flore,
Semper sint in flore. | Long live the academy,
Long live the professors,
Long live each individual member
Long live all members whosoever
And always be in flower. |
| All | Alma mater floreat quae nos educavit,
Alma mater floreat quae nos educavit,
Caros et commilitones
Dissitas in regiones,
Sparsos congregavit,
Sparsos congregavit. | May our alma mater flourish,
She who has reared us
And brought us together,
dear companions,
Scattered though we have been
Into remote regions. |

Recessional

(All standing)

*Allegro maestoso from Sonata I.
Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)*

Gail Archer, Organ

***Please join us for the President's
reception, immediately following
Convocation, on the President's lawn.***

Convocation Speaker

Yvonne Elet

Professor of Art History



Yvonne Elet is a historian of art and architecture, whose research focuses on integrated designs for art, architecture, landscape, and urbanism in early modern Italy, and also in twentieth century Italy and America. Her current research and teaching projects encompass Renaissance/ Baroque villa culture; intermedial designers from Raphael to Olmsted; and materials in early

modern art, science and natural philosophy. She received the M.A. and Ph.D. from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, and a B. S. in Computer Science from Yale College. She had an earlier career in systems engineering and marketing at IBM; and at the IBM Gallery of Science and Art in New York, she coordinated exhibitions on topics from fractal geometry to Sardinian Renaissance painting.

Professor Elet teaches courses on Italian art, architecture, landscape, and urbanism of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, as well as intensives about the Vassar Campus and Springside. Her seminar topics include a reconsideration of Raphael's multimedia oeuvre, and the history of landscape and gardens in early modern Italy. Together with students, she created the website *Vassar Campus History*, a digital repository for ongoing research on the history of the college's architecture, landscape, and soundscape; and organized the 2022 exhibition *The Campus Green: The Olmsted Firm's Designs for Vassar College*.



**Alumnae/i Association of Vassar College
(AAVC) 2023 Young Alumnae/i Achievement
Award Recipient**

Priya Nair '15



Priya Nair '15 currently serves as Deputy Chief Diversity Officer in the office of New York Governor Kathy Hochul. Previously, they served as Associate Director of Gender Equity at NYC Health + Hospitals, the largest public healthcare system in the United States. In that position, Nair managed the system's award-winning LGBTQ program and served as point person on issues

of LGBTQ equity for staff and patients across more than 70 locations. Nair was also the inaugural Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, and Edie Windsor New York State LGBTQ Fellow—a position that allowed them to strengthen policies for transgender New Yorkers across state agencies. In both 2022 and 2020, Nair was named to the “Pride Power 100” list of the most influential LGBTQ leaders by the news site City & State.

2023 Faculty Endowed Chairs



Tobias Armbrorst

Professor of Art

The Isabelle Hyman Chair

This endowed professorship was established in 2008 in honor of the esteemed architectural historian Isabelle Hyman, Vassar class of 1951, with a generous gift from Isabelle Hyman and Jerome E. Hyman. Isabelle Hyman is Professor Emerita in the Department of Art History at NYU, where she taught for forty years; her fields of specialization are history of architecture and Italian Renaissance art and architecture. The Isabelle Hyman Chair recognizes and supports a distinguished faculty member in the Art Department.



Kathryn Libin

Professor of Music

The Mary Conover Mellon Chair

This endowed professorship was established in 1961 in honor of Mary Conover Mellon, born Mary Conover Brown, Vassar class of 1926. After Mary's death in 1946, Mary's husband Paul Mellon collaborated with Mary's Vassar classmate, Gertrude Garnsey, to create the Mary Conover Mellon Fund at Vassar. The fund provided support to establish two Mary Conover Mellon Chairs and the Mary Conover Mellon House Fellow program. This Mary Conover Mellon Chair recognizes and supports a distinguished faculty member in Music.



Colette Salyk

Associate Professor of Astronomy

The Maria Mitchell Chair

This endowed professorship was established in 1886 with contributions from Vassar alum, former students of Professor Maria Mitchell. Professor Mitchell, among the nine professors who served as Vassar's original faculty, was an internationally-recognized astronomer. She encouraged students to do hands-on research, and was committed to providing original research opportunities for Vassar students. Mitchell was a beloved professor at Vassar until her retirement in 1888. The Maria Mitchell Chair recognizes and supports a distinguished faculty member in Astronomy.





William Hoynes
Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Sociology
The Jane Baker Nord '42 Chair

This endowed professorship was established in 2022 with a generous gift from Jane Baker Nord, Vassar class of 1942. Previously, Ms. Nord established The Eric and Jane Nord Fund to support faculty salaries and The Eric and Jane Nord Fund for Skinner Landscaping, and she has been a lifelong supporter of the Frances Lehman Loeb Arts Center. The Jane Baker Nord '42 Chair recognizes and supports a distinguished faculty member in Media Studies.



Laura Haynes
Assistant Professor of Earth Science
The Mary Clark Rockefeller Chair

This endowed professorship, one of two pre-tenure chairs in Environmental Studies, was established in 2001 with a gift from Mary R. Morgan, Vassar class of 1960, in honor of her mother Mary Clark Rockefeller. The two Mary Clark Rockefeller Assistant Professor Chairs, which rotate among junior faculty members who hold the chair during their Assistant Professor years, were created to provide sustaining support for the Environmental Studies Program at Vassar.



Molly McGlennen
Professor of English
The Anne McNiff Tatlock '61 Chair
in Multidisciplinary Studies

The Tatlock Chair was established in 2012 with a gift from The Mellon Foundation in honor of Anne McNiff Tatlock, Vassar class of 1961, who had served as Chair of the Mellon Foundation Board from 2003 to 2012, to recognize multidisciplinary leadership at Vassar. The rotating chair supports a senior faculty member to conduct faculty development activities that build a stronger campus foundation of knowledge and support for multidisciplinary programs.



Ming-Wen An Wissmann
Professor of Mathematics and Statistics
The Elizabeth Stillman Williams Chair

This endowed professorship was established in 1961 in honor of Elizabeth Stillman Williams, Vassar class of 1927, one of two endowed chairs funded by a bequest from her estate. Ms. Stillman Williams served on the Vassar Board of Trustees, and was a member of the Board's Executive Committee. This Elizabeth Stillman Williams Chair recognizes and supports a distinguished faculty member in the Mathematics and Statistics Department.

Academic Dress

The custom of wearing academic dress stems from the Middle Ages when scholars were also clerics and wore the costumes of their monastic orders. Significant parts of academic dress are the gown, the hood, and the cap. Each has a particular significance and is worn in accordance with standards established by the Academic Costume Code of the American Council on Education.

Gowns recommended for use in the colleges and universities of this country have the following characteristics.

The gown for the bachelor's degree has pointed sleeves, and is designed to be worn closed. The gown for the master's degree has an oblong sleeve, open at the wrist. The sleeve base hangs down in the traditional manner. The rear part of its oblong shape is square cut, and the front part has an arc cut away. The gown is supplied with fasteners so that it may be worn open or closed. The gown for the doctor's degree has bell-shaped sleeves. It is supplied with fasteners so that it may be worn open or closed.

Material. Cotton poplin or similar material for the bachelor's and master's degrees, and rayon or silk ribbed material for the doctor's degree.

Color. Black is recommended.

Trimmings. None for the bachelor's or master's degrees. For the doctor's degree, the gown is faced down the front with black velvet and three bars of black velvet are sewn across the sleeves. These facings and crossbars may be velvet of the color distinctive of the subject to which the degree pertains.

For all academic purposes, including trimmings of doctors' gowns, edging of hoods, and tassels of caps, the colors associated with the different subjects are as follows:

Agriculture	Maize	Music	Pink
Arts, Letters, Humanities	White	Nursing	Apricot
Commerce, Accountancy, Business	Drab*	Oratory (Speech)	Silver Gray
Dentistry	Lilac	Pharmacy	Olive Green
Economics	Copper	Philosophy Dark	Blue
Education	Light Blue	Physical Education	Sage Green
Engineering.	Orange	Public Administration, including Foreign Service	Peacock Blue
Fine Arts, including Architecture	Brown	Public Health	Salmon Pink
Forestry	Russet	Science Golden	Yellow
Journalism	Crimson	Social Work	Citron
Law	Purple	Theology	Scarlet
Library Science	Lemon	Veterinary Science	Gray
Medicine	Green		

**Sapphire blue as alternate. Not recommended because of the likely confusion with blues previously assigned to other subjects.*

Gaudeamus Igitur

In 1865, President John H. Raymond gave a sermon in honor of the College's opening. Such services continued to be held every September until 1914. Then, at the suggestion of History Professor Lucy Maynard Salmon, a convocation ceremony, with a procession of the faculty in academic regalia, was organized to formally open each academic year. "**Gaudeamus Igitur**" was added in the 1920s and has been sung by students and faculty alike to conclude the celebratory event. Believed to originate from a 13th-century manuscript, it creates a direct link to the period and culture in which the university was invented

"The university was arguably the most progressive and liberating institution of the medieval period— the product of student and teachers' guilds rather than a top-down hierarchical creation. It was and is a living and ever-changing entity, and 'Gaudeamus' reminds us of the university's exuberant and imperfect roots as we continually seek to improve it. The Latin lyrics recall a language that was accessible to many school boys and girls; it was a gateway to a world of higher education that enabled countless people to communicate across borders and to enjoy popular songs that spoke to shared experiences."

– Nancy Bisaha
Professor History

