



St. George's University

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Grenada, West Indies

WHITE COAT CEREMONY

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2025

Patrick F. Adams Hall
Chancellor Charles Modica Campus, Grenada

“Tonight is a transition in life—an opening, a passage, and a precious opportunity to reassert what we share, what we deeply believe beyond subspecialty or gender or age—that the chains of pain and suffering can and will be broken, that the world can change one person, one situation, one diagnosis, one dignity-affirming moment, one life-affirming moment at a time.”

Jonathan M. Mann, MD, MPH
St. George's University White Coat Ceremony
January 1998

PROGRAM

Master of Ceremonies	Kazzara Raeburn, MD '08, MSc '20 Assistant Dean, Curriculum, Basic Sciences, St. George's University
Remarks	Glen Jacobs, DEd Provost, St. George's University
Remarks	Marios Loukas, MD, PhD Dean, School of Medicine, St. George's University
Remarks.....	Robert Grant, MD, MSc, FACS Senior Associate Dean, Clinical Studies, St. George's University
Remarks.....	Charles R. Modica, JD Chancellor, St. George's University
Introduction of Keynote Speaker	Kazzara Raeburn, MD '08, MSc '20 Assistant Dean, Curriculum, Basic Sciences, St. George's University
Keynote Address	Michael Keenaghan, MD '06 Assistant Dean of Students, Academic Advising (Clinical, US), St. George's University
Presentation of White Coats	Dr. Myanna Charles, Dr. Rohan Cummings, Dr. Rachael George, Dr. Tiffany Clementson, Dr. Theofanis Kollias, Dr. Gabrielle Walcott-Bedeau Dr. Deon Forrester, Dr. Fomba Kanneh,
Professional Commitment	Anna Cyrus-Murden, MD '05, MPH Assistant Dean, Simulation and Co-Chair, Clinical Skills, St. George's University
Recessional	

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

MICHAEL KEENAGHAN, MD '06



Dr. Michael Keenaghan, a proud 2006 alumnus of St. George's University School of Medicine, has come full circle from student to educator. He currently serves as a professor of pediatrics and assistant dean of students at SGU. He is also director of Clinical Academic Advising, where he supports students' academic success and well-being.

Mike is a board-certified pediatrician with training at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University. He is also a bariatrician and pediatric critical care intensivist trained at Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital and NewYork-Presbyterian-Columbia. He has spent over a decade caring for critically ill children and leading multidisciplinary teams in high-pressure settings. As associate chief academic officer for graduate medical education at Kings County Hospital, he also organized over 45 training programs.

Throughout his career, Mike has been instrumental in developing pediatric simulation labs, curriculums, training programs and critical care protocols, enhancing both medical education and patient care. His contributions to the field also extend to research, with numerous publications and presentations, advancing pediatric critical care, adolescent bariatric medicine, and quality improvement initiatives.

Mike's impact goes beyond patient care to his unwavering commitment to shaping the next generation of physicians. After years of pediatric critical care in Brooklyn, he joined SGU faculty in Grenada, where he dedicated himself to teaching, mentoring, and supporting students' personal, academic, and career success.

Mike's work with students, faculty, and the community is driven by empathy, insight, and the power of human connection. He believes excellence in medicine starts with integrity, kindness, and a deep commitment to others.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

KAZZARA RAEBURN, MD '08, MSC '20



Dr. Kazzara Raeburn, is currently assistant professor and co-chair of the Department of Anatomical Sciences at St. George's University School of Medicine. Kazzara also has significant experience in curriculum development. She is assistant dean for curriculum in basic sciences and chair of the Basic Sciences Curriculum Subcommittee, where she is involved in expanding the teaching and assessment of communication skills and professional behaviors within the SOM courses.

Additionally, Kazzara became the youngest course director of the integrated Term 1 course in the new systems-based curriculum in 2016. She was actively involved in the development of this new curriculum and was tasked with being the first course director to implement it with a pilot class of medical students. Over the next three years, Kazzara not only directed this popular course but also introduced innovative ideas that increased the integration of clinical knowledge into the basic sciences. This included the expansion of ultrasound and simulation labs, integrated small groups, and clinical cases within the course.

Kazzara is a member of several professional societies, including the American Association for Anatomy (AAA) and the American Association of Clinical Anatomists (AACA), where she serves on the Association Council and chairs several standing committees.

A proud alumna, Kazzara earned her Doctor of Medicine, graduating cum laude from SGU in 2008. She later completed her clinical training in the UK and returned to serve at the Grenada General Hospital. Kazzara began her career at SGU as a clinical instructor in the Department of Anatomical Sciences and was quickly promoted to lecturer within the department. In 2020, she received a master's degree in anatomy, where her research focused on the clinical application of ultrasound, with special interest in the posterior forearm.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

CHARLES R. MODICA, JD, DCL (HONORARY)

I welcome all of you to St. George's University School of Medicine. You have chosen a great and noble career. This White Coat Ceremony symbolizes your entry into the medical profession, a milestone in your life that carries with it a profound obligation of service to others.

As you begin your studies for this challenging career, you must weigh opportunity against responsibility. St. George's University will equip you with all the right tools for the job, but how much you take away with you will depend on how you approach the experience and how much effort you invest in it. I wish you every success.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

MARIOS LOUKAS, MD, PHD

Today bears reflecting on a few of the principles of the oath you will affirm upon graduation from this institution. At the heart of that oath is a resolve to treat the sick to the best of your ability, to preserve patient privacy, and to safeguard life. It also calls to mind a responsibility to share your wisdom with others. Recognize that in entering the field of medicine you join a community, wherein the team is as pivotal to success as individual effort. To this end, you must strive for excellence in your pursuit of knowledge, for you can only give your best when you fulfill your potential.

As you don these white physician coats, you pledge an oath of professionalism and service. While these values are under attack, they are a necessary requirement in medical practice. Professionalism is a commitment to integrity, altruism, competence, and ethics in the service of others.

A physician must constantly balance the needs of his patients and society against the available resources and his own interests. We must endeavor to honor the sacred trust and privilege that society places in medical professionals, cognizant that the standard is an ideal that we must continuously aim to achieve.

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR FACULTY

THE JOURNEY OF A PHYSICIAN: A COMMITMENT TO COMPASSION AND EXCELLENCE

As you embark on the remarkable journey of becoming a physician, it's crucial to embrace the qualities that will guide you both personally and professionally. Kindness, gratitude, focus, laughter, optimism, compassion, honesty, presence, humility, curiosity, and attentive listening are not just virtues; they are essential tools that will shape your interactions with patients and colleagues, ensuring you provide the best care possible.

"Reflecting on my own journey, I entered medical school 61 years ago as an M1. Back then, there was no formal White Coat Ceremony, but I proudly wore my white coat from day one. This coat followed me through basic science and clinical years, internship, residency, and into practice. At age 82, I still put on my white coat every day and go to the hospital or go into the classroom with the same enthusiasm I had 61 years ago. The white coat is more than a garment; it symbolizes the ethical and professional standards we must uphold."

- *Dr. Anthony N. Dardano, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology*

"Medicine is a lifelong commitment to serve. The road is long and hard, and the goal sometimes seems challenging to reach. Clear your mind and heart of preconceptions and face your future open to the unexpected. Medicine requires more than knowledge; it requires you to welcome and embrace different views, cultures, and idiosyncrasies. Your experience here will provide the knowledge and opportunity to reinvent yourself. Remember, if you need help along the way, we are here for you."

- *Dr. Maria Ramos Nino, Department of Pharmacology, Microbiology, and Immunology*

"Clearly defining your short-term and long-term goals will guide your actions and decisions. Don't hesitate to ask for help, whether for academic assistance or emotional support. Seeking help is a sign of strength in your professional community. Learn to prioritize and manage your time effectively. Balance study, rest, and play to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Challenges and setbacks are part of the journey. Stay persistent and resilient, and you will overcome obstacles and achieve your goals."

- *Dr. Charlotte Taylor-Drago, Department of Clinical Skills*

"Strive for self-improvement through continuous learning in the ever-evolving field of medicine. Foster meaningful connections with your peers and professionals, as collaboration leads to remarkable progress. Embrace each day as a new opportunity to learn, grow, and make a difference in the lives of your patients."

- *Dr. Stephen Onigbinde, Department of Gross Anatomy and Histology*

"While the road may seem rocky at times, embrace each day as a new opportunity to learn, grow, and make a difference in the lives of your patients. Remember that empathy and compassion are as vital as your medical expertise. Stay curious, stay humble, and let your dedication to healing guide you through every challenge and success you face."

- *Dr. Krystal Rampersad, Department of Clinical Skills*

"Bring your whole self along on this journey. It takes your entire authentic self and all your experiences to connect with others. Show compassion even in difficult situations. Speak with kindness, even when frustrated. Offer hope, even when physically tired and emotionally drained. Fight for justice in healthcare, even when uncomfortable. Remember, it is a privilege to see, hear, and do what we do. These words may sound daunting, but they are vital."

- *Dr. Toni Johnson-Liggins, Associate Dean Clinical Studies*

"This is an exciting time! Savor the moment. When you encounter hard patches in residency or treating patients, remember that your connections with them make a difference. I find that I am my best self when I do things that invigorate my well-being. For me, it's a bike ride, yoga, or dinner and a movie with family. I recommend you take care of yourself so you can better take care of your patients."

- *Dr. Christina Fernandez, Department of Emergency Medicine*

"Remember this moment as you start your journey in medicine. Today, you will take an oath to serve your patients, a commitment that will stay with you throughout your career and beyond. Learn from everyone involved in your medical education. Be kind to others and treat them with respect. Your faculty are here to support you at every step of your journey. Take care of your patients as you would your own family and friends, as this will connect you to your purpose indefinitely. The education you receive here will equip you to fulfill that purpose successfully. Enjoy the ride and let your passion for medicine guide you through every challenge and success."

- *Dr. Melissa Wallach, Department of Pediatrics*

Being a physician is a journey, not a destination. Enjoy the ride!

HONOR CODE

ST. GEORGE'S UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

As a member of the student body of St. George's University School of Medicine, an institution of medical education dedicated to a high standard of ethics and academic achievement, and recognizing that it is the duty of the University community to nurture responsible, competent, and safe physicians who exhibit professional maturity and sound moral character, I agree:

- To adhere to the University policy of maintaining a high standard of honor and academic integrity;
- To uphold these ideals by refraining from cheating, plagiarism, lying, and theft; and,
- To accept the responsibility of reporting such wrong doing upon witness.

It is understood that any breach of this Code necessitates disciplinary action, subject to the discretion of University officials. Once signed, acquiescence to this Code is in effect.

GOLD HUMANISM HONOR SOCIETY

Every academic year, a group of students is inducted into St. George's University School of Medicine Chapter of the Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS). Inductees are nominated by their peers and selected on the basis of their humanistic qualities and community service. Our GHHS strives to promote humanism and high ethical standards in medicine and medical education. The White Coat Ceremony Committee extends congratulations to our most recent inductees.

INDUCTEES

Sandra Alhaj
Samantha Alvarez
Kiereth Atariwala
Caitlyn Brown
Irene Choi
Madeline Cotto
Norah Daghestani
Dianna Daniel
Summer Den Haese
Moyinoluwa Femi-Gege
Girija Ganeshan
Pinima Godpower
Natasha Hastings

Desann James
Moazzam Khan
Yousef Kosho
Abshiro Mayow
Salima Meskine
Jeffrey Michaels
Noreena Ogidan
Madison Olexson
Adam Parker
Shefali Pati
Hrithik Ramanulla
John Ramatowski
Astrit Sabani

Padmini Sangaraju
Bassem Sherif
Ethan Slouha
Amanda Stroiney
Mosammath Sultana
Yasir Taki
Vanshika Talasila
Mario Torres
Eleonora Vapheas
Arman Virabov
Gavin Ward

PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT

Today is the beginning of my medical education and training as physician. I acknowledge my responsibility to continue the pursuit of knowledge and understanding while recognizing the limits of my abilities and seeking assistance when necessary.

I am entering training for a noble profession in which my interest must always be subservient to those who may seek my assistance. I must be ever conscious of the value of my fellow healthcare professionals and treat them with respect at all times. My classmates at St. George's University are now my colleagues and I owe to them the same support and encouragement to achieve their goals as I hope to receive from them. I will work alongside my colleagues and professors with tolerance, compassion, honesty, and cultural humility. I will treat all members of the St George's University community and its visitors with equity, regardless of rank, as I will do with my future patients.

I acknowledge my obligation to adhere to the University Honor Code and to conduct myself with integrity and in an ethical manner at all times henceforth. Taking full responsibility for my choices and actions, I shall do all within my power to show in myself an example of all that is honorable and good throughout my medical career. It is a privilege to have been given the opportunity to become a physician. May I be ever conscious of that privilege and never abuse it.

Written by the Student Ethics Task Force
and Alexander P. Ross, MS, FRCS

Revised by the Office of Multicultural Affairs
with input from SOM faculty and students

THE WHITE COAT CEREMONY

More than 25 years since its inception at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University in 1993, the White Coat Ceremony has become an important ritual symbolizing a student's induction into the medical profession. St. George's University School of Medicine embraced the White Coat Ceremony in 1996.

Affirming this oath of commitment to the medical profession at the beginning of their studies inducts our MD students into the medical profession—and its highest ethical and professional standards—from the very beginning of their career.

The ceremony is significant not just to each incoming class, but for all who attend including: St. George's University faculty; its staff; students' families and friends; and the White Coat Ceremony keynote speakers who inspire first-term students with heartfelt words of wisdom and personal reflections. It is their spoken contributions that we treasure, and are honored to share with past, present, and future generations of St. George's University students.

“Time, sympathy, and understanding must be lavishly dispensed, but the reward is to be found in that personal bond which forms the greatest satisfaction of the practice of medicine.

One of the essential qualities of the clinician is the interest in humanity, for the secret of care of the patient is caring for the patient.”

Francis W. Peabody

*From a lecture to Harvard medical students in 1925
Accessed from the American College of Physicians, 2007*