



69th Commencement Ceremony
Fall Class of 2024
Thursday, December 12, 2024

CFK Board of Trustees

Kevin Madok, Chair

Sheldon Suga, Vice-Chair

Daniel Leben

Mike Puto

Alexandria Suarez

Richard Weinstein

A Message from the CFK President

Dear Class of 2024,

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 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

Melody Dawn Tuschel

Bachelor of Applied Science, Supervision and Management

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Clayton Lopez

Retired City Commissioner, City of Key West

STUDENT RECOGNITIONS

Lana Gaspari

CFK Vice President of Advancement

PRESENTATION OF THE FALL CLASS OF 2024

Dr. Monekka Munroe

CFK Vice President of Academic Affairs

DIPLOMA PRESENTATION AND CONFERRAL OF DEGREES

Dr. Jonathan Gueverra

CFK President

Kevin Madok

CFK Board of Trustees Chair

NURSING PINNING AND OATH

Laura Cox

CFK Interim Dean of Sciences and Nursing

PINNING OF ALUMNI

Lana Gaspari

CFK Vice President of Advancement

RECESSIONAL

“Happy”

Composed and performed by Pharrell Williams

Student Speaker

Melody Dawn Tuschel

Class of 2024

Bachelor of Applied Science, Supervision and Management

Born and raised in St. Augustine, Florida, Melody has always had a passion for the coastal environment. After raising two sons and serving 29 years in the medical field, Melody decided to live full-time in her RV while working and learning with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. By the end of 2021, she served as a resident volunteer at Bahia Honda State Park, where she developed a deep connection with the Florida Keys' environment. During this time, she also worked at the Marathon Veterinary Hospital and Dolphin Research Center.

Melody, who already held an Associate in Arts from St. John's River State College, decided to return to college to prepare for a career in which she could develop, manage, and promote environmental programs. She enrolled in the Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management program at CFK, which empowered and motivated her to pursue her career goals.

In 2022, Melody started working as a Scale Operator at the Monroe County Cudjoe Transfer Station. After learning about the disparity between community perception and the reality of waste systems, and conducting extensive research, she successfully advocated for the creation of her current position as the Recycling Coordinator in 2023. In this role, she draws from her professional and college experiences, as well as her passion for sustainability, to educate residents, businesses, and visitors. The result has been a seven percent increase in recycling with a 16 percent decrease in contamination.

Melody represented the student body on CFK's All College Council. She volunteers with the Save-A-Turtle Foundation and is a member of the Key Deer Response Team and the Upper Keys Business and Professional Women. She also serves on the Monroe County Personnel Policies and Procedures Committee, Monroe County Employee Grievance Council, and City of Key West Sustainability and Advisory Board.

Keynote Speaker

Clayton Lopez

Retired City Commissioner, City of Key West

Clayton Lopez, a fourth-generation Conch, was born and raised in Key West, where he became a prominent community leader. The eldest of four siblings, he was mentored by his grandfather, Roosevelt Sands, a notable figure in the community. Clayton is a father and stepfather to four children and a proud grandfather to 13.

Elected to the Key West City Commission in 2005, he served until recently due to term limits, making him the longest-serving member in modern history. At the time of his retirement, he was one of only two Black elected officials in Monroe County. His community service began at age 13 when he organized a march against segregation of a local skating rink.

Clayton attended Florida Keys Community College, as CFK was known in the late 1970s. He has held various roles, including youth advisor for the NAACP and board member for several organizations focused on health and arts. He actively participated in protests for LGBTQ+ rights and has been involved with local churches and civic groups. A man of faith, he advocates for diversity and inclusion while identifying as fiscally conservative and socially liberal.

He retired from the Florida Department of Health as an HIV Prevention Training Consultant and has received numerous awards for his contributions to the community, including the Lang B. Millian Community Service Award and the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award. His family legacy includes recognition for community service spanning four generations.

The Academic Processional

The academic processional officially preludes 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

NURSING CANDLE

The illumination of candles by graduate nurses represents the flame used by Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, to shed light on the poor conditions of wounded soldiers during the Crimean War. The reading of the Florence Nightingale Oath dedicates graduate nurses to the highest standards and responsibilities of the profession of nursing.

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 employees 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 media, 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

Elizabeth Nichole Baker

Bachelor of Applied Science, Supervision and Management

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Kirsten Lynn Carter

Bachelor of Science, Marine Resource Management

Jasen Anthony Cruz

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Science, Nursing

Melody Fischer

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Science, Nursing

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Jasmine Garrison

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Science, Nursing

Lisa Katherine Kronus

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Science, Nursing

Noah James Meus

Bachelor of Science, Marine Resource Management

Megan L. Ossont *

Bachelor of Science, Nursing

Associate in Science, Nursing

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

Mary Ramos

*Bachelor of Science, Nursing
Associate in Science, Nursing*

Melody Dawn Tuschel †

Bachelor of Applied Science, Supervision and Management

Sharlene Vallecillo

*Bachelor of Science, Nursing
Associate in Science, Nursing
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society*

Associate Degree & Certificate Graduates

Angie Alvarez

*Associate in Science, Business Administration
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society*

Brett William Atchley

Associate in Arts

Belen Maria Avalos-Lemus

*Associate in Science, Nursing
Student Nurses Association*

Laurel Ashley Beaupre

*Associate in Science, Nursing
Associate in Arts
Student Nurses Association*

Caitlin Ashlee Boyle

Applied Technical Diploma, Emergency Medical Technician

Sahara Rain Brown

Associate in Arts

Outcasts for Christ

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Student Government Association

Alexander Martin Cavilla

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

Gabrielle Irene Comeforo

Associate in Science, Nursing

Student Nurses Association

Linoshka Marie Costa

Associate in Science, Nursing

Jaden Alexander Cruz

Associate in Arts

Eric Jason Cuneo †

Associate in Applied Science, Diving Business and Technology

Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

Certificate, Fundamentals of Professional Diving

Certificate, Professional Research Diving

Connor Maxwell Davidson †

Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

Aquaculture Society

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

Emondina Derantin

Associate in Science, Nursing

Associate in Arts

Student Nurses Association

Mason William Egan †

Associate in Applied Science, Marine Engineering, Management and Seamanship

Outcasts for Christ

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Swim Team

Weights and Wellness Club

Jeanette Fernandez

Associate in Arts

Nadejda Filatova

Associate in Science, Nursing

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Student Nurses Association

Courtney Lashay Fisher

Associate in Science, Business Administration

Yodis Ariel Fuentes Flores

Associate in Science, Nursing

Applied Technical Diploma, Emergency Medical Technician

Student Nurses Association

Erica Megan Gaertner

Associate in Science, Nursing

Associate in Arts

Student Nurses Association

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

Theodore Laurance Ochman Gragg

Certificate, Marine Technology

Kieran Patrick Grealish

Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

Certificate, Fundamentals of Professional Diving

Certificate, Professional Research Diving

Sage Carlin Hanley

Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

Associate in Arts

Samantha Lynn Haskins †

Associate in Arts

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Tamrah Salazar Hill

Associate in Arts

Lorena Maria Hopley *

Associate in Science, Business Administration

Chrisfer Hyppolite

Certificate, Guest Services Specialist

Certificate of Completion, Project ACCESS

James Riley Jackson

Associate in Applied Science, Marine Engineering, Management and Seamanship

Charlene L. Jackson

Associate in Science Nursing

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

Benjamin John King *

*Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology
Certificate, Professional Research Diving*

Lauryn Nicole Knowles

Associate in Arts

Guerschom John Louis †

Associate in Science, Criminal Justice Technology

Jennifer Nicolle Martinez

Associate in Arts

Victoria Cari Mayor *

Associate in Arts

Creative Expressions Club

Swim Team

Ivory J. McClure

Associate in Science, Nursing

Student Nurses Association

Abigail Faith McPherson

Associate in Science, Nursing

Student Nurses Association

Laura Celine Mikkelsen *

*Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology
Certificate, Professional Research Diving*

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

C'Aaliyah Leeanna Moon

Associate in Science, Nursing
Student Nurses Association

Gwendolyn Marie Moore

Associate in Science, Nursing
Student Nurses Association

Trinity Grace Patty

Associate in Arts

Lesley Pazo

Associate in Arts

Dwight Wade Pearson *

Associate in Science, Marine Environmental Technology

Jackson Pierrilus

Associate in Science, Business Administration

Associate in Arts

Certificate, Corrections Officer

Applied Technical Diploma, Emergency Medical Technician

Thalia Quile Martinez

Associate in Science, Nursing
Student Nurses Association

Christopher James Alan Tran

Associate in Applied Science, Marine Engineering, Management and Seamanship

Kenneth Steven Vilchez-Rodriguez †

Associate in Arts

DEAN'S LIST †

PRESIDENT'S LIST *

Alexandra Isabel Walsh-Durso
Associate in Science, Engineering Technology
Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society

Jordan Ward
Associate in Science, Nursing
Student Nurses Association

Raynell Christopher Ward
Associate in Science, Nursing

Rex Andrew Zimmerman
Associate in Science, Nursing
Applied Technical Diploma, Emergency Medical Technician
Student Nurses Association

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 professional networking opportunities and hands-on laboratory mentorship for students to learn about and master technician level skills in marine and freshwater aquaculture.

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.

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

Gay Straight Alliance Club is a student club creating a safe, welcoming school environment for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. It provides a supportive community for LGBTQ+ students, those questioning, allies, and advocates

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 beginner, 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 unique abilities.

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.

CFK Student Clubs

Swim Teams are comprised of men and women athletes. They compete 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.

Weights and Wellness Club provides students with a supportive community to connect, pursue fitness goals, and enhance their well-being through exercise. Members are dedicated to fostering healthier bodies and minds, building both strength and resilience.



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Share your graduation experience

#CollegeFLKeys #CFKAlum

