

Emerson  
COLLEGE

EMERSON COLLEGE  
COMMENCEMENT  
CEREMONY

Saturday  
May 9, 2026 | 7:00 p.m.

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*Wang Theatre  
270 Tremont Street  
Boston, Massachusetts*

2026

# Commencement Ceremony

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<i>Music</i>	<b>Triton Brass</b>
<i>Call to Order</i>	<b>Michael Brown, JD Grand Marshal</b>
<i>President's Welcome and Address</i>	<b>Jay M. Bernhardt, PhD, MPH President of the College</b>
<i>Undergraduate Awards</i>	<b>President's Award for Excellence <i>Presented by</i> Jay M. Bernhardt, PhD, MPH President of the College</b>  <b>Student Affairs Award for Excellence <i>Presented by</i> Christie Anglade, MEd Vice President, Student Affairs</b>
<i>Undergraduate Class Speaker</i>	<b>Sofonyas Alebachew '26</b>
<i>Conferral of Honorary Degrees</i>	<b>Jay M. Bernhardt, PhD, MPH President of the College</b>
<i>Doctor of Humane Letters Upon</i>	<b>Helen Dreher Credle Associate Director for Community Engagement; Elma Lewis Center; Community, Culture, and Belonging <i>Citation by</i> Shaya Gregory Poku, MA, MS Vice President, Community, Culture, and Belonging</b>  <b><i>Hood presented by</i> Alexandra Socarides, PhD Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs</b>  <b>Eric Alexander, BSSp '78 Chair, Board of Trustees <i>Citation by</i> Douglas Holloway, BS '76, MBA, LHD '24 Former Co-Vice Chair, Board of Trustees</b>  <b><i>Hood presented by</i> Alexandra Socarides, PhD Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs</b>
<i>Student Performance</i>	<b>Elizabeth Stone '26</b>

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*Graduate  
Award*

**Graduate Studies Award for Excellence**  
*Presented by*  
**Jan Roberts-Breslin, MFA**  
Dean, Graduate and Professional Studies

*Graduate  
Class Speaker*

**Roma Sur, MA**

*Faculty Recognition*

**Alexandra Socarides, PhD**  
Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

*Introduction of  
Commencement  
Speaker*

**Jay M. Bernhardt, PhD, MPH**  
President of the College

*Commencement  
Keynote Address*

**Henry Winkler, BA '67, MFA, LHD '78**

*Conferral of  
Student Degrees*

**Jay M. Bernhardt, PhD, MPH**  
President of the College

**Jan Roberts-Breslin, MFA**  
Interim Dean, School of Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies

**Paul Mihailidis, PhD**  
Interim Dean, School of Communication

**Shaun Clarke, MFA '12**  
Interim Dean; School of Film, Television, and Media Arts

*Alumni Welcome*

**John Porio, BS '88**  
Co-Chair, Alumni Board

*Student  
Performance*

**Musical Theatre Seniors:**  
Gilbert Almaraz, Grace Altenburger, Emily Barnett, Sofia Bordner, Semaj' Byrd, Aimee Coleman, Bridget DeVine, Amelia Duval, Tucker Gold, Sydney Hoffman, Haydn Kelley, Hope Kim, Kylee Majkowski, Ezekiel Manry, Grace Osier, Jordan Rochna, Em Salzman, Juliet Simon, Rebecca Tobin

*Closing*

**Michael Brown, JD**  
Grand Marshal

*Music*

**Triton Brass**

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*Marshals*

*Grand*

**Michael Brown, JD**

**Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism, School of Communication**

*Platform*

**Alexandra Socarides, PhD**

**Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs**

*Trustee*

**Patricia Peyton, BS '84**

**Member, Board of Trustees**

*Faculty*

**Felicity Ratté, PhD**

**Associate Professor; School of Film, Television, and Media Arts**

*In Memoriam*

**Sydney E. Ledoux, MS '26, Student**

# Graduati Honoris Causa

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## Helen Dreher Credle

*Associate Director for Community Engagement; Elma Lewis Center; Division of Community, Culture, and Belonging; Emerson College*

Helen Dreher Credle is the associate director for community engagement in the Elma Lewis Center in the Division of Community, Culture, and Belonging at Emerson College. She leads engagement and programming for the Elma Lewis Center's storytelling work, including its Living Stories Project: Documenting Boston's Black Luminaries in the Arts, Education, and Civil Rights.

Credle's work focuses on advancing the College's commitment to creativity, inclusion, equity, and expression, and building and strengthening its relationships with neighborhood-based organizations. She is a frequent speaker, including at Emerson College and Harvard University, and neighborhood organizations. Her presentations focus on her seven decades of experience with community engagement and the importance of intergenerational collaborations between campus and neighborhood communities.

Prior to her Emerson role, Credle led community engagement programs for several organizations, including the New England Conservatory of Music, the City of Boston's former Office of Human Rights, Massachusetts Department of Corrections, and the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts. Credle currently serves as a board member of the Mayor's Advisory Council for the City of Boston's Age Strong Commission.

Credle always credits who she is to her connections with thousands of people, mentors, and ancestors. She collaborated closely with Susan Batson, Ruth Batson, Melnea Cass, Elma Lewis, Talley Beatty, Arthur Mitchell, Light Man Al Patricelli, Malcolm X, Oscar Brown Jr., John Sdoucas, James Baldwin, Bob Credle, and incarcerated community members and their families. Her practice integrates community engagement, dance, music, archiving, youth and elder education, fashion, and carceral justice and re-entry. She also dedicated time to marry, raise children, and care for her family.



## Eric Alexander

*Chair, Board of Trustees, Emerson College  
Legislator, Dutchess County, NY  
President and Co-Founder, Compitium*

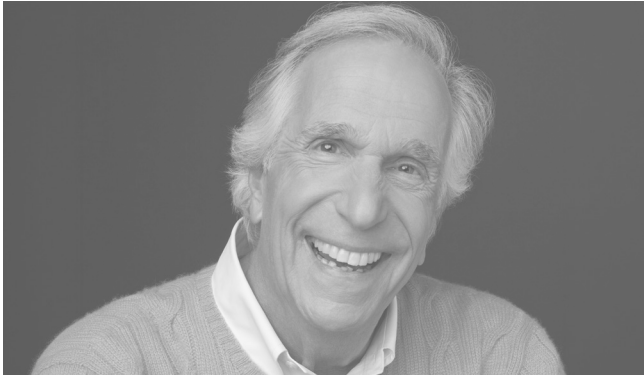
Eric Alexander is completing his term as chair of Emerson College's Board of Trustees. Alexander has served as a member of the College's Board for nearly two decades, and in the role of chair since 2021. During his Board tenure, he has served as chair of the Investment Committee and as a member of the Academic Affairs, Finance, Audit, Trusteeship, and Institutional Advancement Committees.

A first-generation American and the first of his family to graduate from college, Alexander credits Emerson with "changing his life" and has dedicated his service on the Board to providing opportunities for talented students to study and thrive at Emerson, regardless of their backgrounds. As chair, he has been committed to ensuring Emerson's ongoing presence as the leading academic institution dedicated to preparing students for leadership roles in the fields of communication, media, entertainment, and the arts.

In addition to his Board service, Alexander has led a successful career as an executive leader. In 2020, he co-founded Compitium, an integrated consulting and marketing firm that advises financial services organizations. In 2025, he was elected to the Dutchess County (NY) Legislature. Previously, Alexander spent two decades at the helm of Wall Street Access, a New York Stock Exchange member brokerage firm. He began his career at leading advertising and public relations agencies, including Ketchum and Burson-Marsteller. He holds a BS degree in Speech from Emerson College.

# Commencement Speaker

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## Henry Winkler

*Actor, producer, director, author*

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Award-winning actor and Emerson College alum Henry Winkler celebrates 50 years of success in Hollywood and continues to be in demand as an actor, producer, and director, as well as a best-selling author.

Winkler co-starred on the HBO dark comedy *Barry*, and in 2018, won his first Primetime Emmy Award for Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy. Additionally, he won two Television Critics Choice Awards and was nominated for both a Golden Globe and SAG Award for the role. Best known as “The Fonz” on *Happy Days*, he won two Golden Globe Awards and was nominated three times for an Emmy Award. He has appeared in over 100 television series and specials. Some of his feature film credits include *Night Shift*, *Here Comes the Boom*, *The Waterboy*, *Click*, *Heroes*, *Holes*, and *Scream*. Winkler is also a well-known children’s book author. He and his writing partner, Lin Oliver, are publishing their 41st children’s book, *Detective Duck*, this November. His autobiography, *BEING HENRY...The Fonz and Beyond*, was on the *New York Times* bestseller list for 11 weeks.

While at Emerson, Winkler pledged the Alpha Pi Theta fraternity, acted in numerous productions, and was involved with WERS. He holds an MFA from the Yale School of Drama and a BFA in Theatre and an LHD from Emerson College.

# Board of Trustees

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Los Angeles, CA

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SMPA Director, Associate Professor of Media and Public

Affairs, Director of the Project on Ethics in Political

Communication, George Washington University

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Kevin McKeon, BA '07  
Director, Original Film, Netflix  
Los Angeles, CA

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Marketing Communications  
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Television Writer, Producer, and Showrunner,  
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# Resources and Information

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## Captions

Captions of today's ceremony in English, Spanish, and Mandarin are available for your personal mobile device at:

[emerson.edu/commencement-captions](https://emerson.edu/commencement-captions)



Captions for the livestream of today's ceremony are available at:

[emerson.edu/live](https://emerson.edu/live)

## Photography and Video

Professional photographers and videographers will be on site today, capturing the spirit of the ceremony. Photography and video of the ceremony and our guests may be used in College publications, on Emerson's website and social media, or for other institutional marketing purposes.

After the ceremony, graduates will be offered a professional video clip of their stage crossing and be invited to purchase professional photos. Visit [emerson.edu/commencement](https://emerson.edu/commencement) for more information.

On-demand viewing of the full ceremony video will be available after the ceremony on the Emerson College YouTube channel.

## Social Media

Tag your social media posts with [Emerson2026](#) and connect on X and Instagram with [@emersoncollege](#) and [@emersonalumni](#).

## Consideration

We ask that guests be mindful of blocking others' view when celebrating their student. Due to safety regulations, guests may not stand in the aisles.

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120 Boylston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts