

Mercy University Trustees' Scholarship Gala Celebrates Honorees and the Transformative Power of Higher Education

The Trustees' Gala raises critical funds to benefit student scholarships and honors individuals who have had an impact on Mercy University and beyond.

DOBBS FERRY, NY, UNITED STATES, March 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Mercy University announced its 44th Annual Trustees' Scholarship Gala, an evening dedicated to celebrating the transformative power of higher education. The gala will honor distinguished individuals whose contributions have left an indelible impact on the university and the broader community, while also engaging the university's loyal and generous supporters in the mission of educating future generations. The Trustees' Gala, which raises critical funds to benefit student scholarships, will take place on Wednesday, April 9th at 5:30 p.m. at the Glen Island Harbour Club in New Rochelle, NY.

"The Trustees' Scholarship Gala is a testament to the power of education and the incredible impact that individuals can have on shaping future generations," said Susan L. Parish, Ph.D., M.S.W., president of Mercy University. "We are honored to celebrate this year's remarkable honorees, whose dedication and leadership have strengthened our university and community."



Official seal for Mercy University

This year, Mercy University is honored to recognize the following individuals for their outstanding contributions:

Robert (1930-2001), H.D. '79 and Mary Joyce McCooey – Lifetime Achievement Award

Robert (Bob) McCooey played a pivotal role in Mercy University's history. Joining the Board of Trustees in 1967 as one of its first lay members, he became Board Chair in 1970, guiding the university through a transformative decade. Under his leadership, Mercy's enrollment surged from 750 to 11,000 students, making it the largest higher education institution in Westchester County. His dedication to providing quality, affordable education led to significant curriculum expansions, faculty enhancements, and library improvements. In recognition of his contributions, Mercy awarded him an honorary degree in 1979.

Beyond Mercy, Bob's philanthropic work extended to The College of New Rochelle (CNR), where he served on the Board of Trustees, as well as Lincoln Hall, the New York Foundling Hospital, Iona Preparatory School, Catholic Big Brothers, the Boy Scouts of America, and many other organizations.

His wife, Mary Joyce McCooey, was a dedicated volunteer and community leader, serving on numerous boards, including the Order of Malta, the Sisters of Life, the Inner City Scholarship Fund of New York, Iona Preparatory School, the College of Mount St. Vincent, and other organizations. Bob passed away in 2001, but the McCooey family's legacy of service and generosity continues to benefit Mercy University and the broader community.

The Honorable Mary E. Sommer (ret.) CNR SAS '71 – CNR Legacy Award

Mary E. Sommer, a distinguished alumna of The College of New Rochelle, has dedicated her career to public service and law. Graduating magna cum laude in 1971 with a degree in political science, she earned her Juris Doctorate from the University of Notre Dame in 1975. Sommer's legal career spanned decades, including serving as Corporation Counsel for the City of Stamford, co-founding a prominent law firm, and being appointed as a Connecticut Superior Court judge in 2008. Her tenure on the bench included leadership roles in juvenile justice, racial equity, and immigration services.

A dedicated advocate for education and community service, her extensive nonprofit work includes serving on the board of the Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut and leadership roles with Hope for Haiti, Building One Community, and the Ferguson Library Foundation, embodying CNR's motto, *Serviam*—"I will serve."

Sommer also served as a member of CNR's Board of Trustees from 2016 until CNR's closure in 2019, where she played an instrumental role in Mercy University's teach out of CNR students and its adopting of the CNR alumni community. Sommer's commitment and dedication to CNR have ensured its legacy lives on at Mercy University.

Tashauna Wynter '25 – Student Achievement Award

Tashauna Wynter, a senior health sciences major on the pre-physician assistant track, is an exemplary student leader at Mercy University. A member of the Mercy Scholars Program, she actively contributes to campus life as a resident assistant, president of the Black Student Union, and manager of the Prestigious Divas performance organization. Her commitment to service extends beyond campus, with volunteer work at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore and as a Bridge Coach for Bronx high school students.

Born and raised in Jamaica, Wynter is a first-generation college student who values the importance of education and community service. Her dedication to supporting underserved communities aligns with her aspirations of becoming a healthcare provider, making her a deserving recipient of this year's Student Achievement Award.

Mercy University invites its community of alumni, supporters, and friends to join in this celebration and continue investing in the future of higher education.

To learn more about the 44th Annual Trustees' Gala and what promises to be an inspiring evening, celebrating the honorees' contributions and raising crucial funds to support the university's mission, visit www.mercy.edu/2025gala.

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About Mercy University

Mercy University is an independent, coeducational institution serving more than 9,000 students each year across campuses in Westchester, the Bronx, Manhattan, as well as online. It is a federally designated minority-serving institution and the largest private Hispanic Serving Institution in the state of New York. Mercy offers more than 100 undergraduate and graduate degree programs and certificate programs within six schools: Business, Education, Health and Natural Sciences, Liberal Arts, Nursing and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Mercy was founded in 1950 by the Sisters of Mercy whose mission of transformative education remains strong. For more information, visit www.mercy.edu.

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Mercy University

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