



# HONORS NEWS

SPRING 2026  
EDITION

# ASPIRATIONS



## ABOUT ASPIRATIONS

Aspirations is the newsletter of the CSU Honors College, which provides updates, features, and information for the honors community. On behalf of the Honors College staff, we hope you enjoy Aspirations and welcome any ideas for future issues.

# SENIOR PROJECTS & THESIS 2025-2026

**Micaiah Byrd - B.F.A. Theatre Performance**

**Mentor: Professor David Turner**

Thesis: *A.I. and Its Impacts on Modern Theatre*

**Jessica Cegarra-Arraiz - B.S. Robotics Engineering**

**Mentor: Dr. Mohammad Jafari**

Thesis: *Machine Learning for Predicting Prosthetic Limb Movements*

**Lily Conner - B.S. Biology**

**Mentor: Dr. Subhas Mukherjee**

Thesis: *Novel Regulators of Glioblastoma Stem Cell Growth and Their Translational Relevance in Human GBM*

**Chloe Curbelo - B.A. History, Minor Asian Studies**

**Mentor: Dr. Doug Tompson**

Thesis: *From Curiosity to Controversy: American Perception of the Japanese, 1853-1924*

**Savannah Flowers - B.A.**

**Mentor: Dr. Shannon Godlove**

Thesis: *Spoken Promises and the Instability of "Trouthe" in the Poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer*

**Erin Fowler - B.A. in Music Education**

**Mentor: Dr. Reba Wissner**

Thesis: *Digital Docent: An Analysis of Accessibility in the Digital Music Space*

**Charlie Hearn - B.S. Theatre Education, Minor English**

**Mentor: Professor Molly Classen**

Thesis: *Servant Leadership: A Directing Approach*

# SENIOR PROJECTS & THESIS 2025-2026

**Carolina Maldonado - B.A.**

**Mentor: Dr. Christine Cannon**

Thesis: *Effects of AI in the Arts*

**Zoe Rasso - B.F.A. Art, Painting**

**Mentor: Professor Juliana Cowsert**

Thesis: *Practicing Contemporary Documentation: An Analysis of Historic Influences and Personal Inspirations*

**Cynthia Short - B.A. English**

**Mentor: Dr. Patrick Jackson**

Thesis: *Unmasked and Unprotected: An Autistic Poet's Journey of Imperfect Confession*

**Amiya Smith - B.A. Studio Arts**

**Mentor: Professor Travis Dodd**

Thesis: *Misrepresentation in Black Media and How it Affects Generational Mental Health*

**Elizabeth Woods - B.A. English Literature and French**

**Mentor: Dr. Patrick Jackson**

Thesis: *Writing Against the War Machine: Wilfred Owen's Poetic Challenge to WWI Pro-War Rhetoric*

**Cole Zelman - B.A. Music Performance**

**Mentor: Dr. Anna Cherry**

Thesis: *Timbral Effects of 3D Printing Brass Wind Musical Instruments: A Comparison Between Traditional and 3D Printed Construction*

# Honors Scholastic Awards

## Interdisciplinary Studies Award



**Cole Zelman**

## Scholarly Activities in Humanities



**Chloe Curbelo**

## Scholarly Activities in Fine & Performing Arts



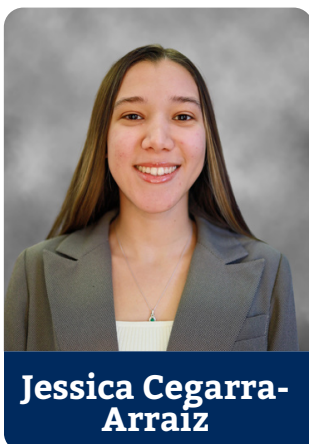
**Zoe Rasso**

## Scholarly Activities in Professional Studies



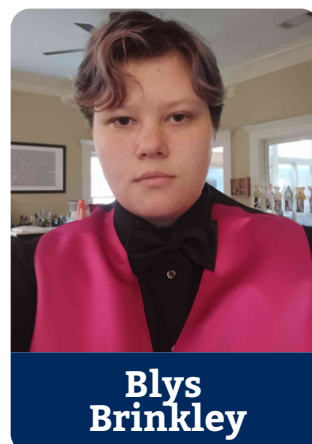
**Erin Fowler**

## Scholarly Activities in Sciences



**Jessica Cegarra-Arraiz**

## Scholarly Activities in Social Sciences



**Blys Brinkley**

# Honors Faculty Awards

## Outstanding Teaching in the Honors College



**Dr. Bobby Nixon**



## Outstanding Mentor in the Honors College



**Dr. Joshua May**



# Honors Alumni Spotlight

## Valencia Coleman

Valencia Coleman is a Gameplay Engineer at Owlchemy Labs, a professor at the University of Alabama–Huntsville, and an indie game developer.

Coleman earned her B.S. in Computer Science with a focus on Game Programming from Columbus State University. Some of her notable achievements include being an IGDA Foundation Scholar, a Women in Games Ambassador, and a speaker at several game industry events.



# HONS 3000 - The JT48 Project: Putting a face to the Civil Rights Movement at CSU.

John Townsend was the first African American student to matriculate to Columbus State, then Columbus College, with this entry into Columbus College part of the larger national Civil Rights movement. All over the south, young people were doing their part to transform the social and political landscape, with a number of these efforts not as well celebrated.



Our class, the JT48 Project, was not only our opportunity to honor the bravery of John Townsend but to spotlight how the civil rights movement unfolded in Columbus, Georgia. Using historical documents like yearbooks, past issues of the student newspaper, and online research, we explored the integration of Fort Benning, the cognitive dissonance of an integrated military alongside a segregated city, and some early experiences of John Townsend and other black students enrolling to Columbus College. It is this foundation that rooted the transformation of Columbus State University into what it is today.

As a culminating experience, we reported on our research during the Tower Day in April. Preparing for the presentation was a journey in and of itself because it was actually beyond the scope of the class.

To better prepare, we created a script and the power point presentation and carried out several dry runs to get our timing down. The day of the presentation we were pretty nervous but prepared. All in all, we came to not only know more about how CSU came to be what it is today, we were proud of the journey students like John Townsend walked in order to make CSU a more welcoming place.



# HONORS ENRICHMENT COURSE: HONS 3555 STORYTELLING THROUGH DIFFERENT GENRES



**HONS 3555 Great Conversations: The Power of Storytelling: Exploring the arts and culture through music and language is co-taught by Dr. Nixon and Dr. May.**



**As part of our immersive course experience, students attended a performance of "Hairspray" at the historic Springer Opera House.**

# HONORS ENRICHMENT COURSE: ANTH 1107H DISCOVERING ARCHAEOLOGY

Students in the Discovering Archaeology course participated in a guided tour of Fort Benning's Cultural Resources Management Program. Archaeologists and architectural historians led the tour and explained the site's archaeology, historic buildings, and overall history.



They explored World War I-era trenches, Airborne-related sites near Lawson Army Airfield, the historic Cusseta town location, the Main Post Historic District, a curation facility, and a restored bank building. The tour gave students a hands-on look at cultural resources and insight into how they are managed, including the role of Army preservation professionals.

# Spring Colloquium Series



This semester also saw the return of our Spring Colloquium Series where students debated hot topics of today.

The first debate included a light icebreaker, “What is your favorite M&M flavor?” which was a hit. Students tried a variety of flavors but ended up settling on the classic milk chocolate. From there we dove into the more controversial topic of “Are we currently living in a civil rights movement.” This included some thoughtful discussion that brought up some very relevant issues.

Our second debate included the icebreaker, “what is the best Oreo flavor.” Once again, students were able to sample a variety of Oreo flavors and while it was a close race, the original flavor one. We invited special guests, Coach Robert Moore along with some of his basketball players to help us debate if college athletes should be paid. They brought some valuable insight to the night and our students learned a lot from listening to their points of view.



# 2025 -2026 Awards Ceremony

**On May 2nd, we held our spring awards ceremony for our Honors students at the Columbus Country Club Ballroom. This is our annual send off for the graduating group of Honors seniors.**



**We are excited to congratulate our 25 Honors Pin recipients, and our 13 seniors graduating with an Honors Seal!**



# *Thank You to Our Esteemed Laureate Society*

**Mr. & Mrs. R. Gary Allen**  
**Mrs. Peggy H. Batastini**  
**Mr. Josue Becerra**  
**Dr. & Mrs. James E. Buntin**  
**Ms. Sharron Caldwell**  
**Mr. Robert Anness & Mrs. Katharine Cannella**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Larry Cardin**  
**Mrs. K. Michele Carlisle**  
**Ms. Stephanie Carney**  
**Mrs. Kelly Cooper**  
**Mrs. Diane Dana**  
**Ms. Beverly Mack Davis**  
**Ms. Janet W. Davis**  
**Ms. Jessica Demarco-Jacobson**  
**Ms. Ashlyn N. Dewberry**  
**Mrs. Susan Dolan**  
**Dr. William Edwards**  
**Mr. Mick Etchison**  
**Mr. & Mrs. W. Feigner, Jr.**  
**Dr. & Mrs. R. Clark Gillett, Jr.**  
**Mrs. Richard Hallock**  
**Ms. Amy Hamilton**  
**Mr. John T. Hargrove**  
**Dr. & Mrs. Ed Helton, Jr**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Howell Hollis III**  
**Mr. Paul Holmer-Monte**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Howard**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Edgar M. Hughston**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Richard Joyner**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Jack B. Key III**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Kelsey Kennon**  
**Dr. Lauren King**  
**Mr. Tyler Krug**  
**Ms. Rachel Lambert**  
**Dr. Kayron Laska & Mr. John Laska**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Lewack**  
**Dr. & Mrs. David F. Lewis**  
**Dr. Ryan Lynch & Mrs. Jackie Lynch**  
**Mrs. Hildagine Manio**  
**Dr. Kayron Laska & Mr. John Laska**

**Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Lewack**  
**Dr. & Mrs. David Lewis**  
**Dr. & Mrs. Ryan Lynch**  
**Mrs. Hildagine Manio**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Earnest Victor McGregor**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Money**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Frank Moody**  
**Ms. Abby Moore**  
**Dr. & Mrs. Vincent Naman**  
**Dr. & Mrs. Eddie Obleton**  
**Mr. Donald Osborne**  
**Dr. & Mrs. Robert Patton**  
**Mr. & Mrs. David Phillips**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Ragan**  
**Ms. Diamond Rashad**  
**Dr. Lydia Ray**  
**Dr. Stuart Rayfield & Mr. David Rayfield**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Donald Regan III**  
**Mrs. Geraldine Regnier**  
**Mr. Richard Rodgers**  
**Ms. Jazmin Rush**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Sabau**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Frank Schley IV**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Todd Schuster**  
**Mr. Harrison Sharitt**  
**Mrs. & Mrs. John Shinkle**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Siddall**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Michael Smith**  
**Dr. & Mrs. Eric Spears**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Mathews Swift**  
**Ms. Patty Kimbrough Taylor**  
**Ms. Maryah Thompson**  
**Mr. Lealava'a Tuiolosega**  
**Mr. Michael Tullier**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Michael O. Ussery**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Richard Ussery**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Van Allen**  
**Mr. Ferrell Weatherman**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Torrey Wiley**  
**Mr. & Mrs. James Yancey**

## Our Vision

The Honors College will make Columbus State University a first choice institution for students who strive to succeed by championing innovative instruction, undergraduate research, and interdisciplinary studies.

## Our Mission

Our dual mission provides an innovatively delivered curriculum for high achieving students and advances the intellectual growth and recognition of the university. Our college challenges a diverse community of students to individualize their academic experiences, while serving as an institutional champion for undergraduate research, interdisciplinary studies, and creative instruction.



Do you have a student or faculty member you would like to spotlight, or just have a suggestion for an upcoming edition of *Aspirations*?

Please send us an email at [honors@columbusstate.edu](mailto:honors@columbusstate.edu)  
We would love your suggestions!