Commencement Ceremony Celebrates the Class of 2023 Graduates

Taking time for reflection and celebration, the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine held its 68th commencement ceremony, honoring the Class of 2023 graduates. The 211 graduating medical students received their Doctor of Medicine degrees and recited the Hippocratic oath as they set out on the next step in their medical training journey.

Latha Chandran, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A. (left), executive dean for education and chair of the Department of Medical Education; and Dean Henri R. Ford.

Henri R. Ford, M.D., M.H.A, dean and chief academic officer of the Miller School, began the ceremony by instilling inspiration in the new graduates.

“Today, you will officially become a physician, which gives you the remarkable opportunity to ameliorate human suffering by providing exceptional medical care to people with various ailments,” Dean Ford said. “Your skills, dedication, commitment and compassion are needed today more than ever.”

Two hundred and eleven medical
students were part of the Class of 2023 graduating class.

Julio Frenk, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D., president of the University of Miami, followed suit with his words of wisdom, encouraging the class to uphold the values taught to them during their time in medical school. He also recognized and thanked the expansive network of support the Class of 2023 graduates has had during their years at the Miller School.

“Graduating from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine is a rite of passage that has resulted from your commitment, work, focus and discipline,” President Frenk said. “Your path to a medical degree has not been a straight line as you have faced challenges and made sacrifices for the sake of your education. Going through these experiences while pursuing an advanced degree has given you the opportunity to learn and practice adaptability and resilience. No matter where your paths take you, I can guarantee you this: You will continue to use those skills.”

Creating Well-Rounded Physicians

Kyla Danielle Rakoczy, M.D. ’23, delivering the student address.

The Miller School is the nation’s leader in dual medical degree graduates. The Class of 2023 graduates included 57 M.D./M.P.H. graduates and four M.D./M.B.A. graduates.

“There has never been a more eventful time to be steeped in the study of public health and medicine,” said Brianna
Mussman, M.D., M.P.H. ’23, who will be entering an internal medicine residency at UM/Jackson. “I know that my future practice will forever be shaped by the way our Miller School community reacts with compassion, a thirst for knowledge and with fearlessness as we face the unknown together.”

The class celebrated a record residency match: 98% of the class will enter programs in competitive specialties, a proud moment for the class as reflected by Kyla Danielle Rakoczy, M.D. ’23, who delivered the student address.

“Being a doctor is an immense privilege with the responsibility for us to provide for our patients, become leaders in our communities and to acknowledge our humanity,” said Dr. Rakozcy, who will begin a general surgery residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital. “Each of us brings a unique past and present perspective which serves as an opportunity to be the person that makes a difference in a patient’s life, in the community and in the world.”

Keynote Speaker Encourages, Challenges Class of 2023

Jennifer Arnold, M.D., served as the Class of 2023 commencement ceremony keynote speaker and received a Doctor of Science degree, *honoris causa*. Dr. Arnold, who is a UM alumna
and the program director of immersive design systems at Boston Children’s Hospital, spoke about overcoming adversity and the importance of becoming physicians who display humility and compassion. Born with a rare type of skeletal dysplasia, she encouraged the students to find strength in their differences.

“It is not only important to overcome adversity, but to see the unexpected gifts it can bring,” Dr. Arnold said. “Our lived experiences, tragedies and pain makes us more human, and compassion and humility make us better doctors. You all now have the power to heal; I hope you maintain the courage to be humble and view humility as a gift.”

Family and friends gathered to celebrate the graduates after the ceremony.

As commencement concluded, Alex J. Mechaber, M.D. ’94, president of the Medical Alumni Association, welcomed the latest alumni to a cohort that has existed since 1956. As the latest alums from the Miller School, the Class of 2023 represents excellence in medical education.

“I believe the education and professional opportunities I have been exposed to at the Miller School are unmatched and have prepared me for residency,” said Dayana Perez Sanchez, M.D. ’23, who will enter the family medicine residency at UM/Jackson. “My biggest takeaway from my time at Miller has been that practicing medicine is a privilege and it does not end at simply treating disease; rather as future physicians, we have a responsibility to advocate for our patients and
communities in order to improve their overall quality of life.”

The entire ceremony can be viewed here, with photos from the event available on our Facebook page.

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