



67th Commencement Ceremony
Fall Class of 2023
Tuesday, December 12, 2023

CFK Board of Trustees

Kevin Madok, Chair

Sheldon Suga, Vice-Chair

Daniel Leben

Michelle Maxwell

Mike Puto

Alexandria Suarez

Richard Weinstein

A Message from the CFK President

Dear Class of 2023,

When you stepped on the campus or arrived at one of the centers, you changed the world at The College of the Florida Keys. As we have changed, you too have been transformed into ambassadors for a more sustainable and brighter future. Congratulations and a heartfelt thank you for choosing CFK to be a part of your life's journey.

As you accept your diploma, consider the many sacrifices that you made to enjoy this moment. Show your appreciation for the loved ones, the community members, the mentors, and the College employees who helped you along this route. Each of you has a unique set of challenges that have tested your perseverance, grit, and dedication. Yet, you finished what you started. You have dared to dream and to make your dream a reality.

For some of you, the next step is a baccalaureate or graduate degree. I know that many of you have already been accepted into one of CFK's bachelor's degree programs or a degree program at another institution. For others, it is the beginning of or the continuation of a career. Seize every opportunity and be the best at what you do. Create opportunities for others and help them to do their best as well.

As you thank all those who made this day possible for you, please pay it forward by inspiring and supporting others to achieve a college education. Remember the importance of service to others. Our collective future is only as fruitful as the success that we individually bring to the teams to which we belong. Some of you will be sparks and some will be flames. You will shine! Just remember, you don't have to set the world on fire to produce light.

Congratulations, best of luck, and don't forget your Alma Mater.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Gueverra', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Jonathan Gueverra, Ed.D.
President & CEO
The College of the Florida Keys



THE
COLLEGE
OF THE
FLORIDA KEYS

Commencement Exercises

CFK President Dr. Jonathan Gueverra, Presiding

As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all electronic devices and phones during the ceremony. Please remain in your seats and refrain from moving to take photos during the ceremony. CFK will make all photos of graduates available at no charge via cfk.edu.

PROCESSIONAL*

“High Hopes”

Written by Jake Sinclair and Jonas Jeberg

Performed by Panic! at the Disco

PRESENTATION OF THE COLORS

Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps, KWHS

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Lela Griffin

CFK Academy and CFK Student

WELCOME

Dr. Jonathan Gueverra

CFK President

Kevin Madok

CFK Board of Trustees Chair

Please stand *

STUDENT ADDRESS

Sara Marie Squire
Bachelor of Science, Nursing
Associate in Science, Nursing

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Bill Becker
Retired News Director, US1 Radio/ Florida Keys Media LLC

STUDENT RECOGNITIONS

Lana Gaspari
CFK Vice President of Advancement

PRESENTATION OF THE FALL CLASS OF 2023

Dr. Michael McPherson
CFK Vice President of Academic Affairs

CONFERRAL OF DEGREES AND DIPLOMA PRESENTATION

Dr. Jonathan Gueverra
CFK President
Kevin Madok
CFK Board of Trustees Chair

PINNING OF NURSES

Dr. Aimee Jorgenson-Stough
Dean of Sciences & Nursing

RECESSIONAL

“Happy”

Composed and performed by Pharrell Williams

Student Speaker

Sara Marie Squire

Class of 2023

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Science, Nursing

Originally from Delaware, Sara Squire moved to the Florida Keys in 2012 to pursue a career on the water. After years of maritime work, including earning a 100-Ton U.S. Coast Guard Captain's License, Sara decided she was ready to make a career change into the medical field. In 2018, she began taking classes at The College of The Florida Keys and successfully graduated with her Associate in Science in Nursing in the spring of 2021. She immediately began working towards her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, which she is graduating with today.

During her five years of classes at CFK, Sara remained actively involved at the College and in the community. She volunteered over 150 hours to administer COVID-19 vaccines during the pandemic and provided service for various at-risk populations. She was also the Vice President of CFK's Student Nurses Association and volunteered with the Special Olympics. While earning her degrees, Sara achieved momentous personal milestones, including marrying her husband, Ryan, and having their daughter, Piper.

Sara plans to continue working as a Home Health Nurse serving the Florida Keys' home-bound population. She aspires to continue her education to obtain a master's degree and become a Nurse Practitioner in family medicine.

Keynote Speaker

Bill Becker

Retired News Director, US1 Radio/ Florida Keys Media LLC

Bill Becker was born and raised in New York City. His love of the ocean propelled his path to his first career and the Florida Keys. Bill earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in Marine Biology from City College of New York and the University of Delaware, respectively. Immediately following college, he took a position at the Newfound Harbor Marine Institute at Seacamp in Big Pine Key. He served as the marine biology instructor and assistant director for nine years.

In 1980, Bill shifted his professional focus to broadcast journalism. He served as the News Director at US1 Radio/ Florida Keys Media LLC for 40 years, producing and hosting the popular Morning Magazine news show on US1 Radio. His work earned two national Edward R. Murrow Awards from the Radio and Television News Directors Association. Following his retirement, Bill donated more than 3,000 cassette recordings of interviews, live broadcasts, and meetings to CFK to archive so unique audio history of the Keys could be available to students and the public.

Bill has served the community in numerous other ways. He was a founder and past president of the Big Pine Key Botanical Society. He co-founded and produced the Underwater Music Festival in 1984 and served as president of the Lower Keys Chamber of Commerce and Big Pine Key Civic Association. Currently, Bill is a mentor for Take Stock in Children. He also teaches in a STEM program for fifth graders at Sugarloaf School called "The Art and Science of Big Bubbles," funded by a Florida Keys Council of the Arts grant. This work earned him the nickname "Bubbleman" and the formal title of "Senior Volunteer of the Year" at the school.

Bill lives on Sugarloaf Key with his wife, Bernadette. They have two daughters and four grandchildren, including one granddaughter who is a student at CFK.

The Academic Processional

The academic processional officially precludes the Commencement ceremonies on college and university campuses and is one of the oldest and most colorful customs.

The traditions surrounding academic ceremonies, such as Commencement, are rooted in the customs of the Middle Ages when universities were first formed. Gowns and mortar boards, or caps, were a common form of dress during that era. Today, graduates wear colorful academic apparel, signifying their alma maters and highest degrees received.

ACADEMIC REGALIA

Graduation gowns of associates, bachelors, and masters are usually without trimmings of any sort, whereas those of doctors are faced down the front with velvet and adorned with three velvet bars on the sleeves. College president gowns have four velvet bars.

Attached to a button atop the **mortarboard** is a **tassel**, worn on the right side until degrees are conferred.

The **hood** is a triangular fold of cloth worn over the back of the gown. The colors of the face denote the wearer's degree and the colors of the lining are those of the college or university that granted the degree. The length of the hood is correspondingly longer with each higher degree.

The **colors** of the wide velvet borders extending down the front of the doctoral gown, the velvet bars on the sleeves and the borders of most hoods, represent the scholarly field of the wearer:

Blue Violet Architecture

Light Blue Education

Crimson Communication

Apricot Nursing

White Arts, Letters and Humanities

Orange Engineering

Purple Law

Dark Blue Philosophy

Drab Business

Brown Fine Arts

Lemon Library

Gold Science

PRESIDENTIAL REGALIA

The **Presidential Medallion** and **Chains of Office** comprise the large metal necklace worn by a college's president as part of official ceremonial regalia. Both are ancient symbols of authority and important expressions that honor the history and traditions of higher education.

CEREMONIAL ACADEMIC MACE

The **Ceremonial Academic Mace** is an institutional symbol of strength and authority. CFK's official mace was created in 2022 by a committee comprised of faculty and staff in collaboration with artists from the College and the community. Carefully crafted to reflect CFK's unique values and personality, the design represents a legacy of academic excellence, student achievement, and commitment to the Keys community.

The CFK Mace combines art mediums, consisting of pewter, wood, and glass. The Mace's shaft is embellished with palm trees. The fronds are carved into Cuban Mahogany and the trunk is made from a Sapodilla tree that once grew on the Key West Campus. Pewter coins depicting the College's seal and colorful tassels representing each academic and career training program encircle the mace. Above the coins is a pewter Tuga, the College's mascot and symbol of strength and perseverance. The top is adorned with an orange and blue blown glass sphere inspired by the sun and ocean of the Florida Keys.

The College recognizes and thanks the artists who brought the mace to life: metal artist Reen Stanhouse, wood artists Stephen Hatchett (mace) and Lieutenant David Black (stand), and blown glass artist Wes Hunting.

Bachelor's Degree Graduates

Wendy Sue Blacker Davis †

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Science, Nursing

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

James Thomas Fournier

Bachelor of Applied Science, Supervision and Management

Associate in Science, Business Administration

Certificate, Business Operations

Certificate, Business Specialist

Certificate, Entrepreneurship

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Emily Faire Hull

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Science, Nursing

Teresa Rodriguez

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Science, Nursing

Sara Marie Squire

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Science, Nursing

Antonina Stankova *

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Arts

Associate in Science, Nursing

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

Associate Degree & Certificate Graduates

Chelsea Ruiz Belette

Associate in Science, Nursing

Arden Rose Berlanga

Associate in Science, Nursing

Creative Writing Club

Geeks and Gamers Club

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Student Government Association

Student Nurses Association

Marian Biddle

Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

Certificate, Professional Research Diving

Southernmost Coral Restoration Club

Swim Team

Madison Carter Blake

Associate in Science, Nursing

Student Nurses Association

Makaylee Irene Bufano

Associate in Science, Nursing

Silvia Kate Carson-Emily

Associate in Arts

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Sarah Loretta Cochran
Associate in Science, Nursing
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Susan H. Costa
Associate in Science, Nursing

Brittany Elizabeth Davis*
Associate in Science, Business Administration

Savannah Leann Deis
Associate in Science, Business Administration

Lillian Yvette Desoto
Associate in Arts

Elise Marthe Dusaintil
Associate in Science, Nursing
Student Nurses Association

Leah Erin Eve
Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

Barbara Falcon
Associate in Arts

Jessica Fiallo
Associate in Science, Nursing

Gabriella Elaine Fields*
Associate in Arts

Mud Pi Ceramics Club

Sailing Club

Southernmost Coral Restoration Club

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

Kylelamar Huan Brenden Francis †

Associate in Science, Business Administration

Certificate, Business Operations

Certificate, Business Specialist

Certificate, Entrepreneurship

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Antonio Garcia Cabral*

Associate in Arts

Melany Gonzalez

Associate in Science, Nursing

Christopher Daniel Green*

Associate in Science, Nursing

Applied Technical Diploma, Emergency Medical Technician

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Student Nurses Association

Danielle Novetzke Greene

Associate in Science, Nursing

Student Nurses Association

Wyatt Lang Grosvenor*

Associate in Applied Science, Marine Engineering, Management and Seamanship

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Matthew Glenwood Hardison †

Associate in Arts

Preston Palmer Higgs

Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

Rose Kathur Joseph *

Associate in Arts

Martin Earnest Kramer

*Associate in Applied Science, Marine Engineering, Management and Seamanship
Certificate, Marine Technology
Certificate, Professional Welder*

Maia Rae Laccheo

Associate in Arts

Alejandro Lasprilla

Associate in Science, Nursing

Melissa Danelle Lewis

Associate in Science, Business Administration

Christopher Steven Douglas Long *

*Associate in Applied Science, Marine Engineering, Management and Seamanship
Certificate, Marine Technology*

Deanna Davila Martinez

Associate in Arts

Tara Sheree Mathis

*Associate in Science, Business Administration
Associate in Science, Nursing*

Ashley Taylor Marie Meyer

*Associate in Science, Nursing
Student Nurses Association*

Gabriella Monteagudo

Associate in Science, Nursing

Marisela Morales

Associate in Science, Business Administration

Certificate, Business Operations

Certificate, Business Specialist

Certificate, Entrepreneurship

Stewart Everett Natkin †

Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

Catalin S. Olortegui*

Associate in Applied Science, Marine Engineering, Management and Seamanship

Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

Sean Robert Pastor

Associate in Arts

Kaylee Marie Peck

Associate in Science, Nursing

Student Nurses Association

Frank Dominic Perlik*

Associate in Arts

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Steven Lee Powell Jr.

Associate in Arts

Crystal Prado

Associate in Science, Nursing

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

Amber Ramsey

Associate in Science, Nursing

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Student Nurses Association

Stephanie I. Robelo

Associate in Science, Nursing

Joel Rodriguez

Associate in Science, Nursing

Claudia Rodriguez Hernandez

Associate in Arts

Jessica Lane Rojas

Associate in Arts

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Darlene Romero

Associate in Science, Nursing

Lyndsey Ruiz †

Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

Southernmost Coral Restoration Club

Lisdania Santana

Associate in Science, Nursing

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Alif Aisha Smith

Associate in Science, Business Administration

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

Amanda Anne Spalten
Associate in Science, Nursing
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society
Student Nurses Association

Holly Elyse Delvin White
Associate in Applied Science, Diving Business and Technology
Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology
Certificate, Professional Dive Instructor
Certificate, Professional Research Diving
Mud Pi Ceramics Club
Southernmost Coral Restoration Club

CFK Student Clubs

CFK Aquaculture Society works to further national aquaculture societies outreach, providing benefits, activities, and news to students at CFK. This club provides increased opportunity for students to organize and participate in activities that relate to aquaculture on a local scale.

Southernmost Coral Restoration Club supports the reefs' natural recovery processes through the large-scale cultivation, planting, and monitoring of genetically diverse, reef-building corals as well as engages and empowers the community to join in the effort of saving our planet's coral reefs.

Creative Expressions Club brings students together to appreciate the joys of writing, drawing and other creative endeavors. The Club's purpose is to create and support a community of writers and artists on campus to share throughout the community.

Culinary Club supports students with a love of culinary arts and provides an environment to learn, cook, and make various food products.

Geeks and Gamers Club serves as a place for technologically driven students to discuss topics related to gaming, film and TV, as well as partake in book reviews, board games and competitions.

Mud Pi Club is a student-based, extracurricular organization dedicated to advancing ceramic arts at CFK and surrounding communities. The purpose of the club is to expand the awareness of the ceramic arts and to support personal growth through self-expression in clay.

Outcasts for Christ strives to restore prudence, morality, fortitude and temperance on campus and in the community.

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society recognizes academic achievement of college students and provides opportunities for them to grow as scholars and leaders. Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society is open to students who have completed at least 12 credits of coursework and have a GPA of 3.25 or higher.

Sailing Club offers beginners, intermediate and advanced sailing skills that boost students' knowledge and confidence on the water. Club members participate and demonstrate boat safety, boat handling, marine engineering and navigation, both on and offshore.

Scuba Club seeks to unite CFK students through passion for the underwater world and to build connections within the environment. The club educates and builds awareness of the importance of these ecosystems through scuba diving events, community service, outreach efforts, and other fun activities.

CFK Special Olympics College Club supports Special Olympics as athletes, cheerleaders and friends. The club celebrates differences and inclusivity and spreads knowledge about interacting with individuals with disabilities.

CFK Student Clubs

Student Government Association provides guidance and direction to the student body and develops student programs and activities, promoting student involvement. Students are provided with opportunities to develop and exercise their leadership skills

Student Nurses Association is a local chapter of the National Student Nurses Association. The mission of the CFK chapter is to support health and wellness through education, advocacy, and community activities.

Swim Team, comprised of men and women athletes, competes in regular season against other Florida colleges and colleges from around the country in national meets. CFK is a member of NJCAA, which allows the College's athletes to participate in a variety of activities that promote personal growth, effective teamwork, and academic excellence.

Veterans Club is a local chapter of the Student Veterans of America and is dedicated to helping fellow veterans in the transition from military to college life.



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#CollegeFLKeys #CFKAlum

