

*School of Law*

2025

Hooding and  
Commencement  
Ceremony

MAY 15, 2025





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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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# Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD

*President, Creighton University*



Dear Creighton University Graduate,

Congratulations on reaching this remarkable milestone. Through hard work, perseverance and resilience, you have not just reached the end of your studies but the beginning of a new chapter in your life.

Commencement is an incredibly special time, and it is yours to cherish in the company of your family, friends and supporters. As a member of the Class of 2025, you carry with you the hopes and dreams of those who have supported you as well as the legacy of those who have come before you. I am proud to count myself among the many individuals who have watched you embrace the challenges of higher education and become all the stronger and more compassionate because of it.

There is so much to look forward to as you continue your journey. But today, I encourage you to reflect on all that has brought you to this moment. Your academic rigor, service to the community and commitment to a better world—these are rare and extraordinary achievements. You now stand among a select few who have dared to pursue excellence with courage and heart.

During your time at Creighton, you embraced the unknown and stepped out of your comfort zone. You met new people, explored new places, and, most importantly, pursued truth in all its forms. I implore you to keep that passion for discovery alive and hold with you the lessons of your Jesuit, Catholic education as you become a leader the future needs.

As you join the Creighton alumni family of more than 80,000, remember that the world will not simply come to you. It is your responsibility to lead with clarity of purpose and fullness of soul. Keep seeking truth, embracing discomfort and creating change not just as a graduate—but as a Creighton graduate.

May God bless you and your family as you celebrate today. You have earned this moment—and now, the world awaits your light. Go forward with courage and conviction, knowing you will be a Bluejay, always.

Sincerely,

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD





# Order of Exercises

## PROCESSION

### MACE BEARER

**Sarah Gloden Carlson, JD**  
*Associate Dean and Professor*

### GRAND MARSHAL'S OPENING REMARKS

**Yvonnda A. Summers, JD**  
*Associate Dean and Special Faculty*

### PROVOST'S WELCOME

**Mardell A. Wilson, EdD, RDN**  
*Provost*

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

**Jayrald B. Mercene**  
*Class of 2025*

### INVOCATION

**Rev. Nicholas J. C. Santos, SJ, PhD**  
*Associate Professor,  
Heider College of Business*

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD**  
*President*

### DEAN'S MESSAGE

**Joshua P. Fershée, JD**  
*Dean, Professor of Law*

### SENIOR CLASS SPEAKER AND PRESENTATION OF THE ERIC PEARSON OUTSTANDING FACULTY MEMBER AWARD

**Nneka L. Jones**  
*Class of 2025*

### THE ERIC PEARSON OUTSTANDING FACULTY MEMBER AWARD

**David P. Weber, JD**  
*Professor of Law*

## BOARD AUTHORIZATION

Presented by  
*Board of Trustees Member*

## DEGREE CONFERRAL STATEMENT

**Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD**  
*President*

## PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES FOR EARNED DEGREES

**Joshua P. Fershée, JD**  
*Dean, Professor of Law*

Names read by  
**David P. Weber, JD**  
*Professor of Law*

Hooding of candidates by  
**Kristy A. Côté, JD**  
*Associate Professor*

**Craig W. Dallon, JD**  
*Professor of Law*

**Leigh A. Ellis, JD**  
*Assistant Professor*

**Kendra H. Fershée, JD**  
*Professor of Law*

**Victoria J. Haneman, JD, LLM**  
*Associate Dean and  
Professor of Law*

**Michael J. Kelly, JD, LLM**  
*Professor of Law*

**Carol C. Knoepfler, JD**  
*Associate Professor*

**R. Collin Mangrum, JD, SJD**  
*Professor of Law*

**Daniel L. Real, JD**  
*Associate Professor*

**Joy M. Suder, JD**  
*Director, Juvenile Justice Clinic*

**Larry L. Teply, JD, LLM**  
*Professor of Law*

**Diane K. Uchimiya, JD, LLM**  
*Director, Abrahams Legal Clinic*

## TURNING OF THE TASSEL

**Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD**  
*President*

## STAGE PARTY, FACULTY, AND GRADUATE RECESSIONAL



## Mission Statement

At Creighton School of Law, our mission is to provide the men and women of our student body intellectual challenge, academic rigor and an opportunity to develop a foundation of moral values for lifelong service in the law, to offer an environment to our faculty which encourages personal growth and scholarly achievement and to continue our long-established tradition of service to the Bar and citizens of the community.



# CANDIDATES FOR EARNED DEGREES

Joshua P. Fershée, JD, Dean

## JURIS DOCTOR

**Elsa Lauren Abrahamson ♦**  
Van Meter, Iowa  
*Master of Business Administration*

**Valerie Ann Aguilar**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Aleigha Lynne**  
Lesmeister Alexander  
Berthoud, Colorado

**Nicholas Robert Anderson**  
Sandy, Utah

**Matthew Thomas Badell**  
Dover, Delaware

**Ryeson Peter Berne**  
Pine, Colorado

**Morgen Rose Bessmer**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Madisyn Cathleen Bigler**  
Springfield, Missouri

**Nicolas Peter Bradley**  
Phoenix, Arizona

**Sasha Lauren Brun-Wibaux**  
Bradenton, Florida

**Zoe Ellen Burt**  
magna cum laude  
Naples, Florida

**Erin Marie Byers Ware**  
Woodbine, Iowa

**Antonyo Byrd, Jr.**  
Kansas City, Missouri

**Darby Cahill**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Cameron Daniel Carney**  
cum laude  
La Vista, Nebraska

**Kristopher Adam Carter**  
Oro Valley, Arizona

**Augusta S. Chirbas**  
Kenosha, Wisconsin

**Caleb Allan Chmelka**  
summa cum laude  
Council Bluffs, Iowa

**Anna Jane Clark**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Iesha Holgado Comia**  
Portland, Oregon

**Kailey Elizabeth Coughran**  
Friendswood, Texas

**Sierra Nichole Crees**  
Seward, Nebraska

**Gracie Rae Culp**  
cum laude  
St. Louis, Missouri

**Christopher Alexander**  
Andrew Daniels  
Canton, Ohio

**Austin Guillermo Dominguez**  
Pleasant Grove, Utah

**Elizabeth Carolyn Zoe Dunn**  
cum laude  
Lawrence, Kansas

**Joseph Michael Ernatt**  
cum laude  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Hailey Ann Fagundes**  
San Jose, California

**Cale R. Ficken**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Cade Christopher Fries**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Shannon Nicole Goaley**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Harrison Matthews Griggs**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Brady Austin Hackney**  
Corydon, Iowa

**Morgan Ashley Hager**  
Pueblo, Colorado

**Paige Hansen Hartkoorn**  
Denver, Colorado

**Jonathan Elway Hastings**  
North Platte, Nebraska

**Rachel Noel Hearn**  
La Vista, Nebraska

**Grace Noelle Heinert**  
Papillion, Nebraska

**Graham Christian Heisey**  
Elkhorn, Nebraska

**Addyson Hergert**  
Gretna, Nebraska

**Cameron Michael Hite**  
Lenexa, Kansas

**Trenton Eugene Hoeft**  
Holdrege, Nebraska

**Blaire Elise Hoeme**  
Cheney, Kansas

**Anton Bisbjerg Hutchinson**  
Glen Ellyn, Illinois

**Reneé E. Jackson-Armendáriz**  
El Paso, Texas

**Abigail Marie Janeczek**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Nneka Laura Jones**  
Chicago, Illinois

**Amaris Yasmeen Justice**  
Pipersville, Pennsylvania

**Rachel Christine Keenan**  
Great Bend, Kansas

**Reiley M. Kirwan**  
Kansas City, Kansas

**John Kenneth Knutsen**  
cum laude  
Frankfort, Michigan

**Ryan Thomas Koch**  
Gilead, Nebraska

**Stacey Tuckett Koller**  
Payson, Utah

**Maxwell Louis Lamberty**  
magna cum laude  
Lincoln, Nebraska

**Regan Elizabeth Lavalée ♦**  
cum laude  
Highlands Ranch, Colorado  
*Master of Business Administration*

**Micheal Zachery Lee**  
Second Lieutenant, U.S. Air Force  
magna cum laude  
Salt Lake City, Utah

**Thomas Dean Lindblom, Jr.**  
Sioux City, Iowa

**Shaina Nicole Looker**  
Bakersfield, California

**Thomas Anthony Lukaszewicz**  
cum laude  
La Vista, Nebraska

**Moriah Elizabeth-Ellen Mack**  
San Antonio, Texas

**Sydney Claire Mallum**  
cum laude  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Joseph Anthony Masi ♦**  
magna cum laude  
Fort Collins, Colorado  
*Master of Business Administration*

**Zachary Palmer Matson**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Tasia Matsuda**  
Kahului, Hawaii

**Christian Andrew Arthur Mays**  
Southfield, Michigan

**Jayrald Steven Batallador**  
Mercene  
Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands

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Minneapolis, Minnesota

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Fort Lauderdale, Florida

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Centennial, Colorado

**Colin Robert Mott**  
Colonial Heights, Virginia

**Patrick Donald Mruz**  
magna cum laude  
Bellevue, Nebraska

**Lindsey Olivia Muraskin**  
summa cum laude  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Elisabeth Nicole Nagle**  
Purcellville, Virginia

**Sloane M. Nicoletti-Watson ♦**  
Cato, New York  
*Master of Science, Government  
Organization and Leadership*

**Allyse Maryn Epifania Noel**  
cum laude  
Chico, California

**Allee Grace Norvell**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Stephanie Lauren Oliver**  
San Antonio, Texas

**James Thomas Olsen**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Brooklyn Nicole Olson**  
cum laude  
Ronan, Montana

**Hannah Nikole Osborn**  
Council Bluffs, Iowa

**Thomas William Owens**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Sean Thomas Pallardy**  
Raymore, Missouri

**Makayla Susan Pardun**  
O'Neill, Nebraska

**Adrian Sky Pascotto**  
Naples, Florida

**McGrane Pledger**  
Walnut Creek, California

**Francesca Rae Pollina**  
Kansas City, Missouri

**Jonathan Michael Rada**  
Papillion, Nebraska

**Eliana Rochelle Reiss**  
Omaha, Nebraska

**Julyssa Lissette Rocha**  
cum laude  
Gothenburg, Nebraska

**Corbin Scott Ruth ♦**  
Malcolm, Nebraska  
*Master of Business Administration*



Kaitlyn P. Ryan  
magna cum laude  
*Gretna, Nebraska*

Mitchell John Shukis  
*Papillion, Nebraska*

Cameron Marquice Smith  
*Amarillo, Texas*

Ethan Andrew Sotak  
*Gilbert, Arizona*

Fionna Dawn Sparrow  
*Winfield, Iowa*

Henry H. Sugden IV  
*Woodstock, Illinois*

Jack Henry Suter  
summa cum laude  
*Omaha, Nebraska*

Kamille Christine Sweenie  
cum laude  
*Brush, Colorado*

Jacob Elroy Taute  
*Cedar Park, Texas*

Anthony G. Thies  
summa cum laude  
*Bellevue, Nebraska*

Connor James Thompson ♦  
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*Master of Science, Government*  
*Organization and Leadership*

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cum laude  
*Mason City, Iowa*

Easton Scot Thorn  
*Spirit Lake, Iowa*

Tyler W. Timm  
*Omaha, Nebraska*

Caleb Joshua Timmerman  
*Aberdeen, South Dakota*

Emily Jean Todd  
cum laude  
*Glenwood, Iowa*

Sedona Lynn Valdez  
*Fishers, Indiana*

Renata Valquier Chávez  
*Bennington, Nebraska*

Byron G. Warby  
*St. George, Utah*

Isabella Maria Washka  
magna cum laude  
*Argyle, Texas*

Alexander Ryan Wells  
cum laude  
*Funk, Nebraska*

Grace Elizabeth Wheeler  
cum laude  
*Prairie Village, Kansas*

Chandler Fitzgerald Wichman  
*Omaha, Nebraska*

Jordan Rae Woolman ♦  
*Clovis, California*  
*Master of Science, Government*  
*Organization and Leadership*

# Traditions of Creighton



## Creighton Seal

The Creighton University seal includes elements representing the Creighton family, Creighton's Jesuit tradition and the Omaha Archdiocese.

The gold stripes on the red field, in the upper left-hand quadrant of the shield, come from the family coat of arms of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). The lion rampant comes from the Creighton family coat of arms, and the three seashells on a field of white and red sable come from the Wareham family coat of arms—paying homage to Creighton University's founding families. The design for the shield's final quadrant, in the lower left, comes from the coat of arms of the Archdiocese of Omaha. The starburst behind the shield comes from the seal of the Society of Jesus.



## Ceremonial Mace

In the Middle Ages, the mace was a club used in battle and carried by a bodyguard to defend a person of authority. Over the years, it began to lose its warlike image and became a symbol of peaceful leadership.

At an academic institution, the mace is the symbol of the legal and chartered authority of the leadership to whom the board of trustees has delegated authority. When the ceremonial mace is present, the authority of the University is present. Use of the mace is reserved for occasions of outstanding importance, and it is an honor to bear the mace.

The Creighton University mace was designed and fashioned by Brian K. Besack, operations supervisor of the University's carpenter shop, at the invitation of then president, the Rev. John P. Schlegel, SJ, to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the University.

Using a cherry wood baluster from a long-abandoned staircase in the attic of Creighton Hall, the oldest building on Creighton's campus, Besack designed and fashioned the shaft, head and foot of the mace. Each facet of the nine-sided head displays a bronze, gold-plated medallion bearing the name and founding date of the University's schools and colleges. Its foot is sheathed in gold-plated brass, and cradled in its shaft rests the official seal of the University. At its top, the mace is crowned with a three-dimensional blue and gold medallion symbol of the Society of Jesus.





## Credo of Creighton

Creighton, a Jesuit, Catholic university, is convinced that the hope of humanity is in the ability of men and women to seek truths and values essential to human life. Creighton aims to lead all of its members in discovering and embracing the challenge of using their intelligence and freedom in a way that values all persons. We therefore profess, and pledge our commitment to, the following creed:

*We believe* in God, our loving Creator.

*We believe* each person, created in God's image, is called to be God's child, and therefore possesses intrinsic value as a human being. This includes all persons and excludes any form of discrimination.

*We believe* that the deepest purpose of each person is to enrich and share life through love and reverence for the human community. This motivates our open and continuous pursuit of truth. For this reason, we foster reverence for life in all of its human potential.

*We believe* in supporting all persons in their responsible contributions to the community through family, social interactions and all life endeavors.

*We believe* that we must strive for a human community based on justice, mutual respect and concern. In this context, we must cultivate care for our planet and its resources.

*We believe* that laws exist for the benefit and well-being of individual persons, that legal systems must express the common good, and that governments must be respectful and open to thoughtful criticism by intelligent and responsible citizens.

*We believe* that the laws of justice and love must regulate the personal, family, economic and global components of our lives if civilization is to progress.

*We believe* in the teachings and example of Jesus Christ.

## Academic Attire

The scholastic dress worn at academic ceremonies is a customary practice which dates back to the Middle Ages when people dressed according to class distinction. The clergy was the literate class, thus, the dress worn by scholars was that of the church—gowns. Hoods were also worn because the buildings where scholars lived and studied were often cold.

The academic dress worn today by the graduating law students and the faculty members identifies the institution from which they received, or will receive, their degrees and also the nature of the degrees received.

The gowns worn by today's Juris Doctor degree candidates are black, and are marked by three horizontal velvet bars on each sleeve. The greatest degree of symbolism, however, is shown by the hood. The doctor's hood has a purple velvet border marking the law degree received, and is lined with blue and white, the colors of Creighton University. Similarly, the colors of the gowns and the colors of the hoods worn by the faculty mark the institution from which they received their degrees.





CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY

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\*Creighton alumnus/alumna

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*Dean, School of Pharmacy  
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*Vice Provost, Student Success*

\*Creighton alumnus/alumna





# Endowed Chairs

## SCHOOL OF LAW

### **A.A. and Ethel Yossem Endowed Chair in Legal Ethics (1991)**

R. Collin Mangrum, JD, SJD

### **Catherine Mahern Endowed Chair in Clinical Legal Education (2001)**

Diane K. Uchimiya, JD, LL.M.

### **McGrath North Mullin and Kratz Endowed Chair in Business Law (2006)**

Edward A. Morse, JD

### **Senator Allen A. Sekt Endowed Chair in Law (2009)**

Michael J. Kelly, JD, LL.M.

Larry L. Teply, JD





Edward Creighton



Mary Lucretia Creighton



John Creighton



Sarah Emily Creighton

## History of Creighton University

Edward and Mary Lucretia Creighton, along with Edward's brother, John, settled in Omaha in the 1850s. John married Mary Lucretia's sister, Sarah Emily Wareham, in 1868, and the four are considered the founders of Creighton University. Edward's work with the transcontinental telegraph and freighting, ranching, railroading and banking became a major force in the city's economic development. The two brothers were widely known for their business enterprises, and the two couples were also widely regarded for their philanthropy.

Edward died in 1874, and his widow included \$100,000 in her will to establish Creighton College in memory of her husband. Mary Lucretia died in 1876, and her executors, who included her brother-in-law John, purchased 6.2 acres of land at the northwest corner of what is currently 24th and California streets. The land and additional securities were transferred to Bishop James O'Connor of Omaha, and construction began on the school.

The bishop asked the Jesuits to operate the school and the first president, Roman A. Shaffel, S.J., arrived in Omaha in late 1877; the school opened on Sept. 2, 1878. One priest, two scholastics, a layman and a laywoman formed the faculty. The school began with 120 students ranging in age from 6 to 30. On Aug. 14, 1879, Bishop O'Connor surrendered his trust to the Jesuits, who incorporated "The Creighton University" under Nebraska law. Much of the initial teaching was below the collegiate level; in 1891, Creighton University awarded its first baccalaureate degree.

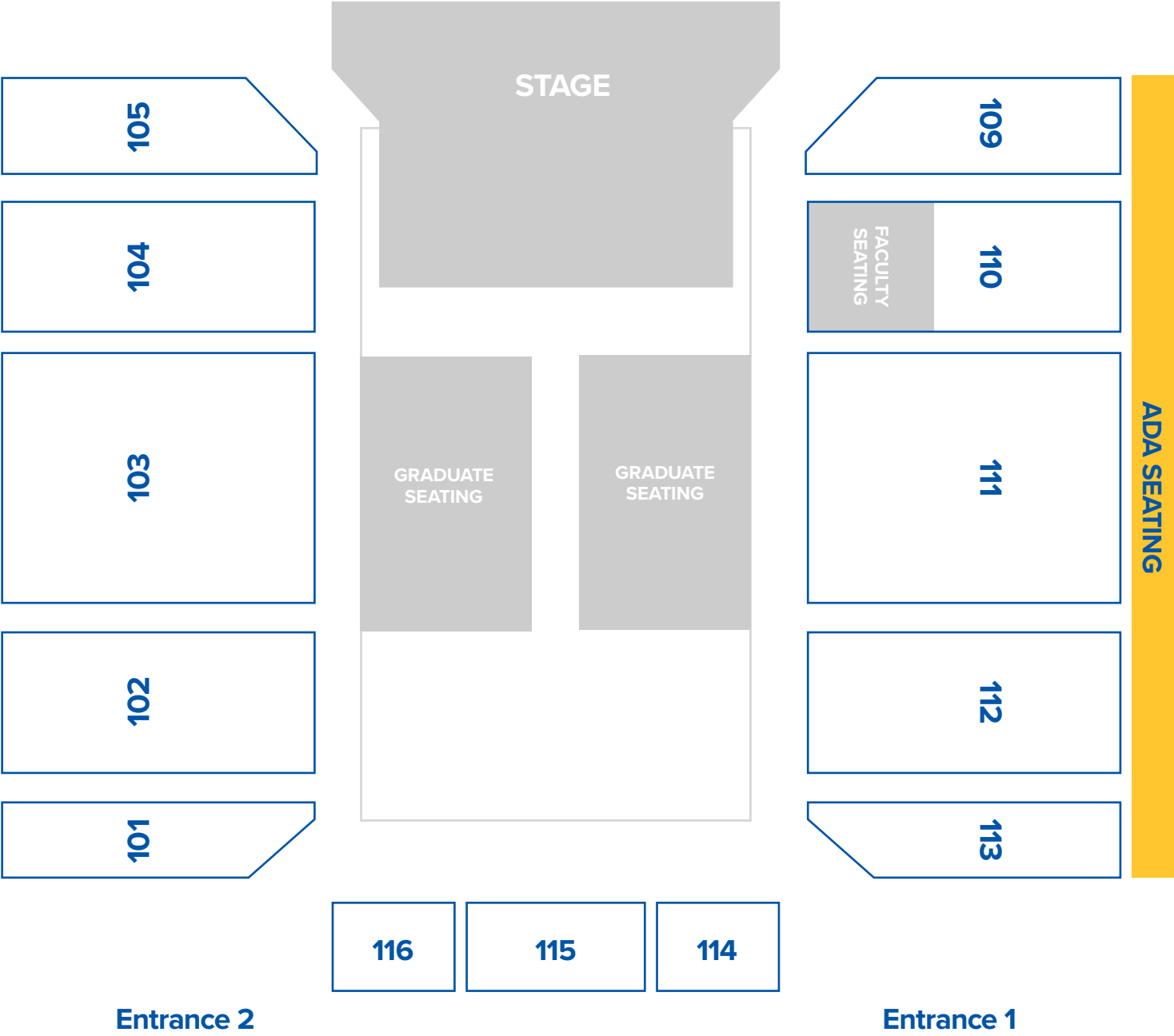


Edward and Mary Lucretia's generosity is credited with establishing Creighton College, while John and Sarah Emily's philanthropy enlarged it to a five-school university. Today, Creighton University consists of nine schools and colleges:

- College of Arts and Sciences (1878)
- School of Medicine (1892)
- School of Law (1904)
- School of Dentistry (1905)
- School of Pharmacy and Health Professions (1905)
- Heider College of Business (1920)
- Graduate School (1926)
- College of Nursing (1971; four-year bachelor's degree program began in 1958)
- College of Professional and Continuing Education  
(Established as University College in 1983)



# D.J. Sokol Arena Map







*Lord, teach me to be generous; teach me to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and not to ask for reward; save that of knowing that I am doing your will.*

*A Prayer for Generosity*

*St. Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits)*



Connect to the **Creighton Commencement** experience using **#CreightonGrad**

 @creighton.law | @CreightonAlumni

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 Creighton University School of Law

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## Graduation Honors

Students may graduate with honors. Criteria for graduation honors can be found in the Creighton University catalogs. Honors for students with previously conferred degrees are listed in this program. Honors for students with May degrees met the honors criteria based on Fall 2024 cumulative grade point averages. Official honors will be awarded on the transcript and diploma based on Spring 2025 cumulative grade point averages. Honors for students who anticipate completing their degree requirements in August or December are not listed in this program. Honors will be awarded on the transcript and diploma at the time of degree conferral.

## Degree Conferral

Creighton University confers degrees three times per year: August, December, and May. Annual University commencement ceremonies are held in May for all Colleges and Schools. The hooding ritual is included in the commencement ceremony for master and doctoral level students. An additional graduate level commencement ceremony is held in December. Students who complete their degree programs in August or December may attend the commencement ceremony following completion, or with the approval of the Office of the Dean, in the preceding May. Participation in a commencement ceremony does not guarantee a degree is officially earned. A degree is conferred only after the dean verifies all academic requirements are met and the degree is posted on the student's transcript by the Office of the Registrar.

## Ceremony Photos

Ceremony Photos will photograph each graduate receiving his or her diploma. Graduates will be emailed a link to their photo proofs, or they can go to [ceremonyphotos.com](https://ceremonyphotos.com) for more information. Questions may be addressed to [service@ceremonyphotos.com](mailto:service@ceremonyphotos.com) or call 402.917.6518.





## *Welcome to the Creighton University alumni family,*

now more than 80,000 strong. While your time as a student is coming to a close, your time in our global alumni community is just getting started. No matter where life takes you, we will be here to support you with opportunities and benefits to help you stay connected.

**Bluejays for life.**



[alumni.creighton.edu](http://alumni.creighton.edu)

*Alumni & Family Weekend*

# **CREIGHTON DAYS**

**SEPT. 12–14, 2025**

Reconnect with classmates. Reminisce about your college days. And remember that Creighton forever remains your home away from home.

More info: [creighton.edu/creightondays](http://creighton.edu/creightondays)



Creighton  
UNIVERSITY

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School of Law