

FALL 2023

# *Aspirations*



*Happy 50th NOCCA!*  
Celebrating a National Treasure

A publication of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts Foundation  
the non-profit partner of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts



Dear NOCCA Community,

As we begin the celebration of our 50th anniversary, we have reflected on what has made NOCCA an important and successful institution thus far.

In other parts of the country, high school arts conservatories are either private institutions costing \$30,000 - \$70,000 per year, or public district schools. NOCCA’s model is unique – serving tuition-free any Louisiana student who passes the audition. It doesn’t matter if families have resources or not, if students live or don’t live in a particular school district. We believe serving creative youth from multiple parishes, communities, and life experiences is an essential element of the NOCCA model.

Looking to the future, we strive to retain and expand on this model. To that end, I’m excited to report that ideas that have been discussed for years by faculty have become reality. We’ve made big changes on campus:

- Our Level I conservatory students now attend classes at the same time as the Level II - IV students, allowing newer students to observe and upper-level students to mentor, enriching both experiences.
- We’ve increased access to include quarterly after-school workshops offered over the entire school year. Students who are unable to attend during the school day are now engaging in a wide variety of workshops in a program we call *Experience NOCCA*. Current students can also expand their artistic interests outside of their primary concentration by attending *Experience NOCCA*.

These changes have greatly extended NOCCA’s outreach and created a more diverse experience for teachers and students alike.

Meanwhile, new statewide outreach has led to collaborations with existing arts organizations across Louisiana. We have moved from partnering with schools in 13 – 15 regional parishes to serving students in 33 parishes, nearly doubling the number of students served. Our goal is to reach all 64 parishes soon.

NOCCA’s designation as Louisiana’s School for the Arts is an honor we take to heart. We look forward to continuing this legacy well into the future.

  
Silas Cooper  
NOCCA President/CEO

Jackson Hill



Dear Friends of NOCCA,

As NOCCA celebrates its 50th Anniversary, we are excited to look to the future.

We know how transformative this center of artistic learning has been to thousands of creative young people since NOCCA’s founding. We want to ensure its vitality and continuous evolution for the decades to come – decades sure to be marked by remarkable change.


So we are building a new road map. We are designing a 50th Anniversary campaign that includes key initiatives for the coming years. Some, such as NOCCA’s efforts to include more entry points for regional and statewide youth, have already launched.

Others are underway. They include establishing targeted funds for our most important student programs and dynamic, industry-standard learning.

Projects such as the Mental Health Initiative will continue to serve students’ core well-being, while other efforts will ensure that all youth, regardless of resources, can always access NOCCA’s traditional training tools, current technology, and tomorrow’s innovations.

We invite you to join us on this road and be part of NOCCA’s legacy over the next 50 years.

Sincerely yours,

  
Shanekah Johnson  
President  
Vocal '01

  
Sally Perry  
Executive Director

On the cover:  
Lawrence Rawlins, Jazz IV; Sage Rumney, Dance IV; and Niko Gaudin, Culinary Arts III  
Cake by Denae Reddick '17, WhippedConfectionsonline.com  
Photography by Jackson Hill





## PATHS HOME

When I found myself studying in Italy in the late 80's, it was because I'd read a book by Italo Calvino in the NOCCA Creative Writing program a few years earlier and wanted to read his work in the original Italian. Over the years we've heard similar stories from Creative Writing alums, that some book they read or NOCCA class they took sent them on a trajectory in life that changed them forever.

My own trajectory led me back to NOCCA, teaching at the old Perrier Street building uptown, later touring the abandoned Bywater warehouses in a hard hat with architects, spaces which would become our future classrooms and offices. I've worked under every principal, and later every CEO, in NOCCA's history, and now I'm on my second generation of writers, having taught the father of a current student. I was even a NOCCA parent for a few years, during which my child learned one of the most important lessons a student can learn here: that a career in the arts is not for everyone.

Throughout this multi-dimensional, multi-generational relationship with NOCCA, we've experienced Hurricane Katrina, a global pandemic, and more hurricanes. Technology and social-cultural changes continue to radically transform our work as artists. But what I've witnessed over and over again, is that artist-teachers are especially well-equipped to respond and adapt to change, maintaining a high level of instruction by centering students and artistic practice.

My early trajectory not only led me back to NOCCA, but also to publishing books and essays and having my own work translated into several languages, becoming part of the generative cycle of art making. And this is one of the most exciting things about working at NOCCA, being part of that cycle, by exposing students to possibility within themselves, their chosen art form and the world.

Anne Gisleson  
Creative Writing Chair, Alumna 1986, Past NOCCA Parent, Author



# PATHS OF CREATIVES

*Intensive learning in most fields provides students with skills to pursue any number of paths. This is especially true in the arts. Alumni from several arts disciplines share the impact of their arts-learning at NOCCA, whether they are now pursuing traditional artistic paths or innovating in other fields using their unique creative talents.*

## ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION DESIGN

**M**y career in the film industry is as a Lighting Programmer. Lighting in film is becoming more and more computerized. It's necessary to have someone like me controlling them from a lighting console. It also gives me creative opportunities on set to influence the look of a scene. To this day I use the very same lighting console family (albeit newer and upgraded) that I was trained on at NOCCA.

I started at NOCCA at the age of 14 in the summer intensive program where I met Dan Zimmer (founding past chair of Entertainment Production Design). Dan became a very important mentor to me and a big influence on my career path.

At a young age I knew that I wanted a career in lighting. Between the training I received at NOCCA and opportunities and experiences given to me by Dan, I can honestly say I wouldn't be where I am today without the two. I often tell people that NOCCA saved my life. I had always planned to be a Lighting Designer at various regional theatres around the country rather than in the film industry. But, as life goes, you just continue forward saying yes to opportunities that are relevant to your passions and you end up in a good place. I'm extremely grateful for my life and my career and it 100% all began with my time at NOCCA.



**JOSH COURTNEY '10**  
Film Lighting Programmer  
New Orleans

(Left, Josh lighting up actor Adam Driver's helmet for the film *65*.)

## CULINARY ARTS

**TRUMAN PARSONS '17**  
Sous Chef, Per Se  
New York City



**W**hile attending Johnson & Wales University after NOCCA, I began a three-month internship at three-Michelin starred Le Bernadin restaurant in New York City. I stayed four years.

It was always my intention to work in fine dining, and to make that happen in such an amazing food city like NYC was, and still is, a dream. Currently I work at Per Se, operated by the great American chef Thomas Keller.

The day-to-day work at a restaurant is something that has always suited me. The goals are generally clear: cook food in a timely manner and be ready when the first guest walks in at 4:30 p.m. Tasks are repetitive and simple, made simpler by the thousands of hours we've all spent performing these motions. Everyone is a specialist down to the last person. If you want to know where the best dishwasher in the country is, he's in the kitchen at Per Se.

Our first team members arrive in the kitchen at 7 a.m. Stocks are put on to simmer, bread is set to proof, and proteins are broken down. An army of young cooks hunch over their cutting boards with the attention and urgency of trauma surgeons. The pace becomes more frenetic as the day goes on, everyone with an eye on the clock, waiting for the first ticket.

The next few hours are a rush as everyone works together to put out hundreds of courses. For many guests, this will be their

most anticipated meal of the year. Everything possible is done to meet those expectations.

To be clear nothing about this is easy most days. The hours are long, the pay is generally not great, and the physical and mental effort you are required to exert every day can be extreme. Ask me about anything going on outside of the four windowless walls of a kitchen and there is a good chance the conversation will be a short one. We are surrounded by other similarly obsessive people all working towards the same seemingly simple goal of serving people good food.

For me this is a profession that is deeply satisfying, both in the act of cooking itself, and in watching people enjoy the product of this labor. I'm very lucky to have had some amazing mentors over the years, beginning with my time NOCCA.

I feel very fortunate to have had access to such an amazing program at a time when I was first discovering this new passion. The industry has changed even in the relatively short time I've been a part of it. Workers are being treated more fairly, and in general the whole culture of a restaurant has modernized to match that of a normal workplace. I honestly have no idea what this industry is going to look like in 30 years' time, but I'm very proud and excited to take part in that future.



# JAZZ

Three years out of college, I have dived into my career as a musician. After NOCCA, I attended the Berklee College of Music on full scholarship, and with 11 other students I was accepted into the Berklee Global Master's program. An offer to tour in Chief Xian aTunde Adjuah's band, Sounds Carved of Legends, changed that path. It's a new concept he has created invoking not only his tradition within the Afro-Native American culture, but also folkloric West African music. I've also been touring and recording with Cautious Clay, Laufey, Alexander Stewart, Ray Angry, Nicolas Payton, Donald Harrison Jr. and many other amazing master artists.

My training at NOCCA has greatly affected my career. Being surrounded by great artists and forward thinkers of my generation – whether they be in my field of Jazz, in Culinary Arts, or recording engineers – we were all able to collaborate, to practice together, to begin to create our own work. Once I got to Berklee, I was ahead of a lot of my peers because I had learned to not only collaborate on the bandstand but within multi-disciplinary spaces as well. I would go as far as to say that NOCCA and Berklee are perfect examples of the industry. How you carry yourself within these spaces matter just as much as craft and merit.

My thought is: create what makes you happy. Worry about others' responses later. If you enjoy certain styles of music, try to blend those styles to create something uniquely your own. In this same vein, be open to every opportunity. Having this mindset will bring about so many more opportunities to work, but also to learn and grow both inside and outside of your craft.



**BRIAN RICHBURG '17**  
Drummer, Band Leader  
New York City

**MICHAEL FREEMAN '99**  
Creative Director and Founding Partner Department  
of Music  
New York City



My path from NOCCA has been intricately connected to music, though not always as a performer. After attending Berklee College of Music and New York University for a master's degree in music technology and production, I pursued a career in music production for film and advertising. My company Department of Music collaborates with agencies and brands to bring musical ideas to life through original music production, sonic branding, licensing, and artist cultivation.

I've gotten to work with legendary artists such as Aretha Franklin, Billy Idol, Leslie Odom Jr., and H.E.R. While as the Executive Music Producer at Global advertising agency Ogilvy, I produced music for brands such as American Express, Coca-Cola, IKEA, Nationwide, UPS, IBM, Tiffanys and NASCAR. Additional Clients included Disney, Chase Bank, HP, and Reebok while producing music at McGarry Bowen and Publicis Kaplan Thaler.

Some of my time is spent translating music-speak to non-music executives and translating advertising-speak to musicians and composers. It's great to get to work with so many musicians, orchestrators, and composers as we produce original music or re-records that perfectly underscore a client's vision for their brand. Since COVID, some business practices have changed, and projects today can be more siloed and mobile as we spend less time recording together in a studio.

In this field, learning to compose is vitally important for your future, just as important as fully understanding the business side of the industry, which includes publishing, master, and performance rights. Your talent is your asset to sustain and protect.

Many of the things I learned from my teachers at NOCCA are essential to my career now. Kent Jordan taught me the immense value of practicing and Clyde Kerr Jr. taught me to approach music with heart and passion. You may be the most talented in the class, but if you don't work hard and put in the time, those who do will be better than you. This is also apt for being successful in today's music industry.

NOCCA was, in fact, one of my most formative music experiences. I learned how to work hard, play with heart, and hit a wrong note with conviction. I learned life lessons every day and don't know where I'd be if I had not attended and crossed paths with incredible teachers and artists in so many disciplines. New Orleans and NOCCA are a gumbo of creativity. NOCCA had a hand in me pursuing my life's passion and that is a great gift.



## CLASSICAL VOCAL

### ASHLEY MILANESE '10 Soprano and Educator New Orleans



As a professional opera singer with an international career, I sing in opera houses around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera, Teatro Regio di Torino, Komische Opera Berlin, Opera Philadelphia, and Mostly Mozart Festival to name a few. I also teach privately and at NOCCA. This career allows me to travel the world, to sing on some of the most historic and beautiful stages, and to experience and learn about other cultures while living in different cities.

I recently moved back to the USA after living in Italy for almost 4 years. This was the most significant experience of my career, both musically and personally. While abroad, I was able to immerse myself and become fluent in the most important language of opera, work with legendary conductors, sing on stages where our most beloved operas made their debuts, and experience Italian culture on a deep and meaningful level. As a proud Italian-American, I was also able to obtain my Italian citizenship – always a personal dream of mine!

NOCCA was a crucial and pivotal part of my career. I had dedicated, world-class training during my most influential years as a growing opera singer and person. Ms. Phyllis Treigle, our voice teacher, provided me with the knowledge and training necessary to then study at both The Juilliard School and Curtis Institute of Music. She prepared me in a way that made me feel like a professional. She created an environment at NOCCA

that allowed me to express myself deeply while developing the skills necessary to take my career to the next level.

This type of training and opportunity cannot be found anywhere else. I firmly believe in the philosophy of learning by doing. Singing is an art that must be fostered by actively singing and by performing for an audience to learn and grow in immeasurable ways. Participating in our weekly performance class at NOCCA was crucial to fine-tuning and learning about myself and my abilities. Performing on Lupin Hall's stage directly reflected what it would be like to sing in an actual opera house. Some of my most cherished memories were made on that stage.

NOCCA also deeply influenced my creativity and expression as a human being. I was able to meet people of all backgrounds, skills, and abilities. We were able to connect through common interests and the belief in the necessity of art in this world. Learning with Jazz and Classical students truly became a melting pot, and we were all influenced by each other's individual expression of art for the better. Sharing space and collaborating with other disciplines was a very important life skill that NOCCA encouraged and fostered beyond our artistry, for our humanity. At NOCCA we learned to be supportive and present, to open our minds and hearts to those around us.

## ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION DESIGN



### MARK-ANTHONY THOMAS '09 Tenor, Arranger, NOCCA Teacher, Minister of Music, Background Singer, (and secretly a Pianist) New Orleans



My creative path has been unique for sure, as I always felt it would be. Even while a Classical Vocal student at NOCCA, I always had a passion for other genres and styles of music, such as gospel, jazz, and folk. NOCCA has led me to a wide-ranging career.

In 2012, I received the worst news any vocalist could ever receive: I had a vocal nodule as a result of not practicing good technique. After surgery, I became an advocate for vocal health and vocal stamina through a commitment to STRONG classical technique refined DAILY. I truly believe I am a testament to the fact that with a classical technique you can sing anything you want. In 2013, I met my current voice teacher, Loretta Bybee, who ingrained in me “learning how to sing (or learning how to do anything well) is a learning how to live.” It requires

lots of self-grace, patience, discipline, commitment, and time. This was the best lesson I ever received, and the lesson I love to teach to my students.

Through work and commitment, I have been able to extend my range, strengthen my breathing and adjust focal points from where I would like my vocal sound to come from. I’m in full control of my options. That’s what I want singers to understand.

This groundwork and consistency have led me to touring, in particular as a background singer for Tank and the Bangas. It is not an easy task to sing in the Alto range when I sing classical tenor repertoire, while rapping. Never thought I’d be doing that! I’m also making my New Orleans Opera debut in the new opera *Blue* this November, while serving every

Sunday as a minister of music. All without damaging my voice.

The opera and classical worlds are definitely changing, and the demand for new works is at an all-time high, especially with the success of Terence Blanchard’s operas, *Champion* and *Fire Up Shut in My Bones*. In the next few years, I see opera being more influenced by urban culture and jazz. I would love to see a hip-hop, jazz-fusion or funk opera and I think it’s possible with the acceptance and success of minority composers, artists, and performers. I really believe the art form will thrive and expand to audiences that would never consider listening to opera. I refuse to believe the art form will die if we continue to evolve and tell more stories of minority experiences.

### DEREK BLANCO '06 Thermal Heater Floor Draftsman New Orleans

I graduated from NOCCA as a theatre design student, but I was a Jazz and Visual Arts student prior. One would think that with such a focus on arts and performance I would have made it my career. Instead, I am an independent contractor draftsman making technical drawings for thermal heated floors.

My career seems opposite of a jazz musician or graphic artist in terms

of workspace. But it is oddly similar in many aspects. Understanding composition and visual emphasis is as important to a draftsman as to a visual artist. It especially helps with proper communication from the planning desk to the production floor.

Having experience with the improvisational nature of jazz bands, one gains the ability to anticipate work shifting on the fly and to be

able to bring the tempo back in rhythm. Company meetings require focus and the ability to convey your message clearly. Anyone performing on a stage will tell you these skills take time and effort to perfect. They are just some of the abilities and attributes I developed at NOCCA. I am appreciative to NOCCA for giving me the chance to be successful in my career *and* still follow my creativity and passion in the arts.



# Experience NOCCA

4 p.m.

**Intensive 5-week  
workshops  
Apply at [nocca.com](http://nocca.com)**



## Introducing Experience NOCCA

NOCCA is excited to introduce a new attendance option!

Added this year are 5-week-long intensive workshops from 4 - 5:30 p.m. Offered are audition prep courses for 8th - 11th grade students, and intensive exploration courses in the arts for 9th - 12th grade students. Classes typically meet twice a week.

Workshops feature specialized training across all arts disciplines, including Classical Instrumental Music, Classical Vocal Music, Culinary Arts, Dance, Drama, Entertainment Production Design, Jazz, Media Arts, Musical Theatre, Visual Arts, and Creative Writing.

The program is designed to serve students who cannot commit to a full-year conservatory schedule but are interested in discovering art at a deeper level. It also serves current students wanting to stretch their arts training by taking a course in a different discipline.

"These workshops are a great way to try on an art and to dispel any anxiousness about auditioning," says Culinary Arts Chair Chef Dana Tuohy. "Over five weeks, students become comfortable and confident and really show us what they can do."

"We've been hearing from alumni in gaming and animation that these types of innovative classes are at the forefront of preparing students to thrive in the field," adds Visual Arts Chair Michel Varisco.

"We're also so excited that students from other arts disciplines can tap into the wealth of knowledge other arts teachers have," Varisco continues. "For instance, Visual Arts and Creative Writing are co-creating a workshop in gaming that provides students with a well-rounded experience in thinking about how games are formed and that merges design and visuals with great storytelling. Through these workshops, students can find out where they shine."

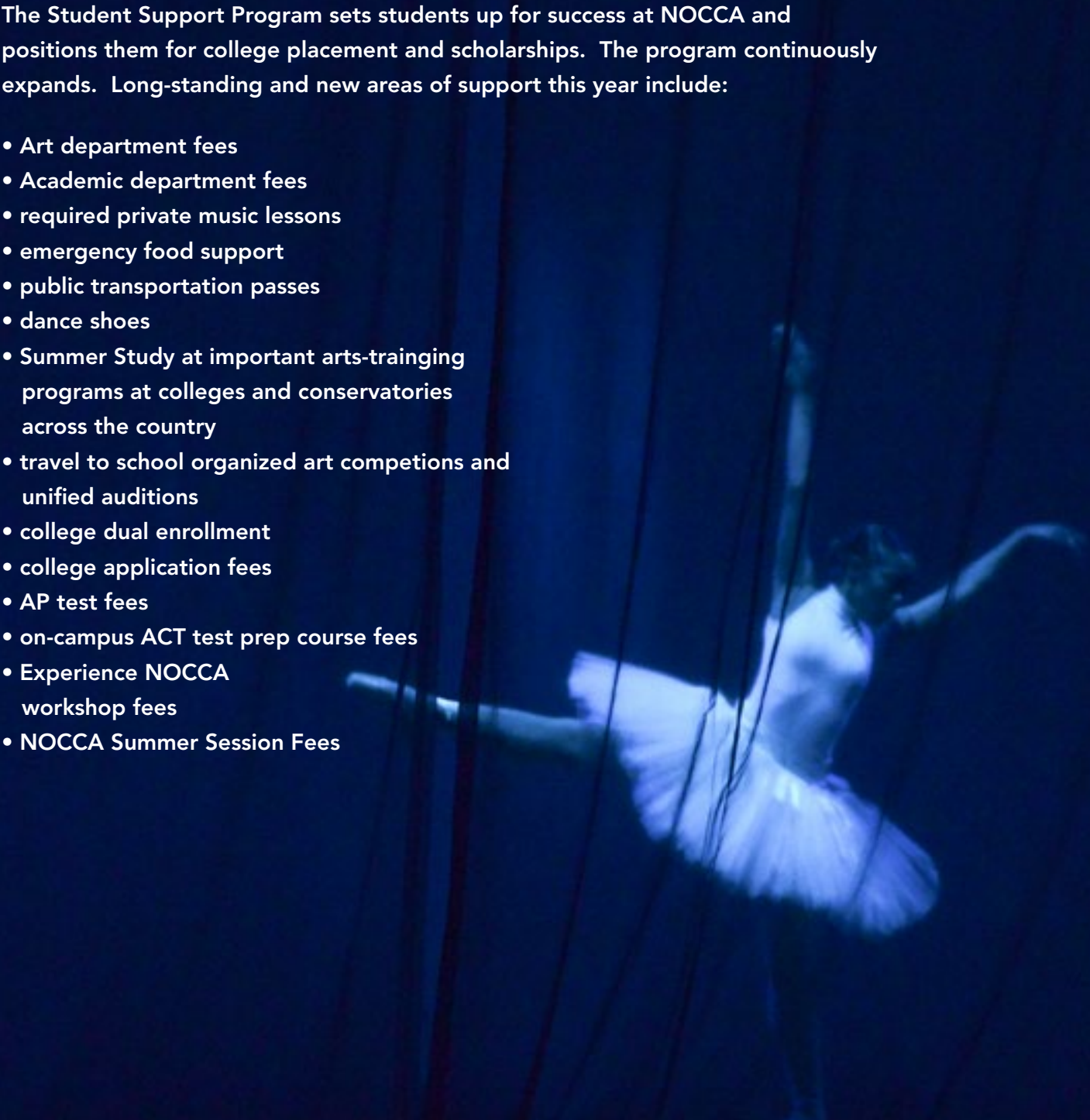
Some young creatives might even change course. "Our hope," believes Chef Dana, "is for students to be passionate about what they are doing every single day they come to school."

- Different classes are offered each session. Among the offerings are:
- All Schools Choir
- Italian Cooking
- Places of Mystery: Gaming Diorama
- Poetry Outloud
- Piano for Very Beginners
- Visual Arts & Creative Writing:
  - World-Building RPG Game Jam
- Cookies, Muffins, and Pies, Oh My!
- Intro to Ballet, Modern, Jazz and Tap Dance
- Sketch Comedy Writing Workshop
- Costume, Lighting and Stage Design
- Jazz Improvisation
- Screenwriting
- Jazz Voice
- The Writers Room: Writing for TV
- Cooking for College & Beyond
- Directing Boot Camp
- Camera and Lighting for Self-Taping
- Musical Theatre: Audition to Stage
- Classical Carving
- Audition Prep Workshops in all Arts

- **UPCOMING SESSIONS:**
- **SESSION #3:** Feb 19 - Mar 21
- **SESSION #4:** April 8 - May 9



PROGRAMS: STUDENT SUPPORT



The Student Support Program sets students up for success at NOCCA and positions them for college placement and scholarships. The program continuously expands. Long-standing and new areas of support this year include:

- Art department fees
- Academic department fees
- required private music lessons
- emergency food support
- public transportation passes
- dance shoes
- Summer Study at important arts-training programs at colleges and conservatories across the country
- travel to school organized art competitions and unified auditions
- college dual enrollment
- college application fees
- AP test fees
- on-campus ACT test prep course fees
- Experience NOCCA workshop fees
- NOCCA Summer Session Fees

	SCHOOL YEAR			ALL AWARDS
	No. of Awards Made	No. of Students Supported	Total School Year Awarded	School Year, Summer, & Graduate Awards
2022-23	242	242	\$154,683	\$301,336
2023-24 Budget			\$212,000	\$356,000

With Deep Appreciation to Lauren Daigle and The Price Fund

The Price Fund, a Lauren Daigle Foundation has provided essential support to New Orleans' arts programs for youth since 2019. In December 2022, Lauren granted \$100,000 each to the Ellis Marsalis Center, Kid Smart, Roots of Music, Young Audiences of Louisiana, and the NOCCA Foundation for our Student Support program. Her support touches the lives of hundreds of youth in the region, helping them develop their unique talents and inspiring their hopes.

She also gave students in performing arts programs the opportunity to open her Christmas 2022 concert at the Saenger! For NOCCA students it was a thrilling experience to perform before an audience that size. Said Classical Vocal student Kallan Butler, "it was an incredible experience to see how different it was to perform outside of the classroom or NOCCA's theatre, to see how such a tour is staged from behind the scenes, to work with her team, and to receive a standing ovation! Ms. Daigle is helping us in so many ways."



Nigel Valle-Maximi  
Jazz III

Study at Skidmore Jazz  
Summer Institute

"I am eternally grateful for the financial aid the NOCCA Foundation provided me to attend the Skidmore Jazz Institute over the summer. During the program's two weeks, my peers and I were exposed to many amazing musicians, whether at the Saratoga Jazz Festival or in performance at Skidmore.

I was able to meet the great jazz vocalist Samara Joy at the Saratoga Jazz Festival. I also had the opportunity to see Pat Metheny performing with NOCCA alum Joe Dyson! I was able to study with Jazz greats Jimmy Greene, Bill Cunliffe, Todd Coolman, Mike Rodriguez, Dave Stryker, Mimi Fox, and many more. And I was given the opportunity to attend a gig at Caffé Lena in Saratoga Springs.

Saratoga Springs is a beautiful area filled with greenery and arguably perfect summer weather compared to New Orleans. During my free periods, I had access to practice rooms and Skidmore's soccer field. Most importantly, I was able to network with people of my generation who are going to keep this music going strong. The Skidmore Jazz Institute helped me greatly improve my craft and discipline as an individual and musician."







**BRYAN BATT**  
Broadway and  
Television Performer

"In our field, you are constantly at the mercy of someone else's opinion of your work. It can be disheartening if you take it personally," actor Bryan Batt told Drama and Entertainment Production Design students. He shared numerous stories of working on

productions from *La Cage Aux Folles* to *Moby Dick the Musical* to *Mad Men*. "Betty Buckley taught me this rule: play the room you are in. Dial it up or dial it down. Once you are comfortable in a character's shoes, you can't make a false move. You have to trust that. There is truth or no truth. There's no such thing as over the top. You can go big as long as it is grounded in truth." He shared differences between working in film and on stage, getting an agent, continuous learning. "Be on time. Be early. Have a good work ethic. Be prepared. Don't ever talk trash about a show or those in your show. Nothing good comes from negativity. Don't talk negatively," he said, jokingly adding "at least until you are six blocks from the theatre."



**CHARLIE GABRIEL**  
Jazz Saxophonist  
and Singer, Member  
of Jazz Preservation  
Hall Band

Ultimately, "everything you play will become part of who you are. And all the mistakes you make are stepping-stones. Those are the tools you need to

learn. Don't be afraid of mistakes," he urged the young musicians. "Discipline and compassion come out of music."

He recommended a number of musicians to listen to, such as his favorite, Coleman Hawkins. "You don't always know when you are in someone's presence. You realize it after. Music is such a beautiful language. It makes you a better you."

Students will always remember their master class with ninety-year-old jazz master Charlie Gabriel, rich in history, technique and love. "The war was going on and everyone was in the service. At 11 years old, I could read music so I could play with all the bands. Everyone I came into contact with made me a better person," Charlie began.



**COURTNEY BYRAN '00**  
Composer, Teacher  
Performer, Alumna

"When did you find your style," a student asked alumna Courtney Bryan. "I can't talk about it in the past tense," Courtney responded. "I'm always trying to get to my style. Since moving back to New Orleans, I'm returning

to my younger style." Performing several works for students, the jazz and classical composer urged students to always be proud of the work they do. "Being consistent in your work can be more important than brilliance." Asked about her work as a woman and a Black artist, Courtney responded, "In jazz, I'm often the only woman. In classical, I'm often the only Black artist. I want to be able to be my full self in whatever setting I am." Today that setting is as a teacher and composer, working with Opera Philadelphia as composer-in-residence. As a 2023 MacArthur Fellow, she can pursue her musical aspirations. "Dream big," she told students. "Throw out an idea. Sometimes it catches."

2022-23

NO. OF  
RESIDENCIES

135

**Joseph Gatti**

Renowned ballet dancer and teacher led a week-long residency in classical ballet and conditioning, and set a new work on students.



**Denae Reddick '17**

Pastry Chef (and creator of our cover cake) led Culinary Arts students in a week-long workshop on cake decorating.



**Leroy Jones**

Trumpeter and composer led master class with Jazz students.



**Cameron Ware**

Performer, choreographer and director led Musical Theatre students in developing their production of *Little Shop of Horrors*.



**Hannah Chelew '04**

Plant-based art maker led a week-long workshop on found natural materials for ink and paper-making for Visual Arts students.



**Leslie Elliottsmith**

Printmaker led a week-long workshop on deconstructed screen printing with Visual Arts students.



**Phoenix Montague '15**  
Eskew Dumez  
Ripple

Interior designer joined other EDR colleagues in a week-long workshop on tiny home design.



**Charis Gullage '15**

Singer, actress, and dancer led Musical Theatre students in sequences from *Donna Summer The Musical*, the starring role she recently played in the national tour.

2022-23

NO. OF  
ARTISTS

119



## National and Regional Awards 2023

Students won awards this year in the following prestigious national and regional competitions:

- **Lillian Foster** (Drama IV), **Amiri Hardy** (Classical Instrumental III), **Vince "VITO" Williams Jr.** (Musical Theatre III), were named Posse Foundation Program Scholars, earning full tuition leadership scholarships to Tulane University, Texas A&M University, and Illinois Wesleyan University respectively.
- **13** students received national honors and Gold Key recognition in the Scholastic Arts and Writing Competition in 2022-23.
- **Sebastien Barrau** (Classical Instrumental IV) was a National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Competition semi-finalist; **three** other students were commended.
- **Khalil McKnight** (Visual Arts III), **Chantel Collins** (Vocal IV) and **Kaleb Johnson** (Culinary Arts IV), and **Camara Dupree IV** (Jazz Instrumental IV) were recognized as NAACP National Gold Medial Award winners.
- **Marcus Monistere** (Classical Vocal IV) was awarded First Place High School Men Southern Region in National Association of Teachers of Singing competition.



## Krewe of Muses

Visual Arts students were invited to submit designs for this year's Muses throw cup. Below are several submissions. The winning selection remains a secret! Look for it at the 2024 Muses Parade!



## Presidential Scholar In The Arts

**Khalil McKnight** (Visual Arts III) was named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, one of twenty named nationwide. He joins other noted NOCCA alumni who have received this award, including musician Terence Blanchard (1980), actor Wendell Pierce (1981), creative writers Nicole Cooley and Susan Bernofsky (1984), and filmmaker Holden Brown (2009). Khalil is attending the Rhode Island School of Design on full scholarship.

(Left) *Bull in a China Shop*, by Khalil McKnight, 2023 NOCCA Foundation Collection Purchase



## Class of 2023 College Scholarship and Grant Offers

	Total Scholarships & Grants Offered	Per Student Average Offer
All NOCCA Seniors	<b>\$38 Million*</b>	<b>\$317,000</b>
Only half-day arts students	<b>\$20 Million</b>	<b>\$292,000</b>
Only Academic Studio students (full-day academics & arts)	<b>\$18 Million</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>
Only NOCCA Foundation Student Support recipients	<b>\$21.7 Million</b>	<b>\$345,500</b>

\* Graduates were offered \$31 million in scholarships and \$7 million in grants.

Ninety-three percent of 2023 graduates are pursuing college while 7% are directly pursuing an arts career.





OF NOTE: ALUMNI

Lincoln Center Year-Long Celebration,  
San Francisco Jazz Artistic Director,  
NEA Jazz Master

2023 continues to be a remarkable year for Jazz alumnus **Terence Blanchard** '80. In March, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts kicked off *See Me As I Am*, a year-long celebration and its first ever cross-campus exploration of one artist. Arts organizations across Lincoln Center's campus – including Film at Lincoln Center, Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Juilliard School, the Metropolitan Opera, New York Philharmonic and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts – will feature Terence's jazz, chamber and orchestral music, opera and film scores, among other works, during the celebration. In June, the venerable San Francisco Jazz appointed Terence as Executive Artistic Director. And in July, Terence was named a 2024 NEA Jazz Master.



2023 MacArthur Fellows

Two NOCCA alumna were named 2023 MacArthur Fellows recipients this year! Dance and Drama alumna **Andrea Armstrong** '91 (right, above), an incarceration law scholar at Loyola University received a genius grant for bringing transparency to detention policies, conditions of confinement, and deaths in U.S. prisons and jails. Jazz alumnus **Courtney Bryan** '00 (right below), performer and composer, also received a genius grant for melding elements of jazz, classical, and sacred music in works that reverberate with social and political issues of our time. The awards enable talented recipients to exercise their own creative instincts for the benefit of human society.



10th Anniversary Doris Duke Artist in  
Jazz

Jazz alumnus **Chief Xian aTunde Adjua**h '01 (formerly Christian Scott), was one of six artists selected across the fields of contemporary dance, jazz, and theatre by the Doris Duke Artists Awards program. The program celebrates recipients extraordinary and innovative artistry. Grants are designed to allow artists the ability to chart their own courses, take creative risks and define what they need, personally and professionally, to thrive and create powerful work.



On The Road

Jazz alum and past faculty member **Gregory Agid** '05 was a member of Michael Buble's 2022-23 worldwide tour.

Jazz alum **Jeffery Miller** '14 is a member of the Jonas Brother's 2023 -24 World Tour.

Vocal alum and faculty member **Mark-Anthony Thomas** '09 has been touring America, Canada and Europe with Tank and the Bangas.



50th ANNIVERSARY

Join us for this year's events celebrating NOCCA's 50th Anniversary!

► **NOCCA Past, Present, and Future**  
**Ogden Museum of Art**  
**March 9 - April 21, 2024**

This retrospective exhibit features work by NOCCA's celebrated faculty, students and alumni from the collection of the Ogden Museum, Roger Ogden and Ken Barnes, the NOCCA Foundation. The exhibit spans work in painting, photography, print making, ceramics, sculpture, drawings, and digital art.

► **NOCCA's Fifty-Year Feast**  
**Press Street Station, 600 Homer Plessy Way**  
**December 1, 2023**

NOCCA students invite you to a sumptuous 5-course dinner celebrating NOCCA's anniversary, with the meal prepared by Culinary Arts students; sound, lighting and costume design by Entertainment Production Design students; and performances by students from across campus. Tickets available at [NOCCAFoundation.org/50feast](https://NOCCAFoundation.org/50feast).



Caesar's Superdome Murals

To capture the spirit and excitement of being a Saints fan, three recent Visual Arts alumni were commissioned by the New Orleans Saints to create "Instagrammable" murals in the Superdome. The murals showcase what the Saints mean to New Orleans. Above left by 2023 alumnus Micah Johnson; below left by 2023 alumnus Khalil McKnight; and above right by 2018 alumna Hillary Spriggins. Look for these exciting works at the next game you attend!





## THANK YOU

*With gratitude, we acknowledge the major support and dedication to educational and artistic excellence at NOCCA by donors during the 2022-23 fiscal year.*

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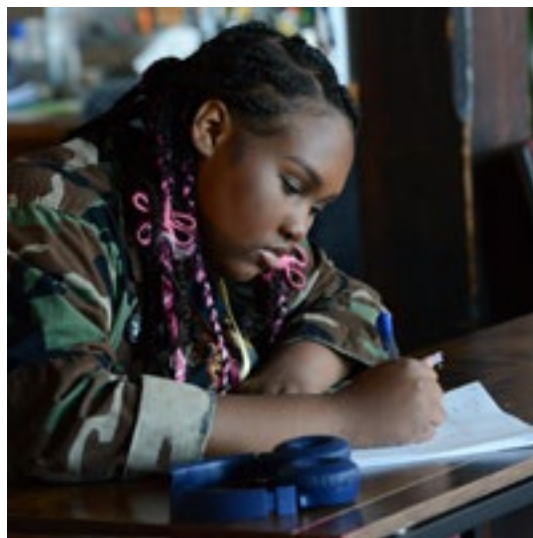
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*On April 3, 2023, family, friends, former and current students honored the late Clyde Kerr Jr. for his artistry and his impact as past Chair of Jazz at NOCCA, educator, trumpeter and composer (below). In his memory the Beightler Squires Charitable Trust dedicated the Clyde Kerr Jr. Memorial Fund for Jazz students.*







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2021-22 NOCCA CIRCLE

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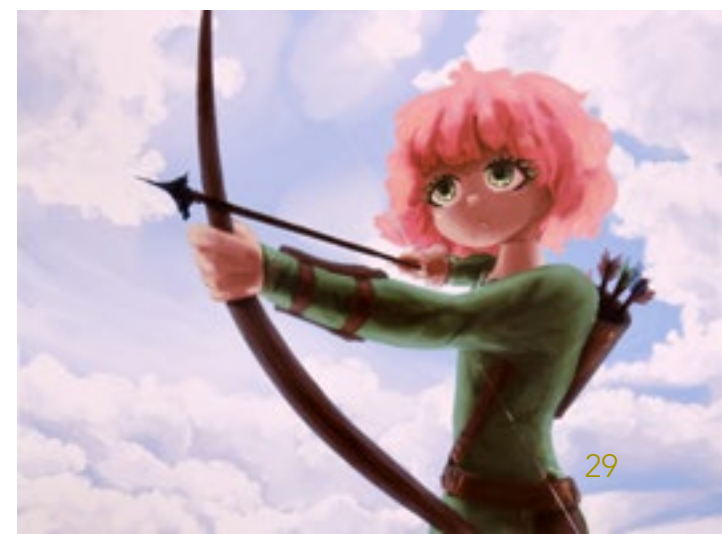
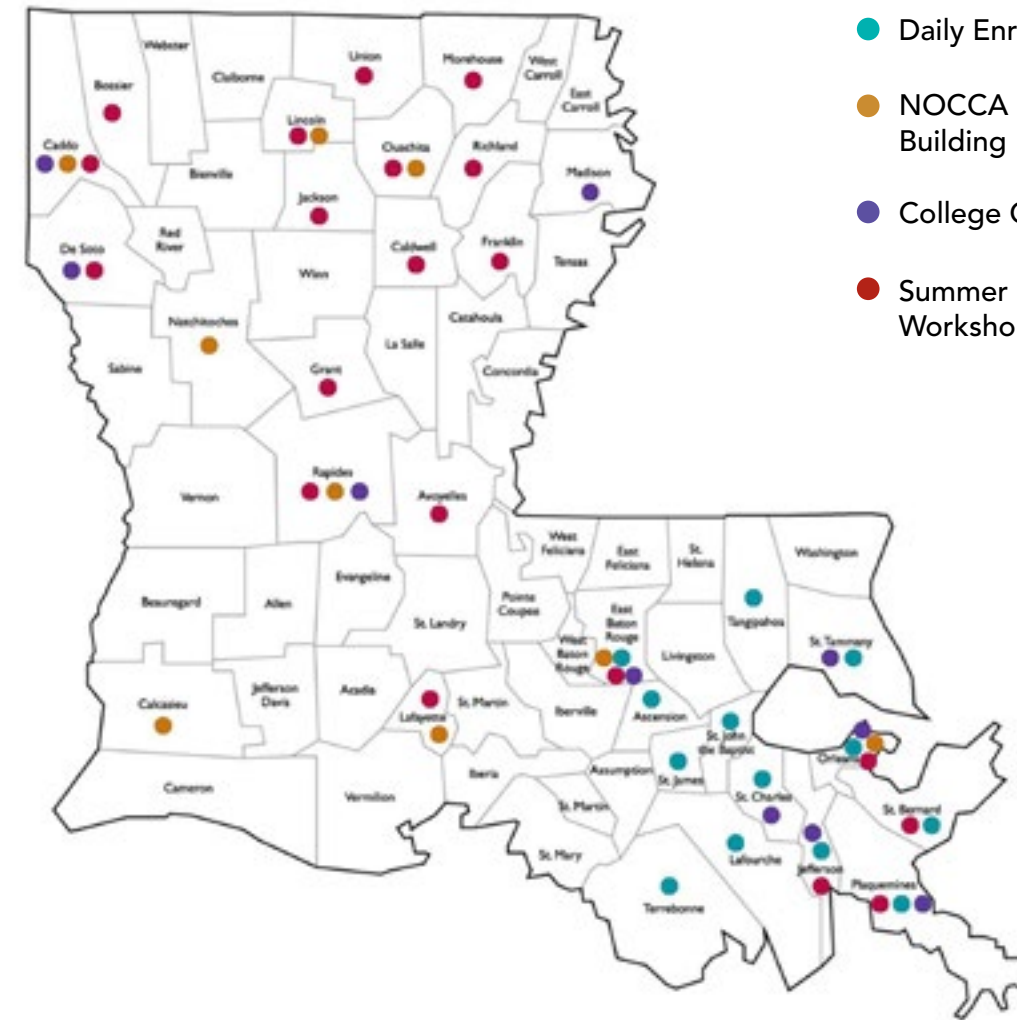
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NOCCA hit the road in 2023, with the goal of providing more opportunities to more students throughout the state of Louisiana. Through summer programming and virtual College Prep Workshops, NOCCA reached nearly 300 additional student-artists in just the first 6 months of this initiative!





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The following gifts of \$250+ supported awards to graduating seniors in 2020 and 2021.

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Vocal alumna Joel Dyson '10 and her band, featuring Jazz alum Stephen Gladney '10



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With great thanks to our 2023 ART&SOUL sponsors, chairs, committee, restaurants, Culinary Arts, and performers.

See you Saturday, May 18 for ART&SOUL 2024!



Death of an Adolescent, by Emily Gowland  
Visual Arts IV  
NOCCA Foundation Collection Award in Memory of Bunnie Hunter





### *The Meadow Inside*

by Feyu Diallo, Visual Arts II  
(former Jazz III)

I wanted this piece to reflect the lesser known side of me. I've been told countless times that I "look mad," or that I should "smile more," even though that's just the way my face sits.

So in this piece, I covered it – letting my body be the one to make my expression instead.



### CREATIVE WRITING

### *Driving through the Mountains*

libby northup, Creative Writing IV

Focus. Breathe.

It takes tremendous concentration,  
driving through these mountains.

The dirt roads are narrow and lined  
with rocks, fallen trees, debris.

Keep your eyes straight ahead.

Ease your foot onto the gas.

Keep your turns tight.

You'll feel like the trees are swallowing you up,  
and it will be charming

and this driving will be a challenge that is simple,  
that is manageable.

Focus. Breathe.

Listen to your tires move the pebbles  
beneath you, the sound that proves  
you are far from the city.

The pressing. The crunching.

Isn't it gratifying?

Distance from the challenge that seems  
to spiral into uncontrollable loops,  
the challenge of tumultuous relationships,  
the challenge of all-consuming work,  
the challenge of the everyday.

That is far away now.

Focus. Breathe.

Roll a window down,  
let the air of elevation lick your face.

Lick it back: it tastes like wilderness.

It tastes like a little bit of liberty.

Be here.

The trees are greater than you,  
allow them to remind you  
of your relieving and pleasant tininess.





Fade into them.

Focus. Breathe.





2023-24 CALENDAR

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	Fall & Spring	Adult Classes Visit NOCCAFoundation.org		Dec 20	Home for the Holidays House of Blues
	Jan 6 - Feb 12	Culinary Arts King Cakes Visit NOCCAFoundation.org		May 18	2024 ART&SOUL Gala Chevron Forum
dance			drama		
	Nov 16-17	Seven Nims Black Box		Oct 26-27	Macbeth Nims Black Box
	May 1-3	Spring Dance Concert Freda Lupin Hall		Mar 26 - 28	Sketch Comedy Review Ellis Marsalis Jazz Studio
jazz & classical			musical theatre		
	Nov 29	Jazz Winter Concert Freda Lupin Hall		Sept 28 - 29	In My Dreams: In Concert Nims Black Box
	Dec 19	Classical Winter Concert Ellis Marsalis Studio		Mar 20-22	Chicago Freda Lupin Hall
vocal			nocca		
	Dec 13 - 14	Back to the Baroque Freda Lupin Hall		Dec 2	Audition Information Session
	April 17 - 19	Vocal Concert Nims Black Box		Jan 19	Application Deadline for 2024-25 School Year
				April 20	Senior Saturday Celebration & Performances



**FRIEND \$100 - \$499**

- Recognition in *Aspirations* annual newsletter
- Invitation to NOCCA Circle member events

**ADVOCATE \$500 - \$999**

- NOCCA Circle Pin
- Plus above benefits

**ARTISAN \$1,000 - \$4,999**

- Special recognition at NOCCA Foundation Events
- Plus above benefits

**INNOVATOR \$5,000 - \$9,999**

- Limited edition NOCCA print
- Plus above benefits

**VISIONARY \$10,000 +**

- NOCCA building rental discount
- Plus above benefits

Contact Richard Read, Director of Development & Communications, at [rread@NOCCAFoundation.org](mailto:rread@NOCCAFoundation.org) for more information.

SUPPORT THROUGH THE NOCCA CIRCLE

A NOCCA student's journey starts with you.

Our broad network of supporters make up the NOCCA Circle, a family of individuals and corporations who have demonstrated a commitment to NOCCA by making consecutive annual gifts to the NOCCA Foundation.

We welcome your donations in any of the following ways:

- Below by check or credit card
- Online at **NOCCAFoundation.org/Circle**
- Or through gifts enabling tax benefits including gifts from an IRA, appreciated stock, Donor Advised Fund, real estate, property or planned gift.

Gift amount:

☐ \$100

☐ \$500

☐ \$2,500

☐ \$250

☐ \$1,000

☐ Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My gift will be:

☐ A recurring monthly gift

☐ A one-time gift

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I make this gift in honor/in memory of (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify (name/address) \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to NOCCA Foundation.

☐ Check, enclosed and made payable to the NOCCA Foundation

☐ Credit card; please charge my Visa \_\_\_\_ MC \_\_\_\_ or Am Ex \_\_\_\_

☐ I decline benefits (tickets, other). Please make my donation fully tax-ductible.

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**NOCCA graduates received \$38 million in scholarship and grant offers from over 200 colleges across the country in 2023.**

*With special thanks for program leadership to:*

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