

*Physician Assistant Program
School of Medicine*

2025

**Commencement
and Hooding
Ceremony**

DECEMBER 11, 2025





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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD

President, Creighton University



Dear Creighton University Graduate,

Congratulations on reaching this remarkable milestone and on being our first Physician Assistant class to celebrate commencement on our Phoenix campus. You are not simply concluding your academic journey but pioneering a tradition that future generations will follow.

Through hard work, perseverance, and resilience, you have earned this moment. You chose to pursue your calling here in the Valley of the Sun through a commitment to academic excellence and our Jesuit, Catholic mission.

As a Creighton graduate, you carry the hopes and dreams of those supporting you as well as the legacy of others who came before you. I am proud to have watched you embrace the challenges of higher education and become all the stronger and more compassionate because of it.

There is much to look forward to, but for today I encourage you to reflect on all that has brought you to this moment. Your clinical excellence, dedication to patient care, and commitment to serving others place you among a select few who have dared to pursue both healing and leadership with courage and heart.

During your time at Creighton, you embraced the unknown and stepped out of your comfort zone. You forged new connections, explored unfamiliar places, and pursued truth in all its forms. I challenge you to carry forward that spirit of exploration and hold with you the lessons of your Jesuit, Catholic education as you mature into the leaders our communities need.

As you join the Creighton alumni family of more than 80,000, remember that the change you want to see will not simply appear. It is your responsibility to seek it out with clarity of purpose and fullness of soul. Keep inviting inquiry 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 rest of your journey begins. Go forward with courage and conviction, knowing you will be a Bluejay, always.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Daniel S. Hendrickson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "H".

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD

Order of Exercises

PROCESSION

BANNER CARRIER

Emily Babcock, DHSc, PA-C
*Program Director,
Associate Professor*

PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

Emily Babcock, DHSc, PA-C
*Program Director,
Associate Professor*

NATIONAL ANTHEM

INVOCATION

Rev. Kevin L. Dilworth, SJ
Chaplain, Phoenix Campus

PROVOST'S MESSAGE

Mardell A. Wilson, EdD, RDN
Provost

DEGREE CONFERRAL STATEMENT

Mardell A. Wilson, EdD, RDN
Provost

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES FOR EARNED DEGREES

Randy R. Richardson, MD
Regional Dean, Phoenix Campus

Names read by

Emily Babcock, DHSc, PA-C
*Program Director,
Associate Professor*

Hooding of candidates by

Lynzi Warner, MPAS, PA-C
Director of Clinical Education

Vanessa Kaye, MPAS, PA-C
Assistant Professor

PROGRAM AWARDS

Emily Babcock, DHSc, PA-C
*Program Director,
Associate Professor*

CHARGE TO THE GRADUATES

Randy R. Richardson, MD
Regional Dean, Phoenix Campus

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROFESSIONAL OATH

Michelle DiBaise, DH, PA-C
Director of Didactic Education

SENIOR CLASS SPEAKER

Shamaine Maylor
Class President

TURNING OF THE TASSEL

Mardell A. Wilson, EdD, RDN
Provost

STAGE PARTY, FACULTY, AND GRADUATE RECESSIONAL

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A RECEPTION ON THE PATIO OUTSIDE THE BALLROOM DOORS

CANDIDATES FOR EARNED DEGREES

Randy R. Richardson, MD, Regional Dean

MASTER OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES

Leah Caitlynn Almquist
Flagstaff, Arizona

Liliana Barajas Bejar
Phoenix, Arizona

Kaitlyn Marie Barth
Madison, Arizona

Callista Marie Becker
Breese, Illinois

Madison Leigh Cawthon
Scottsdale, Arizona

Hannah Chan
Irvine, California

Emily Helen Crisler-Winarta
Mesa, Arizona

Maryssa Irene Fairbanks
Tucson, Arizona

Lilyanne Kathryn Gatterdam
Glendale, Arizona

Nayla Fadi Gebara
Gilbert, Arizona

Savannah Grassel
Payson, Arizona

Carynne Jeanelle Greene
Queen Creek, Arizona

Zachary Dean Hugo
Phoenix, Arizona

Brittney Kianna Jimenez
Chandler, Arizona

Ava Lynn Johnson
Ladera Ranch, California

Lauren Katherine Julian
Eagan, Minnesota

**Rachel Gwendolyn
Kekulalani A'Ahaula Kawakami**
Ka'a'awa, Hawaii

Hannah Elizabeth Kiesling
Lisle, Illinois

Lauren Elizabeth Krieger
Phoenix, Arizona

Shamaine Tatyana Maylor
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

John Allen McDonald
Ben Wheeler, Texas

Elizabeth Marie Netherton
Tucson, Arizona

Gabriel Nkumu
St. Paul, Minnesota

Nikita Patel
Scottsdale, Arizona

Nupur Rajkaran
Peoria, Arizona

Ashley Elizabeth Reed
Scottsdale, Arizona

Connor Jackson Russell
Phoenix, Arizona

Anthony Sandoval
Phoenix, Arizona

Taylor Marie Strasser
Phoenix, Arizona

Francesca Mary Toste
Medina, Minnesota

Allana Ray Vallee
Phoenix, Arizona

Megan Diane Weissmann
Gilbert, Arizona

Megan Ashley Winter
Tempe, Arizona

Abigail Marie Zurbruggen
Phoenix, Arizona



Oath of the Physician Assistant

I promise to perform the following duties with honesty, integrity, and dedication, remembering always that my primary responsibility is the health, safety, welfare, and dignity of all human beings:

I will recognize and promote the value of diversity and will treat equally all persons who seek my care.

I will uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and the principle of informed consent.

I will hold in confidence the information shared with me in the course of practicing medicine, except where I am authorized to impart such knowledge.

I will be diligent in understanding both my personal capabilities and my limitations, striving always to improve my practice of medicine.

I will actively seek to expand my intellectual knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medical art and science.

I will work with other members of the healthcare team to assure compassionate and effective care of patients.

I will uphold and enhance community values and use the knowledge and experience acquired as a PA to contribute to an improved community.

I will respect my professional relationship with physicians and other members of the healthcare team.

I recognize my duty to perpetuate knowledge within the profession.

These duties are pledged with sincerity and upon my honor.



Class of 2025 Graduation Awards

Pi Alpha – National PA Honor Society

Recognizes individuals with significant academic achievement, leadership, research, community and professional service, and who exhibit a high standard of character and conduct.

Recipients:

Emily Helen Crisler-Winarta
Hannah Elizabeth Kiesling
Lilyanne Kathryn Gatterdam
Megan Ashley Winter
Megan Diane Weissmann

Heart of Service Award

Recognizes an individual who exemplifies the mission of Creighton University and the PA Program in serving humanity.

Recipient: Gabriel Nkumu

Magis Award

Recognizes an individual who strives for betterment in all things they engage in, discerning the more appropriate decision that best serves others.

Recipient: Shamaine Tatyana Maylor

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, S.J. 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.

History of Academic Regalia

The robes, hats and hoods worn by faculty members and graduates as they march into the commencement hall, and even the different colors you see on them, have historical origins and significance. During the Middle Ages, scholars at the earliest English and European universities wore wool or fur garments to stay warm in the drafty, stone buildings that were poorly heated. Most of the scholars were also monks or priests, and as such had the hair shaved from the crowns of their heads in the distinctive clerical tonsure. Most wore cloaks that included a hood that could be pulled up to keep their heads warm. The academic gowns and hoods were adapted from both secular and clerical garments of the time, and the hood was chosen by the early scholars to indicate by color, trim or binding the degree held by the wearer.

The style of academic dress most frequently worn in the United States dates back to colonial times, although it was not formally adopted until near the end of the 19th century, when it was chosen as appropriate attire by the Intercollegiate Commission during a meeting in New York. It has remained the general standard in America since, although some variations occur at individual institutions. In the United States, black is the traditional color for academic gowns, although some institutions allow holders of doctoral degrees to wear robes in the university's colors.

The sleeves of the robes vary, depending on the degree held by the wearer. The bachelor's robe has long, pointed sleeves. The master's robe has sleeves that are oblong and closed at the ends, with slits through which the arms may be extended. The doctoral robe has a full sleeve with a velvet facing on the front and at the neck, and three velvet bars on each sleeve. The velvet may be black or of a color that symbolizes the degree held by the wearer.

The head covering most commonly used in the United States is the square, tasseled "mortarboard." Some American universities, however, use berets, and in other countries a variety of styles of head coverings is worn with academic regalia. The tassel is usually black and is worn over the left front quarter of the mortarboard. Holders of doctoral degrees may wear gold tassels.

The hood is the most distinctive feature of American academic dress, which through color and design may indicate the wear's degree and the institution at which that degree was earned. Hoods are lined with the colors of the institution that awards the degree, and may be faced with the color designating the degree awarded. Hoods vary in length. The bachelor's hood is about three feet long, the master's slightly longer and the doctoral version is longer still and is decorated with broad color panels.

Candidates may have the hood ceremoniously placed upon them, as is done at some British universities, or a college/school may 'self-hood' en masse at the appropriate time during the ceremony as has been the practice at Fordham University in the United States. Additionally, the code allows for the wearing of the hood into the commencement ceremony as part of the academic procession, but only if neither of the two procedures above are being employed.

The code also states: "It is quite appropriate for the bachelor's gown to be worn without a hood." Many institutions, particularly larger ones, have therefore dispensed with the bachelor's hood at commencement ceremonies altogether, though a graduate is still entitled to wear one once the degree is conferred. Honorary and/or earned doctoral degrees are very often conferred by the highest academic officer of an institution bestowing the appropriate hood at the podium, regardless of the procedure being followed for other candidates at the ceremony.

Only one hood may be worn at any given time. Trim colors may not be combined or displayed together in any way to attempt to indicate more than one academic field. The regalia indicating the highest degree attained is usually worn, though the code seems to allow for a graduate to revert for some occasion to the entire academic costume (e.g., robe style, trim width, hood length, etc.) of a lesser degree earned. Those who hold multiple degrees of the same level (i.e., more than one master's or doctorate degree) may wear at any given time the regalia, in its entirety, of any one degree earned. The code does not allow for "mixing-and-matching." The regalia prescribed by an academic institution and the degree actually awarded by that institution to the wearer (as indicated by trim color, hood length, robe style, etc.) must be consistent. The one exception is for officers of the academic institution who, while wearing a doctoral gown of the university being served, may display one hood from any degree earned from any institution.

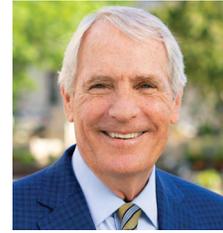
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*Creighton alumnus/alumna

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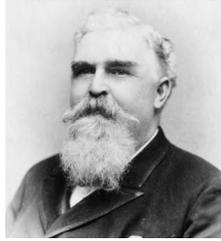
*Creighton alumnus/alumna



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)

Creighton
UNIVERSITY

School of Medicine

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