



# COLORADO COLLEGE

## Office of Communications

14 E. Cache La Poudre St.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

For Immediate Release

Contact:  
Leslie Weddell  
(719) 389-6038  
[lweddell@coloradocollege.edu](mailto:lweddell@coloradocollege.edu)

## **OPRAH WINFREY TO DELIVER COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS AT COLORADO COLLEGE**

### ***Professor of English Jane Hilberry Selected as Baccalaureate Speaker***

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – March 28, 2019 – Colorado College will hold its Commencement ceremony at 8:30 a.m., Sunday, May 19, with global media leader, philanthropist, producer and actress Oprah Winfrey giving this year’s Commencement address. The ceremony will be held on CC’s Tava Quad (formerly known as Armstrong Quad) and ticketed seating will be limited to graduating seniors and their guests. The ceremony will be live-streamed from the college’s website.

Winfrey has created an unparalleled connection with people around the world, making her one of the most respected and admired figures today. She also is a dedicated philanthropist. During a December 2002 visit with Nelson Mandela, she pledged to build a school in South Africa; today, the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls provides an excellent education for 8th- to 12th-grade girls in South Africa. Winfrey has contributed more than \$200 million toward providing education for academically gifted girls from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Winfrey is an Academy Award-nominated actress for her role in “The Color Purple,” earned critical acclaim in “Lee Daniels’ The Butler” and produced and acted in the Academy Award-winning film “Selma.” Winfrey starred in the Emmy-nominated HBO Films production “The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks” and most recently portrayed “Mrs. Which” in Disney’s “A Wrinkle in Time” film adaptation from director Ava DuVernay. Additionally, Winfrey is a founding donor of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture. In 2013, she was awarded the Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor. In 2018, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association honored her with the Cecil B. deMille Award.

In addition to presenting an honorary degree to Winfrey, Colorado College President Jill Tiefenthaler will award honorary degrees to Jairo Valverde Bermudez, a 1992 Colorado



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College graduate and the Costa Rican ambassador to Brazil; Martile Rowland, an accomplished opera singer who has served as artist in residence for the CC Music Department for more than 20 years; and France Winddance Twine, an enrolled member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma and professor of sociology and documentary filmmaker at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Valverde graduated from CC with a bachelor's degree in political economy, and went on to earn his M.A. in international relations from the International University of Japan. Prior to being appointed the Costa Rican ambassador to Brazil in 2015, he worked for the United Nations Development Programme. Valverde contributed, among other things, to the UN's positive role in support of human rights legislation such as the law to protect persons with HIV/AIDS from discrimination in the workplace. He has served as deputy head of mission during the Eighth World Water Forum Ministerial Conference (2018) and as deputy head of mission at the World Economic Forum for Latin America in Sao Paulo.

Rowland was catapulted into the international opera scene with her unexpected debut (six hours' notice) as Queen Elizabeth in Donizetti's "Roberto Devereux" with Opera Orchestra of New York in Carnegie Hall. She later sang leading roles in the world's most prestigious opera houses including the New York City Opera, Opera de Nice, Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro's National Theatre, Frankfurt Opera, Stuttgart Opera and others. Her efforts as founder/artistic director and producer of Opera Theatre of the Rockies afford her the opportunity to focus on the award-winning Opera Theatre Goes to School, the Pikes Peak Opera League and the training of young artists. Her passion as a voice teacher earned her *Classical Singer* magazine's 2006 Teacher of the Year Award. In 2014, the Pikes Peak Arts Council honored Rowland as the recipient of the Eve Tilley Lifetime Achievement Award.

Twine, a nationally prominent ethnographer and feminist race theorist, has published 70 scholarly and artistic works, including 10 books. Her recent publications include "Outsourcing the Womb" and "Girls with Guns: Firearms, Feminism and Militarism." Twine's field research spans Brazil, Britain and the United States, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Andrew Mellon Foundation. She currently is working on a transnational project examining gestational surrogacy. Twine is the former deputy editor of the *American Sociological Review*, the flagship journal of the American Sociological Association. She serves on the international editorial boards of *Sociology* and the official journal of the British Sociological Association, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*.



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CC Professor of English and Nancy Bryson and C. William Schlosser Professor in the Arts Jane Hilberry will give the Baccalaureate address at 3 p.m., Saturday, May 18, in Shove Memorial Chapel, 1010 N. Nevada Ave. Members of the senior class vote upon the Baccalaureate speaker, and the Baccalaureate address will be live-streamed.

Tava Quad will be blocked off for the Commencement ceremony, and Cascade Avenue will be closed between Uintah Avenue and Cache La Poudre Street on Sunday morning during the ceremony, reopening approximately midday.

In the event of inclement weather, the Commencement ceremony will be moved to the Broadmoor World Arena, 3185 Venetucci Blvd., and will begin a half hour later, at 9 a.m. If in doubt, check the Colorado College website and or tune in to 91.5 KRCC.

### **About Colorado College**

Colorado College is a nationally prominent, four-year liberal arts college that was founded in Colorado Springs in 1874. The college operates on the innovative Block Plan, in which its approximately 2,100 undergraduate students take one class at a time in intensive 3½-week segments. In 2016, Colorado College announced an alliance with the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, and the following year the two became the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, providing innovative, educational and multidisciplinary arts experiences for the campus and Colorado Springs communities. The college also offers a master of arts in teaching degree. For more information, visit [www.coloradocollege.edu](http://www.coloradocollege.edu)