

May 2024 Commencement

Recommended Honorary Degree Recipients

Name	Honorary Degree	Ceremony
Ramani Durvasula, Ph.D.*	Doctor of Science, <i>honoris causa</i>	CLAS I and II Sunday, May 5, 2024
Daniel P. Fata, M.A.*	Doctor of Laws, <i>honoris causa</i>	Graduate School of Education - Masters Monday, May 6, 2024
Dr. Barbara Liskov	Doctor of Science, <i>honoris causa</i>	College of Engineering Saturday, May 4, 2024
Chief Mutáwi Mutáhash (Many Hearts) Marilyn “Lynn” Malerba *	Doctor of Humane Letters, <i>honoris causa</i>	School of Nursing Saturday, May 4, 2024
Maya Moore Irons*	Doctor of Humane Letters, <i>honoris causa</i>	CLAS III Sunday, May 5, 2024
Ruth J. Simmons, Ph.D.	Doctor of Humane Letters, <i>honoris causa</i>	Graduate School of Education - Doctoral Monday, May 6, 2024

**denotes UConn alum*

Ramani Durvasula, Ph.D. (Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Ceremony I and II) is a licensed clinical psychologist in California, the founder and CEO of LUNA Education, Training and Consulting, and professor emerita of psychology at California State University Los Angeles. She is the New York Times Bestselling Author of *It's Not You: Identifying and Healing from Narcissistic People*. She is also the author of multiple other books including *"Don't You Know Who I Am?": How to Stay Sane in the Era of Narcissism, Entitlement and Incivility* and *Should I Stay or Should I Go: Surviving a Relationship with a Narcissist*. She has lectured and trained therapists around the world on best practices on working with clients experiencing narcissistic abuse. Dr. Durvasula hosts a popular YouTube channel with over 1.6 million subscribers, hosted the critically acclaimed podcast *Navigating Narcissism*, and is a featured expert on the digital media platform MedCircle. She has also been widely involved in the governance of the American Psychological Association, including the APA Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology and the APA Minority Fellowship Program. Dr. Durvasula received her M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in clinical psychology from UCLA, and completed her internship and post-doctoral training at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute. She is a proud graduate and alumna of the University of Connecticut, having received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology, with a minor in sociology in 1988. She resides in Los Angeles, CA.

Daniel P. Fata, M.A. (Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, Graduate School of Education – Masters Ceremony) is President of Fata Advisory, LLC, a strategic consulting firm based in Virginia. He has nearly three decades of experience working at the highest levels in Washington, D.C. as a Congressional leadership staffer in both the House and the Senate, a senior Pentagon official responsible for Europe/Russia/NATO, as a VP at a global strategic consulting firm, and as an executive with Lockheed Martin.

As a seasoned strategist, analyst, and government affairs professional, Mr. Fata brings a wealth of knowledge, relations, and first-hand experience working in the public, private, and NGO sectors, both domestically and internationally. His expertise focuses on aerospace and defense, transatlantic security, supply chain, emerging technologies, and renewable energy. He serves as a strategic advisor to numerous public and privately held firms and he continues to write and lecture on key national security issues.

Mr. Fata holds a B.A. with Honors from the University of Connecticut and an M.A. in International Relations from Boston University.

Dr. Barbara Liskov (Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, College of Engineering), a luminary in the field of computer science, holds the prestigious position of Institute Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Throughout her illustrious career, Liskov has been recognized with memberships in the National Academy of Engineering, the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Inventors Hall of Fame, among others. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Association for Computing Machinery, and a charter fellow of the National Academy of Inventors, highlighting her broad impact across the scientific community.

Her groundbreaking contributions have fundamentally shaped the domains of programming languages, software development, and distributed systems. In 1968, Liskov marked a milestone in academia by becoming one of the first women in the United States to earn a Ph.D. in computer science (from Stanford University), setting the stage for a career filled with innovation and inspiration.

Central to her legacy is her invention of the notion of abstract data types. This was followed by the development of the Liskov Substitution Principle, a concept that revolutionized object-oriented programming by ensuring that software components can be replaced with their subtypes without affecting the correctness of the program. These contributions underline the importance of software reliability and reusability, making Liskov's work foundational to modern computing practices.

Her exceptional contributions have earned her numerous prestigious awards, including the ACM Turing Award (2009), the IEEE Von Neumann Medal (2004), the IEEE Pioneer Award (2018), and the Franklin Medal (2023). Each accolade reflects her pioneering work's significance, from her early achievements to her lasting influence on the evolution of computing.

Dr. Liskov's journey, marked by perseverance and groundbreaking discoveries, serves as a profound source of inspiration for aspiring female engineers. By overcoming challenges and continuously pushing the boundaries of technology, she has not only advanced her field but also paved the way for future generations of innovators. Dr. Liskov's enduring legacy is a testament to her visionary research and mentorship, which continue to inspire and shape the future of computing.

Chief Mutáwi Mutáhash (Many Hearts) Marilyn “Lynn” Malerba (Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, School of Nursing) became the 18th Chief of the Mohegan Tribe on August 15, 2010, and is the first female Chief in the tribe’s modern history. The position is a lifetime appointment made by the Tribe’s Council of Elders. Lynn follows in footsteps of many strong female role models in the Mohegan Tribe, including her mother, Loretta Roberge, who was a member of the Tribal Council that achieved Federal Recognition for the Tribe and held the position of Tribal Nonner (elder female of respect) as well as her great-grandfather Chief Matagha (Burrill Fielding). Prior to becoming Chief, she served as Chairwoman of the Tribal Council, and served in Tribal Government as Executive Director of Health and Human Services. Preceding her work for the Mohegan Tribe, Lynn had a lengthy career as a registered nurse ultimately as the Director of Cardiology and Pulmonary Services at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital. She earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice at Yale University, named a Jonas Scholar. She was awarded an honorary Doctoral Degree in law from the University of North Carolina Pembroke, an honorary Doctoral degree in Science from Eastern Connecticut State University and an honorary Doctoral Degree in Humane Letters from the University of St. Joseph in West Hartford, CT. She earned a Master’s Degree in Public Administration from the University of Connecticut, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the College of St. Joseph and her diploma in nursing from Hartford Hospital School of Nursing.

Lynn was appointed by President Biden and is currently serving as the Treasurer of the United States.

Prior to her current role, she served as the United South and Eastern Tribes Board of Directors Secretary. She formerly served as Chairwoman of the Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee of the Federal Indian Health Service (IHS), a member of the Justice Department’s Tribal Nations Leadership Council, a member of the Tribal Advisory Committee for the National Institute of Health, a member of the Treasury Tribal Advisory Committee and a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Center for Indian Country Development Leadership Council.

Locally she served as a Trustee for Chelsea Groton Bank, Board Chair for the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, and on the Provost’s Advisory Committee Member for the Harvard University Native American Program

She published “The Effects of Sequestration on Indian Health Funding” in the Hastings Center Report, Nov-Dec. 2013 and authored two chapters in “American Indian Health and Nursing” Ed. Margaret P. Moss, Springer Publishing Company.

She lives in Niantic with her husband Paul. They are the parents of two adult daughters, Elizabeth and Angela and grandparents of granddaughters Taylor and Charlotte and grandson Connor.

Maya Moore Irons (Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Ceremony III) is a basketball icon – a two-time NCAA champion, two-time Olympic gold medalist, four-time WNBA champion, WNBA MVP, and six-time WNBA All-Star. After capturing back-to-back undefeated national championships in 2009 and 2010 at the University of Connecticut and captaining the team that set the NCAA record for most games won in a row, Maya was the NCAA Academic All-American of the Year and drafted No.1 by the Minnesota Lynx in the 2011 WNBA Draft. In 2015, after winning her third WNBA title and being named MVP of the WNBA All-Star Game, Maya became the first pro athlete ever to notch three titles— Rookie of the Year, All-Star MVP, and League MVP—in only five seasons of play. In 2018, after winning her third consecutive All-Star MVP award, she shocked the world following that season when she walked away from the game.

Right before her freshman year at UConn, Maya was introduced to Jonathan Irons by family involved with prison ministry. The two forged a close friendship, grounded in their shared faith, and cultivated through their dedication to finding his freedom. In 2019, at the peak of her career, Maya decided to step away from basketball to focus solely on Jonathan’s case. After a winding, year-long effort, Jonathan was finally released in July of 2020. The next day, Jonathan proposed to Maya, and weeks later, they were married.

Maya was the recipient of the Arthur Ashe Courage Award at the 2021 ESPYS and the story of her fight for Jonathan’s freedom was told in the ESPN 30 for 30 film “Breakaway”. In 2023, Maya and Jonathan welcomed their first child, Jonathan, Jr (“JJ”) and published their joint memoir, LOVE AND JUSTICE. Together, Jonathan and Maya are dedicated to using their now shared platform and social action nonprofit, Win with Justice, to raise awareness and advocate for issues surrounding criminal justice reform, the important role district attorneys play in the judicial system, and the power of each individual to live out their purpose and effect change. UConn women's basketball legend Maya Moore was recently selected to the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2024 and will be formally inducted in April.

Ruth J. Simmons, Ph.D. (Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, Graduate School of Education - Doctoral) is a Distinguished Presidential Fellow at Rice University and Adviser to the President of Harvard University on HBCU Initiatives. She served as president of Prairie View A&M University until March 2023. Prior to joining Prairie View, she was president of Brown University from 2001 to 2012 and president of Smith College from 1995 to 2001. After completing her Ph.D. in romance languages and literatures at Harvard, Dr. Simmons served in various faculty and administrative roles at the University of Southern California, Princeton University, and Spelman College before becoming president of Smith College, the largest women's college in the United States. She also held an appointment as professor of comparative literature during her tenure at Brown University.

Dr. Simmons is the recipient of many honors, including a Fulbright Fellowship to France, the 2001 President's Award from the United Negro College Fund, the 2002 Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal, the 2004 Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Medal, the Foreign Policy Association Medal, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, and the Centennial Medal from Harvard University. In 2023 she was selected to give the Jefferson Lecture for the National Endowment for the Humanities, the highest honor given by the federal government for achievement in the humanities. Dr. Simmons has received more than 40 honorary degrees from universities around the world and serves on the boards of The MacArthur Foundation, Morehouse College, the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Holdsworth Center, and Hines Global Income Trust. Dr. Simmons received the Brown faculty's highest honor, the Susan Colver Rosenberger Medal, in 2011 and was honored by the Prairie View faculty in 2022. In 2012, she was named a 'chevalier' of the French Legion of Honor.