



Rhodes College

DIVISION OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Rhodes College Highlights & Achievements

Fall 2023

Rhodes College continues to garner extensive local and national media attention for our faculty's expertise and thought leadership, active student engagement, annual rankings, campus events, promotions, and noteworthy awards and achievements.

College Rankings, Achievements, and Awards

Rhodes College's standing on college ranking lists persisted in the Fall 2023 semester. Publications such as *Forbes*, *Money*, *The Princeton Review*, *Fiske Guide to Colleges* and other reputable sources have consistently recognized Rhodes for our value, picturesque campus, and our exceptional liberal arts education that empowers students to adapt and succeed in our dynamically evolving society.

- [Rhodes College received a 4.5 out of 5](#) on the **Campus Pride Index**, which rates colleges and universities based on institutional commitment to LGBTQ-inclusive policies, programs, and practices. (Aug. 2023)
- [Rhodes garnered high rankings](#) in **The Princeton Review's 2024 edition of *The Best 389 Colleges***. Rhodes was in the top 25 in three categories: campus beauty, Greek life, and students studying the most. (Aug. 2023)
 - Rhodes also is among the "**Best Value Colleges**" for 2023 included in The Princeton Review's guide.
- College search platform [College Rover designated Rhodes No. 2](#) on its list of the **Most Beautiful College Campuses in the U.S.** (Aug. 2023)
- [Rhodes College is featured](#) as one of the "**Best and Most Interesting**" colleges in the 2024 edition of the *Fiske Guide to Colleges* (July 2023)
- [Forbes Magazine featured Rhodes College](#) on its inaugural list of **America's Best Small Employers**. (July 2023)
- [Rhodes hosted the 24th U.S. Poet Laureate](#) as part of the Jack D. Farris Visiting Writers Series. (Feb. 2023)
- Rhodes hosted the [2023 American Mock Trial Championships](#) and **Anna Eldridge** received the Neal Smith Award for her contributions to law-related education. (April 2023)

Rhodes College's Twenty-First President

Rhodes College celebrated its first year under the leadership of our twenty-first president, Jennifer M. Collins, in July 2023. President Collins continues to capture the attention of local and national media.

- [Jennifer Collins Among Presidents Authoring Open Letter](#) About Liberal Arts Colleges Prioritizing Diversity (May 2023)
- [Jennifer Collins Is Featured](#) Among Profiles of the Power 100 College Presidents in the Mid-South. (Feb. 2023)
- *Rhodes* magazine featured a [profile of Jennifer Collins](#) in the Winter 2023 issue. (Jan. 2023)

Faculty Expertise, Thought Leadership, and Achievement

In 2023, Rhodes faculty remained at the forefront, demonstrating expertise and conducting groundbreaking research on a range of significant subjects.

- [Stephen Haynes](#) was among the five winners of the 11th annual Innovation Awards presented by *Memphis Magazine*. The awards recognize the best and brightest who are keeping Memphis on the cutting edge. (Oct. 2023)
- **Joel Parsons**, director of [the Clough-Hanson Gallery](#), partnered with the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art to present ***Young, Gifted and Black: The Lumpkin-Boccuzzi Family Collection of Contemporary Art*** in its debut exhibition in the American South. (Sept. 2023)
- **Professor Shadrack W. Nasong'o** is a prominent critical voice on African politics, and serves as a co-editor of [African Immigrants and the American Experience: Race, Anti-Black Violence, and the Quest for the American Dream](#) and [The Palgrave Handbook of Kenyan History](#), both published in 2023.
- **Professor Shana Stoddard** was the recipient of three awards in 2023. In August, she was selected to receive the [2024 Ruth Kirschstein Diversity in Science Award](#) from the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and in May she was the recipient of the Council on Undergraduate Research's [Silvia Ronco Innovative Mentor Award](#). In October 2023, Stoddard received the [Tyrone Mitchell Mentor-on-the-Map Award](#) at the 50th annual meeting of the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers.
- [Professor Nikolaos Zahariadis](#), Mertie Buckman Chair and professor of international studies at Rhodes, received his third Fulbright award in February 2023.
- [Professor Brooke Schedneck's](#) work focuses on contemporary Buddhism in Thailand. Schedneck is the author of multiple books, has contributed to a variety of publications, and has done extensive research on her chosen topic. Schedneck published her new book, *Living Theravada: Demystifying the People, Places, And Practices of a Buddhist Tradition*, in April 2023.
- Rhodes produces powerful public programming. In 2023, the [Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center](#) welcomed documentarian Matthew Desmond for a Community Conversation About Poverty. The [Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies](#) welcomed Hip-Hop Scholar Regina Bradley to discuss Memphis' influence on Hip-Hop. [Communities in Conversation](#) invited Omid Safi, a prominent Muslim public intellectual, to discuss the Prophet Muhammad. As part of the college's 175th anniversary celebrations, *New York*

Times columnist [David Brooks](#) visited the college for a discussion on American politics and society.

Other Faculty Achievements

- [Professor Stephen Haynes](#) was presented the 2023 Jameson M. Jones Award for Outstanding Faculty Service. (Aug. 2023)
- [Professor Karl Erickson](#) and alumna Emily Burkhead '20 were featured artists at the inaugural Chroma Art Film Festival. (Aug. 2023)
- [Professor Cara Djonko-Moore](#) is featured as an expert in an article on Best Community Colleges. (Aug 2023)
- [Professor Victor Coonin](#) led a seminar for the Council of Independent Colleges titled "Power and Absence: Connecting Renaissance Art to Diverse Audiences." (June 2023)
- [Professor Elizabeth Cawein](#)'s Guest Column "Memphis Is — Or Can Be — The Music City Of The Future" was published in *The Daily Memphian* (June 2023)
- [Professor Amy Benson](#)'s essay "Snapshots of the End of Travel: On Trying to Enter a Personal No-Fly Zone" appeared in *Literary Hub*. (June 2023)
- [Professor Laura Taylor](#)'s Op-ed "Summer School Isn't The Solution for Improving Third-Grade Literacy" appeared in *The Commercial Appeal*. (June 2023)
- [Professor Scott Newstok](#)'s essay "How to Speak with Shakespeare" appeared in *The First Person with Michael Judge* (April 2023)
- [Professor Michael LaRosa](#)'s Op-ed "Opinion: Seeking Refuge In America – And Memphis" appeared in *The Daily Memphian*. (April 2023)
- [Dr. Rashna Richards](#) was admitted to the 2023-2024 Senior Leadership Academy of the Council of Independent Colleges and the American Academic Leadership Institute. (April 2023)
- [Professor Charles McKinney](#) Discussed activism and police brutality in relation to past and present events on WKNO's "Behind The Headlines" Segment (March 2023)
- [Professor Shatavia Wynn](#) was chosen for Sacred Writes' 2023 Carpenter Cohort, which consists of scholars focused on gender and sexuality studies.
- [Professor Žak Ozmo](#)'s column "'Tosca' At Opera Memphis a Memorable Performance — and a Timely One" appeared in *The Daily Memphian* (Feb. 2023)
- [Professor Sarah Rollens](#) was appointed as the executive editor of the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*.
- [Professor Duane Loynes Sr.](#)'s commentary "The Tyre Nichols Video Is Brutal and Sadly Quite Normal" appeared in *The Commercial Appeal* (Jan. 2023)
- Former Rhodes faculty member [Dr. Francisco O. "Frank" Mora](#) was sworn in as U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States. (Jan. 2023)
- [Professor Eric Henager](#) was selected as an Associated Colleges of the South academic leadership fellow. (Jan. 2023)

Student Achievement

Rhodes students have showcased exceptional achievements in 2023. Their endeavors encompass internships, service, applied research, creative activity, and activism, displaying their significant contributions to both our community and society at large.

Rhodes students excel in their academic fields and are often selected to receive prestigious academic awards.

- [Four Rhodes seniors](#) were selected to receive Fulbright awards for the 2023-2024 academic year.
- [Rhodes boasted two Goldwater Scholars](#) in 2023.
- Rhodes students were also selected for [the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship](#), [the Payne Fellowship](#), and the [overall top scholarship](#) from the **Memphis Chapter of Financial Executives International**.

Students make significant contributions to Memphis through service.

- [Summer Service Fellows](#) help strengthen the capacity of local nonprofit organizations while learning essential career and community building skills.
- [Roots at Rhodes](#) was the recipient of the 2023 Mike Kirby Service Award from the Volland Evergreen Community Association (VECA).
- [Students in Rhodes biology and biochemistry and molecular biology programs](#) taught STEM courses at local elementary schools.

Undergraduate research opportunities provide students with an applied learning environment while giving them experience working with faculty and gaining the necessary skills for their future careers.

- [Students in the Department of Chemistry](#) presented research at the national meeting of the American Chemical Society.
- [The Rhodes RHOK-SAT team](#) won a prize for their project presentation on their satellite design at the American of Aeronautics and Astronautics student conference.
- [Psychology students](#) presented research at the national meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.
- [A team of Rhodes students](#) won the local competition of the Chartered Financial Analysts Institute Research Challenge.
- [Rhodes students](#) brought back distinguished awards for their participation in the 2023 SUNY Model European Conference.

The Lynne and Henry Turley Memphis Center at Rhodes specializes in empowering students to create social change in Memphis. Student recipients of Turley fellowships investigate pressing issues and develop thought-provoking creative works.

- [Turley Fellow Merrick Moore](#) conducted research on community health programming in partnership with a Memphis hospital.
- [Turley Fellow Thea Li](#) honed her photography skills with an exhibition of her project documenting Memphis' public transportation.

- [Turley Fellow Maxie Sansom](#) gained valuable experience curating and exhibiting a set of rare Thai religious art.

Study Abroad experiences give Rhodes students the chance to explore diverse perspectives and expand their horizons.

- In 2023, [Rhodes students lived and learned in several African countries](#) on three-week Maymesters.
- [Asher Drummond reflected](#) on his experience in Rhodes' newest study abroad destination: Ghana.

More Student Achievement Stories

- [The Rhodes Theatre Guild won eight awards](#) for their 2022-2023 season at the Ostrander Awards. (Aug. 2023)
- [Class of 2027 student Landon Fulton](#) gained acceptance to 31 colleges nationwide and was offered more than \$1 million in scholarships. Landon chose to attend Rhodes. (Aug. 2023)
- [Brandon Washington](#) is featured in "Youth Villages Program Lifeset Scholars Helps Students with Tough Past Earn Degrees," published in *The Commercial Appeal* (July 2023)
- [Class of 2023 graduate Fikemi Aiyepuku](#) is the first Rhodes student to secure placement at one of the big three management consulting firms, Bain & Company. (May 2023)
- [Students Trinity Williams and Katie Miller](#) were profiled for their service and activism in *MLK 50*. (April 2023)
- [Roots at Rhodes](#) launched the college's first-ever compost project and routinely engages food service provider Bon Appetit in reducing student food waste and other sustainability initiatives. (Feb. 2023)

Staff Achievement

Rhodes staff members are widely recognized as high-performing professionals. Their contributions extend beyond campus functions — they help shape campus culture and enhance the student experience.

- [Anne Strickland](#), director of student engagement at Rhodes College, recently received the Award for Fraternal Excellence from Kappa Alpha Order. (Sept. 2023)
- [Rhodes names Angela Webb](#) associate vice president for Campus Safety (Aug. 2023)
- [Mariah Hotard](#), manager of talent acquisition and development at Rhodes College, has been selected to participate in the 2023-24 CUPA-HR Ignite program. (June 2023)
- [Robert Carey, Liz Love, Steve Brummel, and Amy Moen](#) were recognized with the college's 2023 Outstanding Staff Awards at the annual Service Recognition Brunch.
- [Nicole Johnson](#), vice president for Student Life, was covered in *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

Alumni Achievement

Rhodes alumni continue to serve as acclaimed members of the Rhodes community, excelling within diverse industries and globally recognized organizations in Memphis and beyond.

Rhodes graduates are top performers in their academic and professional careers post-college:

- [Cary Fowler '71](#), U.S. Special Envoy for Global Food Security, has a long and extensive history as a thought leader in the spaces of food security, global hunger, and nutrition objectives.
- [Russ Wigginton '88 and Sally Heinz '81](#) were included among the 2023 CEOs of the Year by *Memphis* magazine.
- [Jennifer Pepper '03](#) was honored by Women of Achievement in the Heroism category for her commitment and contributions to the Memphis community.
- [Jasmine Crockett '03](#) was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in January 2023 and has been covered extensively in national media.
- [Rene Orth '07](#) was named the winner of the 2023 National Association of Teachers of Singing Art Song Composition Award for her song cycle “Weave Me a Name.”
- [Bailey Hutchison '13](#) was named the 2023 recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship.
- [Lauren Sumski '14](#) was highlighted by *SLAM* magazine as one of the “Black women basketball head coaches who are changing the game.”
- [Gunter Gaupp '16](#) was a member of *The Memphis Flyer's* 20<30 class for 2023.
- [Brooks Lamb '17](#), a Truman Scholarship recipient, published his second book, *Love for the Land: Lessons from Farmers Who Persist in Place*.
- [Tony Eskridge '20](#) was named as the recipient of the inaugural Rising Star Alum Hunger Leadership award presented by the Congressional Hunger Center.
- [Krista Lebovitz '21](#) gained acceptance to several elite colleges for her graduate studies, including MIT, Harvard, and Yale.

Enrollment and Student Body

In partnership with Marketing and Communications, the Enrollment Team has been working on building the applicant pool for the Class of 2028. To attract academically talented and diverse students, they are promoting the Rhodes value proposition through an enhanced digital strategy, print publications, in-person on-campus visits, and through travel all over the nation and abroad.

- [The Rhodes Class of 2027](#) is talented and diverse — the most diverse class in Rhodes College’s history, with domestic students and international students of color making up 42 percent of the class.

Athletics

Rhodes student-athletes are empowering themselves to truly make the most out of their college journey. Dedicated collaboration between professors and coaches paves the way for Lynx to excel both academically and athletically.

- During the 2022-23 academic year, **396 Lynx student-athletes were awarded All-SAA Academic Team Honors**, requiring a 3.25 cumulative GPA. The number of student-athletes earning this honor was by far the most of any school in our conference. Other SAA and NCAA honors and achievements include:
 - Rhodes won **seven SAA Championships**.
 - Lynx appeared in **eight NCAA Tournaments**.
 - **Forty-five players** were named **first-team All-SAA**.
 - **Six players** were named **All-American**.
 - Seven were named SAA Players of the Year
 - Four were named SAA Newcomers of the Year.
 - Two coaches were named SAA Coaches of the Year.
- [Rhodes won the SAA Commissioner's Cup](#), signifying the most successful athletic department in the SAA.
- [Rhodes is serving as a model](#) for other D-III athletic programs with our groundbreaking NIL deal with MOGL.

Fundraising, Stewardship, and Community Engagement

Rhodes has enjoyed exceptional giving from all sources through the 2022-2023 academic year. Several major gifts have been secured that enable advancements across all areas of the college, from academics to athletics.

- [Rhodes College received a \\$25,000 planning grant](#) for the 2023-2024 academic year from the Cornerstone: Learning for Living initiative, which will be used to expand and update the longstanding SEARCH program. (July 2023).
- [An \\$800,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation](#) will enable the college to establish the **Institute for Race and Social Transformation**, which will serve as an intellectual hub for research and curricular development focusing on racial equity, discrimination, and justice in Memphis and the Mid-South region. (June 2023)
- [Rhodes student-athletes and alumni raised \\$250K+](#) to update **Mallory Gymnasium** and to name the court in honor of **Herb Hilgeman**, longtime Men's Basketball coach and the college's all-time leader in wins for all sports. (May 2023)
- [Rhodes College has established a \\$1 million endowment](#) thanks to the generosity of Patricia and Charles Robertson, Jr. **The Charles and Patricia Robertson Biology Faculty Research Fund** will provide \$50,000 annually to the Department of Biology to fund new and ongoing faculty-led research projects. (Feb. 2023)
- [A \\$2 million gift](#) from the estate of **Dr. Frances Elaine Donelson '59** will endow a new chair and fellowship program in the Department of Psychology. (Jan. 2023)