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HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER...

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TTUHSC Honors Class of 2021 Graduates at Commencement Ceremonies

After the pandemic forced the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) to host its first virtual graduation tribute last year, the university returned to more traditional commencement ceremonies for its 2021 class. Graduates from the School of Nursing, the School of Health Professions and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences crossed the stage May 7-8 at United Supermarkets Arena.

Class of 2021 members from the Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy received their diplomas May 22 in a morning ceremony in Amarillo, while the School of Medicine graduates were honored that afternoon in Lubbock.

“I’m so proud of our graduates. They have demonstrated such resiliency throughout this pandemic in their academic endeavors while volunteering in so many capacities to meet the health care needs at hand,” TTUHSC President Lori Rice-Spearman, Ph.D., said. “That, no doubt, will punctuate their education at TTUHSC, but I fully expect their experiences and opportunities in service together will also make a huge impact as they move forward in their careers.”

The School of Nursing, which graduated 480 students in its Class of 2021, kicked off the weekend May 7. Counting the Class of 2021, the School of Nursing, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary, has graduated nearly 17,000 nurses since it began in 1981.

“For 40 years, TTUHSC has led in the innovation of nursing education,” Rice-Spearman said. “As a result, our graduates provide quality health care across our state and nation, and they hold leadership positions in facilities and in organizations that affect policy changes in health care. We’re continually ranked among the leading nursing schools throughout the state and nation for both online and face-to-face programs because of the leadership from a faculty who not only teach, but who also continue to practice and impact the profession.”

Class of 2021 award winners from the School of Nursing included Aaron Salinas (Excellence in Nursing Award, DNP Program), Kelsey Lupton (Excellence in Nursing Award, MSN Program), Morgan Kriska (Excellence in Nursing Award, Traditional BSN Program) and Kathrina Manalo (Dean’s Leadership Award).

The 95 students comprising the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences Class of 2021 also were recognized May 7. Sharavan Ramachandran and Sanaullah Sajib were named co-recipients of the K. Wyatt McMahon Outstanding Graduate Student Award. Other honorees included Nicholas Evans (Dean’s Recognition Award) and Miranda Rice (Outstanding Public Health Student).

On May 8, the School of Health Professions honored 748 graduates from across its five departments and 21 programs. The school's Class of 2021 award honorees included Madison J. Olney (Undergraduate Dean's Award) and Haley Marie Glover (Graduate Dean's Award).

TTUHSC concluded its 2021 commencement exercises May 22 when the Jerry H. Hodge School of Pharmacy and the School of Medicine recognized their Class of 2021 graduates.

TTUHSC's 158 pharmacy graduates took place at Hodgetown Stadium in Amarillo. Sara Powell earned the Banner Bearer Award for having the highest GPA among the graduating class. Anthony Phan received the Bowl of Hygieia, the school's highest student honor given each year to the graduate that best exemplifies the qualities of a fine pharmacist: high ethics, compassion and commitment to the profession.

The 180 members of the School of Medicine Class of 2021 received their diplomas at Lubbock's United Spirit Arena. Several members of the Class of 2020 also returned to participate. Ganesh Maniam earned the Gold Headed Cane Award as the individual selected jointly by students and faculty who best exemplifies those attributes that are most desirable in the competent and caring physician. Andrew Hennecke (Covenant campus), Christine Lin (Lubbock campus) and Catherine Wiechmann (Permian Basin campus) received the Dean's Recognition Award, and Bradley Osemwengie was named recipient of the Dean's Highest Academic Achievement Award. John Aure Buesseler Memorial Awards for student and teacher excellence were presented to Vadivel Ganapathy, Ph.D., (Basic Sciences Faculty), David Trotter, Ph.D., (Clinical Faculty) and Kandis Wright Boothe and Erica Poe (Students).