



CENTRAL  
STATE UNIVERSITY

# *Charter Day Convocation*

*Celebrating*  
*138 Years*  
of Academic Excellence  
1887-2025

**Tuesday, March 4, 2025, 10 a.m.**

**Paul Robeson Cultural &  
Performing Arts Center, Auditorium**



# The History of Charter Day

Charter Day celebrates the 1887 establishment of the Combined Normal and Industrial Department at Wilberforce University, which later became Central State University. In past years, the Charter Day Banquet served as a fundraiser for various University projects.

In the late 1950s, the Charter Day Banquets were preceded by Charter Day Convocations held in Galloway Auditorium. A retrospective written by the 1965 Charter Day committee chronicles the history of the event in the following passage: "President Charles H. Wesley initiated the program of the college family and friends gathering to break bread together and to raise funds to aid the college. The first Charter Day committee, with (Dr.) Wilhelmina S. Robinson (History Department, 1943-1974) serving as the initial chairperson, was appointed in November 1947. The committee worked closely with the President in planning the Charter Day observance and in raising funds for meaningful projects."

Through the cooperative efforts of the Board of Trustees, faculty, students, alumni, and friends, according to the committee, much was accomplished through Charter Day fundraising efforts, including the beginning of the Student Loan Fund; the beginning of the Student Scholarship Fund; the purchase of a concert organ for Galloway Auditorium and television sets for each dormitory; the repair and furnishing of a guest house and guest rooms on the campus; and the reconstruction and furnishing, in cooperation with our National Alumni Association, of the Alumni Guest House; a Steinway Concert Piano for Galloway Hall; the furnishing of the Student Lounge and the increase of the Student Loan Fund; the installation in Galloway Tower of a chime clock; the creation of a fund for faculty



CHARLES H. WESLEY

research and student scholarship; and in 1965, the Charles H. Wesley Research Fund in Negro History. By the late 1960s, the Charter Day observance became a convocation. In 1989, the Alumni Achievement Hall of Fame became a part of the Charter Day celebration.



# The Legacy of Central State University: History, Excellence, and Commitment

Central State University is deeply rooted in the rich history of Wilberforce University, established in 1856 at Tawawa Springs, Ohio, in honor of William Wilberforce, a renowned abolitionist and co-founder of the Anti-Slavery Society. Wilberforce University, the nation's oldest private Historically Black College and University (HBCU), was a prominent stop on the Underground Railroad. Founded by the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) Church as a "refuge from slavery's first rule: ignorance," it laid the foundation for what would become one of Ohio's most significant centers of higher education for African Americans. Today, we continue this proud legacy, preparing young people to lead and uplift the world.

In 1887, the Ohio General Assembly enacted legislation to create a Combined Normal and Industrial Department at Wilberforce. This marked the founding of Central State University. The mission of this department was twofold: to provide teacher training and vocational education while establishing a permanent funding source akin to other state-supported institutions. According to state statute, the department was "open to all applicants of good and moral character," signifying inclusivity regardless of race, color, sex, or creed. However, it was evident that the department primarily aimed to address the educational needs of African American citizens. Although it operated under Wilberforce University's auspices, a separate Board of Trustees oversaw the state-financed operations.

Central State University has a history of resilience and perseverance. Even after a devastating tornado in 1974 destroyed most of the campus, the University emerged with its spirit unbroken. This determination to overcome adversity and advance academic excellence has defined Central State as a leading Historically Black University in the Midwest. Today, Central State stands proud as an 1890 Land-Grant University, with its eyes firmly set on the future.

## Growth and Evolution

In 1941, the Combined Normal and Industrial Department expanded from a two-year to a four-year program, marking a significant milestone in its development. By 1947, it had legally separated from Wilberforce University to become an independent College of Education and Industrial Arts. Four years later,

its name changed to Central State College, and in 1965, it achieved university status, becoming Ohio's only publicly supported HBCU.

Since its inception, Central State University has educated thousands of individuals who proudly represent the Institution. Over the years, nine distinguished presidents have guided the University, each contributing to its legacy. On July 1, 2024, Dr. Morakinyo A.O. Kuti, an alumnus, became the 10th president, ushering in an exciting new era for the University.

## A Vision for the Future and A Commitment to Excellence

Dr. Kuti's leadership embodies the University's mission of transforming lives through education. From his roots as a proud alumnus to his distinguished career as an educator, he represents a vision centered on expanding academic opportunities, embracing innovation, and enhancing the University's regional and global impact. As an 1890 Land-Grant Institution, Central State University is committed to academic excellence, research, and community engagement.

Under Dr. Kuti's transformative leadership, Central State University is poised to achieve new heights of academic distinction and societal impact. His focus on enhancing educational opportunities, fostering innovation through research, and promoting diversity and inclusion reflects a vision grounded in community, excellence, and collaboration.

President Kuti's message to the Central State community is both inspiring and resolute: "Together, we will build upon our strengths, address challenges, and seize opportunities to ensure a brighter future for Central State University."

## 138 Years of Service and Excellence (1887-2025)

Central State University stands as a beacon of history, legacy, and excellence, committed to educating students at the highest level and preparing them to lead and innovate in an ever-changing world. With a steadfast focus on its mission and values, the University continues to honor its past while shaping a brighter future.



# Programme

## Prelude

Robeson Chamber Winds  
Dr. Alvin Level, *Director*

## Processional (please stand)

“War March of the Priests” by Felix Mendelssohn  
Robeson Chamber Winds  
Dr. Alvin Level

## Posting of the Colors (please be seated after the posting)

Central State University Army ROTC Marauder Battalion

## Selection

“Psalm 57” (arr. by John Tebay)  
Central State University Chorus  
Jeremy Winston, *Director*

## Introduction of Dais and Special Guests

Dr. Amy Hobbs Harris, *Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs*

## Welcome

Aisayah Akens, *Mister CSU*  
Breanne Lovelace, *Miss CSU*

## Occasion

Nyshawnti Laney, *President, Student Government Association*

## Selection

“On Hold” (arr. by Jeremy Winston)  
Central State University Chorus  
Jeremy Winston

## 2025 Alumni Achievement Hall of Fame Introductions

Anthony E. Gardner, '92, *President, National Alumni Association*

### Response of Inductees

Leontyne Price '48  
Dr. Jesse W. Gardner '63  
Helen Bourn '65  
Dr. Morakinyo A.O. Kuti '85  
Jeffrey Elmore '86

Dr. Frederick A. Aikens '88  
Tyrone E. Nadir '92  
Angela L. Williams '92  
Dr. Alvin Level '94  
Latoya Turner '09

### Selection

"Begin the Beguine" by Cole Porter (arr. by John Krance)  
Robeson Chamber Winds  
Dr. Alvin Level

### Central State University Board of Trustees Chair Remarks

Jacqueline Y. Gamblin

### President's Remarks

Dr. Morakinyo A.O. Kuti, '85

### Alma Mater (please stand)

Lyrics by Dr. Charles H. Wesley and music by Mrs. Annye R. Dawson '47

### Retiring of Colors

Central State University Army ROTC Marauder Battalion

### Recessional

"Pomp and Circumstance" by Sir Edward Elgar  
Robeson Chamber Winds  
Dr. Alvin Level

*Audience, please remain standing for the retiring of colors, recessional, and until members of the dais have recessed.*



# Leontyne Price '48

HONOREE

Leontyne Price, born in 1927 in Laurel, Mississippi, is one of the most renowned sopranos in opera history. A pioneering African American artist and Central State University alum, she became the first to perform at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1961, a milestone that helped reshape the landscape for African American performers in classical music. With an extraordinary career spanning over three decades, Price is celebrated for her powerful voice and commanding stage presence, especially in roles such as Aida, Tosca, and the Marschallin.



*By Jack Mitchell, CC BY-SA 4.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=15047235>*

Growing up in Mississippi, a state deeply segregated and governed by Jim Crow laws, Price faced limited career options as a Black woman, with teaching in music being one of the few viable paths. She began her formal music education at Central State University. Initially studying Music Education, she switched her major to voice in her third year, following advice from the University's President and her growing involvement in the glee club.

In 1948, Price had the opportunity to participate in a master class with the legendary bass Paul Robeson at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Robeson was so impressed by her voice that he worked with Central State's administrators to organize a benefit concert to help fund her Juilliard tuition. Price's journey was further supported by the Chisholm family, who generously provided the bulk of the funds needed for her to attend the prestigious school.

A recipient of multiple Grammy Awards and the Kennedy Center Honors, she is a symbol of artistic excellence and cultural achievement. Throughout her career, Price performed in major opera houses worldwide, becoming a fixture in both American and European opera scenes. Her achievements continue to inspire generations of artists and remain a testament to her groundbreaking influence in the world of opera.



# Dr. Jesse W. Gardner '63

**HONOREE**

Jesse Willard Gardner is a lifelong educator with nearly 50 years of experience teaching in Michigan and Pennsylvania. Throughout his career, he dedicated himself to guiding young people toward success by instilling core values such as self-motivation, perseverance, and achievement. Born in Newark, New Jersey, Gardner grew up with six siblings, learning the importance of sharing, protecting one another, and engaging in friendly family competition. In 1963, he earned a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from then Central State College, which became Central State University, launching a career in education that spanned more than four decades. Committed to continuous growth, he later earned a Master of Arts from Villanova University and a Doctor of Education from Temple University, along with principal and superintendent certifications. Over the years, he served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and assistant to a regional superintendent.

Gardner's selection as a Danforth Foundation Fellow shaped his leadership approach, teaching him how to make effective decisions with limited resources. Chairing evaluation committees for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools provided him with valuable insights to implement in his own school. Additionally, serving as a delegate to the National Association of Secondary Principals Special Olympic Committee reinforced his belief in the importance of quality education for all students.

One of his greatest honors has been serving as president of Central State University's Class of 1963 for 61 years. He takes great pride in the camaraderie, dedication, and hard work of the class reunion committee. His passion for service extends beyond his alma mater, as he has held leadership roles including chair of the board of trustees at Second Baptist Church of Doylestown, Pennsylvania; board member of the Central State University National Alumni Association; president of the Philadelphia and Greater Carolina alumni



chapters; and co-founder of the Dr. William Ross Jr. Scholarship Fund and the Mu Omega Scholarship Foundation of Delaware Valley. He has also served as chairman of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. in both Philadelphia and Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Eight years ago, Gardner and his wife embraced a warmer climate and relocated to South Carolina. Now, he makes the most of his free time by deep-sea fishing whenever he can escape the house.



# Helen Bourn '65

**HONOREE**

Helen Bourn is a trailblazing dietitian, nutritionist, and civil rights advocate whose career spanned decades of service and activism.

A native of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, Bourn earned a Bachelor of Science in Food and Nutritional Sciences from Central State University in 1965. She was one of several family members who attended CSU.

After graduation, she accepted a position as a staff dietitian with the city of New York. Within a year, she passed the required exam and was promoted to head dietitian. She pursued a master's degree in adult nutrition from Hunter College while working for the city's hospital department.

In 1968, Bourn became a therapeutic dietitian for the neurology and neurosurgery unit at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx. She later relocated to Charlotte, North Carolina, where she joined the Community Health Association as a geriatric nutritionist. There, she launched the first hot lunch program for seniors in Charlotte, a model that expanded throughout Mecklenburg County and across the state. She was later promoted to associate director.

In 1973, Bourn was hired as a dietitian and food service manager at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond's Charlotte branch. While there, she discovered wage disparities and successfully sued for pay equity, securing a judgment in her favor. Though she faced workplace retaliation, she remained committed to her work. She retired in 2004 after 30 years of service.

Bourn's lifelong dedication to civil rights was inspired by her father, a leader in establishing Forrest County's NAACP chapter. As a teenager, she was a charter member of the Hattiesburg NAACP Youth Council, organized by Medgar Evers. At Central State, she was active in the CSU NAACP chapter. She was arrested in Birmingham, Alabama, during the Civil Rights Movement for entering a segregated restroom, an incident that reinforced her commitment to activism.



In retirement, Bourn remained deeply involved in community service. She has been a longtime financial supporter of Central State University and helped establish the Greater Carolinas Alumni Chapter. Her extensive volunteer work includes:

- CSU National Alumni Association, Life Member
- NAACP, Silver Life Member
- Urban League, Carolina Hospital, and Charlotte Democratic Party, Volunteer
- Mississippi Connection of Charlotte, Founder
- Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Active Member
- National Baptist Congress of Christian Education, certified in Sunday school administration
- American Dietetic Association and Food Services Executive Association, Member
- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc., Past President, 1994 Sigma of the Year, Regional and National Delegate, Undergraduate Advisor, and Northeast Budget Committee Member

In 2010, former Assistant U.S. Attorney Gordon Martin invited Bourn to participate in a panel discussion on "Voting Rights in the Kennedy Years" at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, where she spoke about her father's role in a 1950 lawsuit that expanded voting rights for Black citizens in Hattiesburg.

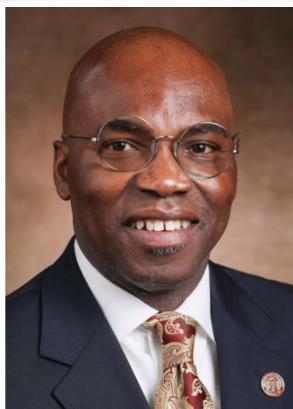
The full program is available on C-SPAN:  
<https://www.c-span.org/program/the-presidency/voting-rights-in-the-kennedy-years/238593>.



# Dr. Morakinyo A.O. Kuti '85

**HONOREE**

Dr. Morakinyo A.O. Kuti, an alumnus of Central State University's Class of 1985, proudly serves as the 10th President, a role he assumed on July 1, 2024. His presidency is marked by an unwavering commitment to advancing Central State University's mission of academic excellence, innovation, and community impact. With over three decades of experience in research, education, and economic development, Dr. Kuti is a visionary leader devoted to shaping the future of Central State University while honoring its rich legacy as one of the nation's premier Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).



Dr. Kuti's leadership is focused on positioning Central State University as a destination for learning and excellence. His vision emphasizes preparing graduates to make a global impact, while fostering academic innovation, workforce readiness, and transformative research.

With over three decades of service at the University, Dr. Kuti has held numerous pivotal roles including Vice President for Research and Economic Development and Director of Land-Grant Programs. Under his direction, the University achieved a 166% increase in external funding, securing more than \$20 million dollars for infrastructure improvements, research expansion, and student scholarships. Central State's position in the National Science Foundation's Higher Education Research and Development rankings ascended from 42nd to 22nd. This achievement underscores Dr. Kuti's focus on advancing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and research.

During his tenure, Dr. Kuti has been responsible for transformative initiatives. These include establishing Central State's Workforce Training and Business Development Center in Dayton, Ohio. In addition, secured the funding for a new \$16 million research facility supported by United States Department of Agriculture and the state of Ohio. The facility is scheduled to open its first phase in winter 2025. Both projects reflect his dedication to regional economic development,

agricultural innovation, and cutting-edge research. His unwavering commitment to elevating Central State University is evident in his extensive accomplishments.

President Kuti is deeply committed to enhancing the student experience. He has prioritized initiatives that connect students with career pathways, leadership opportunities, and real-world experiences. Through his leadership, students have secured internships at renowned organizations such as the Smithsonian Institution, Nationwide Insurance, and the United States Air Force Research Laboratory. These initiatives allow the University's graduates to be prepared for success in competitive, global industries.

Beyond the University, President Kuti is a well-respected community leader, serving on boards such as the Dayton Development Coalition and the Dayton Business Council. His service amplifies Central State University's role as an anchor institution and demonstrates his commitment to fostering economic growth and equitable educational access across the region.

Dr. Kuti is married to Bridget Archie-Kuti, and they are proud parents of Akintoye Kuti, a 2024 graduate of Central State University. Dr. Kuti's passion for his beloved Alma Mater reflects his lifelong belief in the power of education to transform lives, build communities, and inspire the next generation of leaders.



# Jeffrey Elmore '86

HONOREE

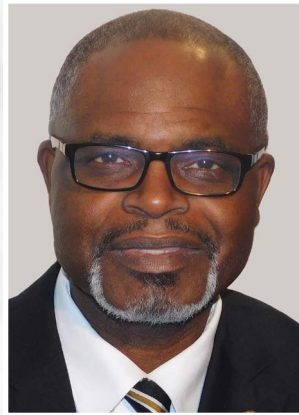
Jeffrey Todd Elmore earned a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Central State University in 1986, continuing a proud family legacy at the University. His late father, Col. Elmon M. Elmore, graduated in 1953, and his late mother, Martha Elmore, graduated in 1956.

A lifetime member of the Central State University General Alumni Board of Directors, Elmore has served as treasurer and worked on the Audit Committee. During his tenure as treasurer, he introduced the use of personal credit cards for alumni to register for Homecoming activities. In 2015, as chair of the Dayton Alumni Association Fish Fry Committee, his leadership helped establish the event's lasting success.

Elmore has dedicated more than 35 years to the United States Department of Defense at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Fairborn, Ohio, and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) in Columbus, Ohio. He has held key financial leadership roles, including budget analyst and budget office branch supervisor. He currently serves as supervisor for the Process Management Team J8C, Finance, in Columbus.

His career achievements include designing the Budget Tipster Financial Report, a tool used to inform senior management and the executive director of their financial standing. In 2007, he was selected for the Enterprise Business System development team, where he led the Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request team in creating an electronic request form for military resources, which remains in use globally.

A lifetime member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., Elmore has held several leadership roles, including Ohio district director, area director, and president of the Theta Lambda Chapter in Dayton. He has also chaired multiple national fraternity programs, including Project Alpha, which mentors young men on responsibility. As a voter advocate for the "A Voteless People is a Hopeless People" campaign, he helped register more than 100 voters for the 2024 presidential election.



Elmore is a member of the American Society of Military Comptrollers, the DLA Transaction Service Voice of the Workforce, and board president of the Alpha Way Foundation. His leadership has earned him numerous awards, including the Dayton Convention Bureau Ambassador Award, the DLA Superior Performance Award, and the J-8 Outstanding Achievement in Financial Operations Award.

A devoted member of Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in Dayton, Elmore serves on the Deacon Board and Men's Chorus and has previously contributed to the Pastor Search Committee and Credit Union Audit Committee. In his free time, he enjoys mentoring young people, golfing, and spending time with family and friends.

Elmore met his wife, Caye, at Central State University. They are the proud parents of two daughters, Elana and Erynn, and their entire family are graduates of HBCUs.



# Dr. Frederick A. Aikens '88

**HONOREE**

Dr. Fred Aikens, a Cleveland native, is an educator, business leader, and elected official with decades of experience in management and academic leadership.

Dr. Aikens attended Cleveland's West Technical High School, where he was inspired by a speech from Dr. Arthur E. Thomas, then Vice President of Academic Affairs at Central State University. He enrolled at Central State in 1984, earning a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science in 1988.

That same year, Dr. Aikens joined PepsiCo, launching a career in the quick-service restaurant industry. He held leadership roles at Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and KFC, including assistant manager, general manager, and multi-unit area coach. Over time, he focused on team development and employee advancement, eventually overseeing eight locations with more than \$15 million in annual revenue. While working, he pursued further education, earning a Master of Management from Antioch University McGregor in 2003.

In 2009, Dr. Aikens began teaching as an adjunct faculty member at Central State University's Dayton location while working on his Doctor of Management at the University of Phoenix's School of Advanced Studies. He transitioned to full-time academia in 2012, joining Central State's Department of Business Administration. He served as assistant, associate, and full professor before becoming department chair, a position he held for six years. Under his leadership, the University earned accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) in 2015.

Dr. Aikens later worked as an administrative fellow in the Office of Academic Affairs and completed leadership programs through the Southern Ohio Council of Higher Education and the



American Academic Leadership Institute. He also coordinated the College Credit Plus program and directed the CSU Honors Program. In 2019, he served as interim dean of the College of Business, leading efforts to establish Central State's Master of Business Administration program, before holding his current role as dean.

Beyond academia, Dr. Aikens is active in public service. He was elected an at-large councilman for Huber Heights, Ohio, representing more than 43,000 residents. Previously, he served on the city's Culture and Diversity Citizen Action Commission. He is also a member of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, where he chairs scholarship and district committees.

Dr. Aikens and his wife, Dr. Theresa Aikens, have been married for more than 33 years. They have two children and two grandchildren. In his free time, he enjoys cooking, golfing, and spending time with family and friends.



# Tyrone E. Nadir '92

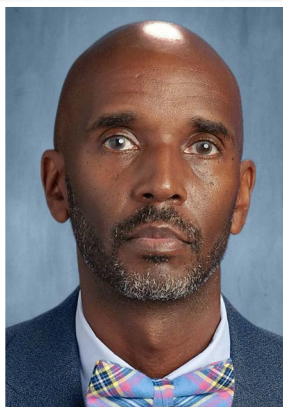
HONOREE

Tyrone E. Nadir is the managing director of elementary education at KIPP Columbus, where he oversees the network's elementary schools. In this role, he manages, develops, and coaches school leadership teams to meet school and regional goals.

Before joining KIPP Columbus, Nadir spent 24 years with Trotwood-Madison City Schools, serving as a third- and fourth-grade teacher, elementary school principal, middle school principal, and director of pupil services. As director of pupil services, he oversaw student attendance, nursing and health services, special education, student safety, and homelessness initiatives.

A native of Saginaw, Michigan, Nadir earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and finance from Central State University in 1992. While working full-time at the University's Hallie Q. Brown Library, he pursued and earned a second bachelor's degree in elementary education. He later obtained a master's degree in educational leadership and administration from Wright State University in 2001.

Nadir serves as board president of the Wright Way Foundation, a nonprofit organization that mentors young people and promotes a healthy, active lifestyle through sports. In his free time, he enjoys coaching, playing basketball, and mentoring youth. He lives in Englewood, Ohio, with his wife and two children.





# Angela L. Williams '92

**HONOREE**

Angela L. Williams is the president and co-founder of DetailXPerts Franchise Systems LLC, a pioneering eco-friendly cleaning franchise that has revolutionized the automotive and commercial cleaning industries. As a leader in the green technology space, Williams is driving the company toward a goal of 1,100 franchises and 30,000 jobs in the next decade.

Williams was born in Tunica, Mississippi, and, at age 2, moved with her family to Detroit, Michigan, where she graduated from Murray Wright High School.

She earned a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Central State University in 1992. Williams continued her academic journey, receiving a Master of Business Administration in International Business from Anderson University in 2000, followed by a master's degree in information management from Syracuse University in 2004.

Williams's professional career spans both public and private sectors, where she has developed expertise in finance, technology, and management. She served at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), managing a \$500 million IT budget, where her initiatives improved data integrity by 30% and operational efficiency. She was recognized with the Commander's Award for Civilian Service for her contributions.

In the private sector, Williams held the position of vice president/director of Professional Services at Fiserv Galaxy. There, she led a team of 25 professionals, implementing Lean Six Sigma methodologies to exceed profit and efficiency goals. Her leadership style, which focuses on fostering collaboration and high-performing teams, has been instrumental in driving operational excellence.



Beyond her professional work, Williams is dedicated to mentorship and sustainability. She co-hosts the More Details Please podcast, where she inspires entrepreneurs and leaders to achieve their goals. She also advocates for community impact and works actively to support the next generation of business leaders.

Williams has been recognized with several prestigious awards for her contributions to business, including the Commander's Award for Civilian Service and accolades for her leadership in the franchise and sustainability sectors.

Currently, Williams resides in Chattanooga, Tennessee, with her husband, Emmanuel Williams, and their son, Emmanuel Jr., a 2015 graduate of Michigan State University with a degree in Mandarin and Creative Writing.



# Dr. Alvin Level '94

## HONOREE

Dr. Alvin E. Level is an educator, musician, and administrator with three decades of experience serving the African American community.

A native of Saginaw, Michigan, Dr. Level began his career at his alma mater, Saginaw Buena Vista High School, before moving to metropolitan Detroit, where he built acclaimed music programs in the River Rouge, Inkster, and Oak Park school districts. He also held leadership roles, including dean of students (River Rouge, Inkster), assistant principal (Inkster), director of a performing arts academy (Inkster), and director of performing arts (River Rouge).

In 2014, Dr. Level pursued his lifelong dream of leading a collegiate marching band at a Historically Black College or University.” He relocated to Kentucky to serve as associate professor of music and director of bands at Kentucky State University, later chairing the College of Humanities and Performing Arts for four years. His leadership and dedication led him back to Central State, where he now serves as director of bands for the Invincible Marching Marauders.

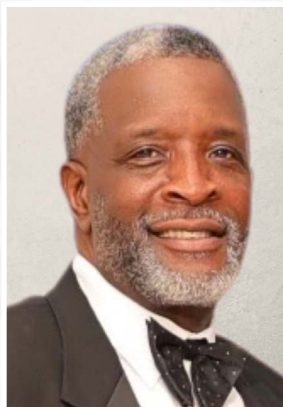
Dr. Level earned a bachelor’s degree in music education from Central State in 1994. He later obtained a master’s degree in educational administration from Saginaw Valley State University, a second master’s degree in music education from Eastern Kentucky University, and a doctorate in higher educational leadership from Morehead State University.

A highly sought-after speaker, clinician, and adjudicator, Dr. Level has helped more than 300 students earn music scholarships, totaling more than \$7 million. He is the only Central State music department graduate to serve as a collegiate director of bands.

Committed to service, Dr. Level volunteered extensively at Kentucky State.

His accolades include:

- 2021 Kentucky State Band, ESPN Division II Band of the Year
- 2020 Director of Bands Spotlight, Kappa Kappa Psi National Band Fraternity
- 2019 Kentucky State Band, HBCU Digest Band of the Year
- 2019 Kentucky State University Thorobred of the Month



- 2018 Kentucky State University Faculty of the Year
- 2012 Oak Park Schools Teacher of the Month (June, November)
- 2011 Inkster Public Schools Outstanding Administrator
- 2009 Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inkster Alumnae Chapter Teacher of the Year
- 2009 Top Ladies of Distinction, Inkster Chapter Teacher of the Year
- 2008 Wayne County Talent in Teaching Resolution
- 2007 Inkster Public Schools Teacher of the Year
- 1997 Buena Vista Public Schools Teacher of the Year
- 1997 Phi Delta Kappa, Saginaw Alumnae Chapter Teacher of the Year
- 1997 Saginaw County Board of Commissioners Who's Who in Saginaw County
- 1997 Crystal Apple Award, State of Michigan

In addition to his mother, Dr. Level credits his success to his mentors at Central State, including Dr. James B. Oliver, Dr. William Caldwell, Dr. William Denza, Sylvia Kelley, and “Momma” Watson.

He resides in Richmond, Kentucky, with his wife of more than 30 years, Churi (Piphus) Level, a 1992 Central State graduate and former captain of the Dancing Belles. Their late son, Donovan, was a music educator in Detroit Public Schools. Their daughter, Imani, a CSU graduate and former Dancing Belle, is a clinical psychologist in Dayton, Ohio. Their youngest son, Jordan, and his wife are Kentucky State University graduates, and Jordan teaches physical education in Lexington, Kentucky. Dr. Level is the proud grandfather of two grandchildren, Laaxiyah and Shalom.



# Latoya Turner '09

HONOREE

Latoya Turner, a 2009 graduate of Central State University, is a dedicated educator, author, and filmmaker committed to advancing literacy and promoting HBCUs. Born and raised in Detroit, she now resides in Cincinnati, where she is an active member of the Central State University Cincinnati STAR Alumni Chapter.

Turner is the founder of Brown Hands Literacy, a nonprofit that empowers youth and families through Black children's literature, HBCU-focused literacy experiences, and film. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education from Central State and a Master of Arts in Reading and Literacy from Central Michigan University. After 15 years of teaching in Detroit, Maryland, and Cincinnati, she transitioned in 2022 to The Literacy Lab, where she serves as a Leading Men Fellowship literacy specialist. In this role, she mentors Black and brown men ages 18-24 working as preschool tutors, helping diversify the teacher pipeline and prepare young students for kindergarten. In 2024, she partnered with Central State's Department of Professional Education and Music and TEAP-C to host the third annual Striving Educational Excellence Conference.

Turner's passion for literacy and community engagement extends beyond the classroom. She has written and self-published two children's books, "Brown Hands, White Sand" and "Brown Hands, Black Schools HBCUs." In 2024, she wrote, produced, and directed an animated film adaptation of "Brown Hands, Black Schools HBCUs," which was showcased at the White House Initiative National HBCU Week Conference and the ESSENCE Film Festival. The film is available on Prime Video and HBCU GO TV, and Turner has hosted multiple free screenings, including one at Central State.

Under her leadership, Brown Hands Literacy has donated more than 5,000 Black children's books, provided literacy resources to over 4,000 families, and hosted events such as the HBCU



Literacy Summer Jam, FC Cincinnati Juneteenth HBCU Send-Off, and various author and community engagements. The organization has received grants from United Way of Greater Cincinnati, Hamilton County, and Major League Soccer's FC Cincinnati.

Turner's impact has been recognized with numerous awards, including the 2024 Distinguished Leader of Character Award from Dayton Public Schools Office of Females of Color and the 2024 Greater Cincinnati National Action Network Emerging Young Adult Award. She was also featured in AT&T's 2023 Dream in Black campaign and on the TV show "All American: Homecoming." A board member of ArtsConnect, she currently has an exhibit at the Cincinnati Museum Center highlighting her work.

Turner continues to coach, write, produce, and advocate for literacy and education. She is also a proud mother to her 4-year-old son, August Stewart, who already shares her Marauder spirit.



# Alumni Achievement Hall of Fame

## 2024

Evelyn Garrette Jackson '69  
Suzanne F. Stantley '71  
Dr. Jane R. Caulton '78  
Gonzalo J. Rodriguez, Jr., M.D. '79  
Samuel P. Martin '81  
Cronicle A. Jackson '83  
Phillip Black '86  
Manuel M. Brooks '97  
Kimberly Johnson '98  
Dawn Floyd '99  
Wayne Knox '08

## 2023

James Hill, Jr. '64 (p)  
Joyce Eldridge-Howard '65  
Phillip D. Ayers '72  
Edwin H. Lloyd '78  
Keith Aaron Perkins '82  
Malva A. Alexander '84  
Dwayne M. Daniel '86  
Dr. Pamela M. Hodge '90  
Brandon Hayes '94  
Angela K. Davis '95

## 2022

Ralph L. McNeal, Sr. '57 (p)  
Richard Austin, Esq. '65  
Betty M. Sanders '65  
Bill C. Littlejohn, Esq. '69  
A. Christopher Lyons, MBA, '81  
Bobby J. Bogan, Jr. '86  
Dr. Belinda Tubbs-Wallace '91  
Rob Murphy '96  
Oyango A. Snell, Esq. '98

## 2021

Gary L. Lawson '73  
Larry Kelly '83  
Sandra Jaribu Hill '87  
Christopher Saunders '90  
Michael "Blue" Williams

## 2020

Gladys Gunn '59  
David R. Smith, Esq. '69  
Dr. Charlla D. Allen '78  
Marya Rutherford-Long '78  
Eric D. High, M.D. '91  
Bryan "Scottie" Irving '91

## 2019

Reginald Elwood Howard Butts '53 (p)  
Dr. Robert L. Bowles, Jr. '61  
Gary A. Dowell '74  
Gillis L. Bowden '77  
Peter C. Gibbs '86  
Natalia S. Harris '97

## 2018

Gonzalo J. Rodriguez, Sr. '52 (p)  
David A. Lister '62 (p)  
William H. Wiley '63  
Brad M. Beasley '73  
Deborah Perkins '73  
Marcella A. Sampson '74  
Lisa M. Peterson '87

## 2017

Harold L. Flowers '59  
Dr. James E. Gordon, '73  
Alvin R. Scott, Sr. (p) '69  
Dr. Thomas E. Simpson, '65  
Dr. Hazel Symonette '68  
Timothy L. Tramble, Sr. '93

## 2016

Shendorah Fisher, '00 & '03  
Derrick Lee Foward '90  
James N. Joyner '62  
Rev. Dr. William Carver Lennard '63  
Dennis J. McNeal, '66  
Rosie A. Turner '81

## 2015

Marsha J. Bayless '73  
Richard R. Boykin '90  
John Benjamin Brown '62  
Edwin R. Clay '69  
Sandi Lynn '68  
Dr. Delors Edgar Magee, Jr. '59  
Willie A. Terrell, Jr. '73  
Ethel M. Washington '69  
Roland Winburn '71

## 2014

Caleb Brown, Jr. '70  
Terri Cope-Walton '96  
Tyrone E. Dickerson '65  
Dr. David "Fred" McBagonluri '96  
Jeffery J. Mims, Jr. '73  
Dr. Dennis W. Weatherby '82  
Dennis L. Wells '75

## 2013

Darryl T. Owens '59  
Kenneth S. Hudson '61  
Mildred C. Joyner '71  
Shirley L. Mays '76

## 2012

Charles E. Delane '60  
Curtis Owens '62

## 2011

Barbara Saunders '60  
Enrique Riggs '68  
Leon W. Tucker '72

## 2010

Yvette Coursey '63  
W. Marvin Dulaney '72  
Joseph H. Hill '62  
Charles Whitehead '61

## 2009

Nancy Travis Bolden '48  
The Honorable Nolan B. Dawkins '69  
Fred J. Grigsby, Jr. '69  
Betty Kennedy Shepherd '71

## 2008

Doris Nicholson '51  
Felton Page '69  
Samuel Williams '49 (p)

## 2007

Joyce Beatty '72  
Edward T. Dixon '54  
Carolyn Farrow-Garland '70

## 2006

Richard Clay Dixon '63  
Omarosa O. Manigault '96  
Michael L. Nelson, Sr. '72  
Frances "Kay" Welch '52

## 2005

Dolores R. Alston '55  
William J. Waterman '52 (p)

## 2004

Gary Allen '67  
John W. Garland '71  
Kwame James C. McDonald '54

## 2003

Robert L. Hylton '54  
Louis G. Long '68

## 2002

Mildred Jones Henderson '67  
Harry G. Johns '47  
Edith Olivia Washington  
Johnson '59 (p)  
Thomas E. Kelley, Sr. '42



# Alumni Achievement Hall of Fame continued

## 2001

Curtis Symonds '78  
Alfonso Wilson '48

## 2000

Ronald Eugene Cosey '71  
James A. Elam '54  
Janette Hoston Harris '62  
Donis Eugene Toller, Sr. '60

## 1999

Dixie J. Allen '78  
Albert L. Harrington '58  
John T. Jackson '69  
Anthony "Tony" Williams '54  
Joey D. Williams '88

## 1998

Gordon L. Berry '55  
Bernida L. Thompson '68

## 1997

Otha N. Brown, Jr. '52  
Bryant Crawford, Jr. '50 (p)  
M. Delmar Edwards '48  
Richard H. Shepherd, Jr. '71  
Audrey L. Norman-Turner '68  
Gloria Taylor Towers '54

## 1996

E. Eugene Brown '72  
Theresa A. Check '74  
Alex B. DarJean '75

## 1995

MacArthur DeShazer, Sr. '71  
Earl H. Duval, Jr. '69  
Clifford E. Gates, Sr. '48  
Lawrence B. Mixon, Sr. '71  
William Ross, Jr. '48 (p)  
James H. Sangster '59  
Lawrence J. Turner '56

## 1994

Calvin E. Davis '50  
Jacqueline G. Davis '77  
Jane Frazier Dixon '57  
James Curtis Joyner '71  
Aaron Lowery '58  
Blanche I. Mayo '76

## 1993

Michael O. Ajisafe '64  
David G. Carter '65  
Thomas J. Craft, Sr. '48  
George C. Dumas '59  
Terrence L. Glass '68  
Judy L. Greene McGill '72  
Charles H. Harrell '69  
Maurice L. Reed '50  
James C. Renick '70

## 1992

Fillmore Freeman '57  
Dwight L. Johnson '66  
Sylvester G. Lee '57 (p)  
Theodore D. Toles '73  
Elliott A. Treadwell '69  
Carolyn Watts-Allen '69

## 1991

Donald K. Anthony '56  
William A. Dupree '56  
James E. Farmer '67  
Deborah K. Brown Gaines '68  
Joseph E. Johnson '57  
Melvin A. Johnson, Jr. '50  
Fredric H. Leigh '63  
Betty K. Pinkney '56  
Chester C. Pryor, II '51  
Joshua I. Smith '63  
James A. Wright '60

## 1990

Vernon N. Ford '70  
Raymond V. Haysbert, Sr. '47  
Bettye Torrey Oldham '56

## 1989

Carneice Brown-White '50  
H. Douglas Covington '57  
Jay Crosby '50  
Jerry Cummings '63  
Dennis Dowdell, Jr. '67  
Delbert L. Flowers '56  
Ronald L. Garnett '67  
Lathardus Goggins '54  
Ronald E. Goldsberry '64  
Charles A. Green '61  
Edward D. Irons '48  
William L. Mallory '55  
June M. Moorehead Marable '48  
Charles Moody, Jr. '54  
Walter G. Sellers, Sr. '51  
Fred Sheffey '50  
Bernice Sumlin '48  
O'Neil D. Swanson '53  
Arthur E. Thomas '62

(p) Inducted Posthumously



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Harry E. Groves, Esq. ....	1965-1968
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Dr. Lewis A. Jackson .....	1970-1972
Dr. Lionel H. Newsom .....	1972-1985
Dr. Arthur E. Thomas .....	1985-1995
John W. Garland, Esq. ....	1997-2012
Dr. Cynthia Jackson-Hammond .....	2012-2020
Dr. Jack Thomas .....	2020-2023
Dr. Morakinyo A.O.Kuti .....	2024-Present

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Dr. Serita Garth '97

Ralph N. Hendricks '86  
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Alissa Paoella  
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Harold Melia  
Dr. Craig Schluttenhofer  
Dr. John Brendan Shaw  
Dr. Joshua Singer  
Rosie Turner

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National Pan-Hellenic Council



# Alma Mater

Lyrics by Dr. Charles H. Wesley

Music by Mrs. Annye R. Dawson '47

**-I-**

O Central dear, we sing of thee,  
Maker of Men who're free.  
We build in deeds thy greater name,  
We spread thy lasting fame.

**-Chorus-**

O Central mine, we'll sing of thee,  
Truth and Right our song shall be.  
Our Alma Mater guides us and it's great  
For God, For Central, For State!

**-II-**

O Alma Mater, Hail to thee,  
Builder of Women to be.  
We build for thee in heart and mind.  
We seek thy grace divine.

**-Chorus-**

**-III-**

O speak to us and we shall hear  
Thy voice so near, so clear.  
And as we sail the future's sea,  
Through the years we'll sing of thee.

**-Chorus-**





*For God,  
For Central,  
For State!*

138 Years of Academic Excellence



CENTRAL  
STATE UNIVERSITY