
Alumni Recognition Awards

At the annual Alumni Recognition Awards hosted each year during Homecoming, the CSU Alumni Association recognizes several deserving alumni in five areas.

Our 2025 Winners

Thomas Y. Whitley
Distinguished Alumnus Award

Debbie Moody, BBA '82

Frank D. Brown
Achievement & Leadership Excellence Award

Mat Swift

Excellence in Alumni Award

Ashley Woitena, BBA '06
Michael Sumuel, BM '07

Distinguished Alumnus
in Military/Public Service

Brandon Cockrell, MBA '99

Young Alumni Award

Sophie Wang, BM '16

Alumni Service Award

Karen Cook, BS '95
Jason McKenzie, BBA '09
Jasmine Reid, BS '15 & M.Ed. '17

Honorary Alumni

Cale Cole
Todd Hibbs
Steve Smith

Faculty/Staff
Appreciation Award

Brandon Lindley, BBA '09 & MPA '15

Alumni Recognition Awards

September 18, 2025 | 6:30PM

Cunningham Center- Blanchard Hall

[Buy Ticket](#)

Criteria for Alumni Recognition Awards

Young Alumni Award

The Young Alumni Award is given to alumni who have graduated in the last 15 years in recognition of a commitment to excellence in post-collegiate life and a significant or ongoing commitment to extraordinary work, research, volunteerism or service to Columbus State University.

Alumni Service Award

This award honors an alumnus that has rendered outstanding voluntary service to the Columbus State University Alumni Association and/or the University.

Distinguished Alumnus in Military/Public Service Award

The award recognizes CSU alumni who are active duty, veterans, or in public service (i.e. law enforcement, firefighter, EMT, etc.) who have brought distinction in their area of service to our country or community and in turn brings distinction to our University.

Faculty/Staff Appreciation Award

This award highlights contributions made to the Alumni Association by a current CSU Faculty or Staff member. Nominations for this award are only accepted from Alumni Association board members.

Thomas Y. Whitley Distinguished Alumnus Award

The Thomas Y. Whitley Distinguished Alumnus Award is presented each year to the graduate who has most lived up to the high standards set by the award's namesake. Approved in 1980 by CSU's Alumni Association Board of Directors, it is considered the most prestigious award given annually to an alumnus. Honorable Mentions for this award will receive the Excellence in Alumni Achievement Award. No award will be given if the Selection Committee decides that no nominee is of sufficient high caliber. The nominee must meet the following requirements:

- The nominee must hold a degree (associate, baccalaureate, master's, or specialist) from Columbus College or Columbus State University.
- The nominee must have distinguished themselves in their professional and personal life and through community involvement and service, and thereby have brought recognition to CSU.
- The nominee must have exemplified high moral character and integrity and be held in high esteem by their fellow alumni.

About Thomas Y. Whitley

As president of Columbus College from its founding in 1958 until his retirement in 1979, Thomas Y. Whitley led Columbus College from temporary buildings to its permanent main campus. Initially, he worked for the state Board of Regents, tasked with harnessing strong community support for a new college. He successfully advocated a move from two-year, junior college status to senior college status in 1965 and handed out our first bachelor's degrees in 1970. By the time he retired, master's degrees in education and business were available. He died on September 11, 2001.

Frank D. Brown Achievement & Leadership Excellence Award

The award is presented only when extraordinary achievement or service merits it. The Brown Award recognizes an organization, active or retired member of the faculty or staff, a non-graduate alumnus, or a supporter of Columbus State University who has made extraordinary contributions to educational excellence at Columbus State University or whose achievement has brought honor and distinction to Columbus State University. The nominee must meet the following requirements:

- Be an organization or individual supporter of Columbus State, other than a CSU graduate. (Former students who didn't graduate are eligible for nomination.)
- Have provided substantial and sustained support for Columbus State or must have brought honor and distinction to CSU.
- Have demonstrated exemplary leadership skills or accomplishments that serve as a model for the Columbus State University community.
- Be held in high esteem by the Columbus State University community.

About Frank D. Brown

Frank Brown was president of the university for two decades, retiring after the 2008 academic year. He's the face of the change that led the institution from a text-sm college of about 4,000 students to a regional university of nearly 8,400 students.

Past Alumni Association Award Honorees

Thomas Y. Whitley Distinguished Alumnus Award

- 1980: Charles R. Eason, '72
- 1981: Helen T. Milian, '61
- 1982: James A. Gill, '71
- 1983: Nancy C. Buntin, '68
- 1984: Wm. Weatherington, '74
- 1985: James F. Loudermilk, '70
- 1986: Wallace A. Kite, '74
- 1987: James D. Yancey, '64
- 1988: Carole L. Rutland, '72
- 1989: Sharon O. Sudderth, '79
- 1990: Peggy H. Batastini, '73
- 1991: Kenneth E. Evans, '70
- 1992: C. Jackie Farris, '76
- 1993: Mary Jane Wadkins, '70
- 1994: L. Lamar Powers, '70
- 1995: James H. Motos, '66
- 1996: Rick C. Gordan, '76
- 1997: Michael W. Patrick, '73
- 1998: Don Andrae, '70
- 1999: Evelyn W. Turner, '77
- 2000: Richard A. Smith, '75
- 2001: Dell W. McMullen, '73
- 2002: Wm. D. Reaves, Jr., '66
- 2003: Emory J. Alexander, '74
- 2004: Sherree W. Mitchell, '75
- 2005: Linda U. Hadley, '80
- 2006-7: Troy Woods, '74

- 2008: Frank D. Brown
- 2009: Wade Burford, '78
- 2010: Vance C. Smith, Jr., '74
- 2011: Janet W. Davis, '81
- 2012: Jean M. Hartin, '72
- 2013: Thomas D. Macdonald, '86
- 2014: Pam Siddall, '91
- 2015: Prem Virmani, '82
- 2016: Arthur L. Smith, III, '76
- 2017: P. Thomas Hackett, Jr., '77 & '86
- 2018: Ashish (AJ) K. Jain, '86
- 2019: Barbara Motos, M.Ed. '84
- 2020: Gwendolyn Ruff, M.S.A. '88
- 2021: Cindy Ticknor, '98
- 2022: E. David Hart, Jr., '77
- 2023: Jerry "Pops" Barnes, '01
- 2024: P. Timothy Money, '86

Frank D. Brown Achievement Award

- 2009: William Bradley Turner, Sr.
- 2010: Marvin R. Schuster
- 2011: Thomas B. Black
- 2012: Paul S. Amos
- 2013: Carmen J. Cavezza
- 2014: James Kyle Spencer
- 2015: George Stanton
- '2016: Kayron Laska
- 2017: Joe C. (Jay) Sparks
- 2018: J. Richard (Rick) Alexander
- 2019: Calvin Smyre
- 2020: John (Johnny) W. Walden, Jr.
- 2021: Stephen T. Butler
- 2022: Champ L. Baker, Jr.
- 2022: Russell D. Carreker
- 2023: Teddie L. Ussery
- 2024: Meg & Frank Schley

Alumni Recognition Awards

Young Alumni Award

- 2011: Nicole De Vries
- 2012: Heather A. Avery
- 2013: Leonard J. Moore
- 2014: Gina Sederstrom
- 2014: Jason (Jay) Alexander
- 2015: Dorothy Cheruiyot
- 2015: W. Jay O'Neal
- 2016 C. Bernard McCrary
- 2016: Molli M. Newman
- 2017: Eric M. Thomas
- 2018: Stefan Lawrence
- 2019: Michael Sumuel

- 2020: Dr. De'smond Henry
- 2021: Boris Abramov
- 2022: Gerald Chichester
- 2022: Tiffany McBride
- 2023: Elizabeth Reeves
- 2023: Evan McGill
- 2024: Jon Ingram

Alumni Service Award

- 1996: Randall K. Lunsford
- 1996: Audrey E. Wolfe
- 1997: Don Andrae
- 1997: Grover C. Barfield, III
- 1997: Jean M. Hartin
- 1998: Leonard W. Hindsman, Jr.
- 1998: William D. Reaves, Jr.
- 1998: David E. Hawkins
- 1999: Allena G. Johnson
- 1999: John W. Rogers, Jr.
- 1999: W. Allen Taber, Jr.
- 2000: Wade M. Burford
- 2000: James M. Lamb
- 2000: John W. Roper
- 2001: Richard M. Gordy
- 2002: James E. Buntin
- 2002: Nancy C. Buntin
- 2002: Dennis R. Hendrix
- 2003: W. Randall Jones
- 2003: Linda S. Reynolds
- 2004: Lavonda W. Forbes
- 2004: Christopher R. Luby
- 2004: Sarah M. Luby
- 2005: Janet W. Davis
- 2005: Mark J. Holladay
- 2006-7: L. Lamar Powers
- 2006-7: Geri P. Regnier
- 2006-7: Michael L. Regnier
- 2009: Jane P. Spettel
- 2010: Patricia Cardin
- 2011: John O. Barwick
- 2011: S. Scott Voynich
- 2011: Brenda Coakley Williams
- 2012: Sommer D. Bundy
- 2013: Torrey S. Wiley
- 2014: Paul Holmer-Monte
- 2015: Tashee' Singleton
- 2016 P. Timothy Money
- 2017: Dennis A. Neal, Sr.
- 2018: Cathy Fussell
- 2018: Ben Thames
- 2019: Judy Nail
- 2020: Jimbo Davis
- 2021: Patty K. Taylor

- 2021: Rashmi Hudson
- 2021: Brice Patterson
- 2021: Jonnie Ellerbee
- 2022: Cortney Wilson
- 2023: Kimberly Scott
- 2024: Twilya Toombs

Excellence in Alumni Achievement Award

- 2011: Steve Taylor
- 2012: Jason F. Harrison
- 2013: Joshua E. Lane
- 2014: Peter D. Rumm
- 2015: Cynthia Colbert
- 2016: Bruce E. Baldwin
- 2016: Denise E. Yardley
- 2017: Bobby G. Peters
- 2017: Jin Kim-Peña & Jorge Peña
- 2018: Thomas McKenna
- 2018: Johannes M. Stosch
- 2022: Brad Harris

Distinguished Alumni in Military/Public Service Award

- 2011: Charles F. Merkel, Jr.
- 2012: Charles E. Anklam, III
- 2013: Norris Wiley
- 2014: Barry Creed
- 2015: Roger Buterbaugh
- 2015: Philip Mullenix
- 2016: Raymond V. Herras
- 2017: Joel G. Baker
- 2018: Philip Broome
- 2019: Jason Armstrong
- 2019: Keith Howard
- 2020: Mark Lott
- 2021: Joyce Dent-Fitzpatrick
- 2021: Donald Bush
- 2022: David Coburn
- 2023: LTG (R) Ben Hodges
- 2024: tom Kirkbride

Faculty/Staff Appreciation Award

- 2011: Steve Morse
- 2012: Jay A. Knape
- 2013: Steven C. Roach
- 2014: Derek Olson
- 2015: CSU Web Team
- 2016: Melissa Dempsey
- 2018: Kimberly McElveen
- 2020: Suzanne Maynard
- 2021: Sue Yost
- 2022: Johnnae Roberts

- 2024: Jay Entlich