Whitman College

Baccalaureate

Saturday, May 20, 2023
2:30 P.M. Chism Recital Hall
ORDER OF SERVICE

WELCOME
Adam Kirtley, Interfaith Chaplain

GREETING
Sarah Bolton, President

OPENING BLESSING
(from the Jewish Tradition)
Richard Middleton-Kaplan, Lay Rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel, Walla Walla
Cormac Uriah Li ’23

Opening Words
Hinei Mah tov u-ma nayim
Shevet achim gam yachad
Behold how good and how pleasant it is for people to dwell together.

The Shehecheyanu: A Prayer for Joyous and Special Occasions
Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v’kiy’manu, v’higianu laz’man hazehe.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.
Opening Prayer: A Prayer for Wellness

Eternal One,
I am filled with Gratitude,
For You, who has given me life
For my Family, who sustains me with their love
For my Community, who supports me with their warm embrace
For the strength of my body, which I have cared for
and prepared to greet this day
For the capacity of my mind, to allow me to reach
beyond what I thought possible

For the courage of my soul, to conquer my fears and
pursue my dreams

For the spirit, You have placed in me that will allow
me to prevail.
I humbly ask of You...
Remove all obstacles from before me
Help me navigate this world without impediment
Grant me the courage to persevere in moments of
weakness
To see and do acts of loving kindness along the way
And that through this endeavor, I may glorify Your
Great Name.

Yihi ratzon milifanekha Adonai eloheinu v’eloei
avoteinu v’imoteinu,

sh’t’khadas et gufi, nafshi v’rukhi b’khol yom
vayom, v’nomar Amen.
May it be Your Will, Eternal One, God of our
Ancestors, that you
renew my body, my soul and my
spirit each and every day.
And we say, Amen.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

“Invocation”                     Amy Beach
Bethany Hermann ’23, violin    (1867–1944)
Jackie Wood, Senior Lecturer, Emerita, piano accompaniment

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Kainat Ansari ’23 and Ahmed Elsayed ’23
Reya Fore ’23
Olivia Myers ’23 and Jaime Fields ’23

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Adam Kirtley, Interfaith Chaplain

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“The Interfaith Explosion in the 1960s: Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel” Pat Henry, the Cushing Eells Professor of Philosophy and Literature and Foreign Languages and Literatures (French), Emeritus

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

“Butterfly Baby”              Composed and performed by Mo Dow ’23

CLOSING BLESSING

(from the Buddhist Tradition) Takemoto-sensei, Assistant Professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Japanese, Emeritus
PARTICIPANTS

IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

**Dr. Richard Middleton-Kaplan** (he/him/his) serves as Coordinator in Whitman’s Academic Resource Center. He is a lay rabbi at Walla Walla’s only synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel, and received training as a lay rabbinical leader at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. In addition to participating locally in interfaith events including the pre-COVID-19 Interfaith Community Immigration Seders, and teaching classes about interfaith peacebuilding, he is the co-author—along with today’s keynote speaker, Pat Henry—of “Using Literature to Teach Peace,” an article about interfaith peace writing and activism which was published in The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies. Middleton-Kaplan also converses with academic and non-academic audiences about literature and human rights as a member of 2021–2023 Humanities Washington Speakers Bureau.

**Bethany Hermann ’23** is from Olympia, Washington, and will be graduating this spring with degrees in Music Performance and Psychology. During her time at Whitman and in Walla Walla, she played as concertmaster for the Whitman Orchestra and participated in Chamber Singers, the Walla Walla Symphony and several chamber music ensembles. She studied violin performance at Whitman with Amy Dodds and Lyn Ritz. She plans to continue playing in orchestras and teaching violin lessons after graduating. This year, she was a co-head research assistant in the Personality Psychology Lab at Whitman, supervised by Associate Professor of Biology Pavel Blagov. This summer, she will be working as a research assistant in the Social Cognitive Development Lab at Yale University. She has also enjoyed pursuing cultural and linguistic studies at Whitman and will be graduating with a minor in Hispanic Studies.

**Kainat Ansari** comes from Karachi, Pakistan. She is graduating with a degree in Psychology. During her time at Whitman, she has served in various leadership, occupational and volunteer capacities, including serving as Web Cultural and Lecture Director and as a Senator for the Associated Students of Whitman College. Ansari received the Robinowitz Award for her campaign to raise greater awareness of mental health issues facing students of color. As a complement to that, she made a documentary and a website identifying the various challenges and recommendations on some of the ways forward. Ansari’s aspirations align with the work and advocacy she has undertaken at Whitman. She seeks to bring hope and mental health resources to underprivileged communities.
Ahmed Elsayed ’23 is an international student from Cairo, Egypt who studied Computer Science and Mathematics and has a deep passion for creative writing. During his time at Whitman, Elsayed’s activities and leadership focused on fostering the Whitman community and providing leadership in the Muslim Student Association and the Halal Cooking Club. After graduation, Elsayed will work as an Xbox Software Engineer at Microsoft in Redmond, Washington.

Reya Fore ’23 is from Seattle, Washington, and is graduating with a degree in Religion. Participating in Semester in the West, the Whitman Chorale and Chamber Choir have taught her the importance and challenges of community and collaboration. Fore has also enjoyed dabbling in the Mathematics Department and hopes to eventually become a middle school math teacher. She has worked with the Outdoor Program as media coordinator and as a trip leader, and loves to make it possible for more people to get outside and connect with each other and the world.

Jaime Fields ’23 is from Portland, Oregon, and will be graduating (tomorrow!) with degrees in English and Japanese and a minor in Theater. Over the course of her time at Whitman, she has served as President of the Drama Club, Chair of the Renaissance Faire Planning Committee, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship co-leader and Vice President of the Whitman Consulting Group. She has also enjoyed stage managing and directing in the Theater and Dance Department, sewing in the Costume Shop, editing for the Whitman Wire and a variety of other on-campus jobs and activities. After graduation, she hopes to continue with her current job as a copywriter for a tech company in Portland.

Olivia Myers ’23 is a follower of Jesus, an aspiring farmer and an Environmental Humanities major. She was born in Seattle, Washington, raised on the central coast of California and has made her best effort to travel to faraway places and volunteer on small family farms. Since sophomore year, she has co-led the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and during her first two years on campus she was found goofing around on the women’s Ultimate Frisbee team. Despite having spent her junior year studying in Munich, Germany, Myers is not at all fluent in German, but hopes to strengthen her Spanish and take up Mandarin post-grad. This coming fall she will intern as a farmhand at the Abbey of Regina Laudis in Connecticut to learn traditional French cheesemaking, the Benedictine way of work and prayer, and the art of dipping candles.
**Mo Dow ’23** is a Music Technology and Production major from Boulder, Colorado. During their time at Whitman, Dow co-founded the student band Wind-Up Birds as the lead singer and primary songwriter, as well as playing guitar, bass and piano. Wind-Up Birds has gone on to play well over a dozen gigs and local shows at Whitman and in the greater Walla Walla community. Dow is also an orchestral and chamber music composer, and will pursue a graduate degree in classical composition after graduation.

**Takemoto-sensei** came to Whitman College in the fall of 1983 to teach courses in Japanese language, literature and aesthetics. He retired in August 2022 and volunteered to remain on campus to offer lectures and demonstrations connected with Chikurakken Tea Room, which he designed and established in October 2010. He was ordained as a Buddhist priest at the Nishi Honganji in Kyoto in 1979, and in 1982, he received permission to teach the art of tea in the United States by Yabunouchi Jōichi (1927–2018), 13th generation Grand Master of the Yabunouchi Tradition of Tea.