



# WESTERN GOVERNORS UNIVERSITY®

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COMMENCEMENT IN CHICAGO

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2023



## OUR MISSION

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To change lives for the better by creating pathways to opportunity.

## OUR PROMISE

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We endeavor to make opportunity work for everyone by improving quality, access, and outcomes of education through diverse, innovative programs, systems, and technologies.

*The flower arrangements displayed on stage for today's commencement are placed in memory of those students and graduates who have passed away. Our thoughts are with their families and friends.*

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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*Dear Graduates,*

*On behalf of all of us at WGU, I want to congratulate you and recognize all of the hard work that has led to today. Only you know the many sacrifices you made to complete your degree. This is your moment to pause and reflect on this significant accomplishment—and celebrate this life-changing milestone!*

*It has been our privilege to be on this journey alongside you, and we share in your excitement and pride. Your degree has the potential to change your life and make a real difference to your family and community. As you join the ranks of more than 325,000 WGU graduates, we hope you will stay in touch through the Alumni Association.*

*Again, thank you for joining us today. We are thrilled to share this day with you and your loved ones. Congratulations!*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott D. Pulsipher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scott D. Pulsipher, President  
Western Governors University

# COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

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## **KimArie Yowell**

*Chief Diversity of Rocket Companies and Chief Learning Officer of Rocket Central*

KimArie Yowell is Chief Diversity of Rocket Companies and Chief Learning Officer of Rocket Central – the centralized hub for the Rocket Companies FinTech platform.

In these roles, she is responsible for team member development programs along with the diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies for the businesses that are part of Rocket Companies. This includes the learning and development initiatives, post-secondary education programs, career development, diversity and inclusion programming and organizational effectiveness.

KimArie has more than 25 years of experience in client service, sales, and corporate education. She has an intense passion for team member growth and helping organizations thrive. She also firmly believes that one's ability to create a dynamic and high performing team rests on their ability to be inclusive.

Rocket was in the top 10 on Forbes magazine's list of America's Best Employers for Diversity in 2022. The company has also ranked #1 on Essence magazine's 10 Best Workplaces for African Americans and has been included on Fortune magazine's list of Best Workplaces for Diversity since the list's inception in 2015.

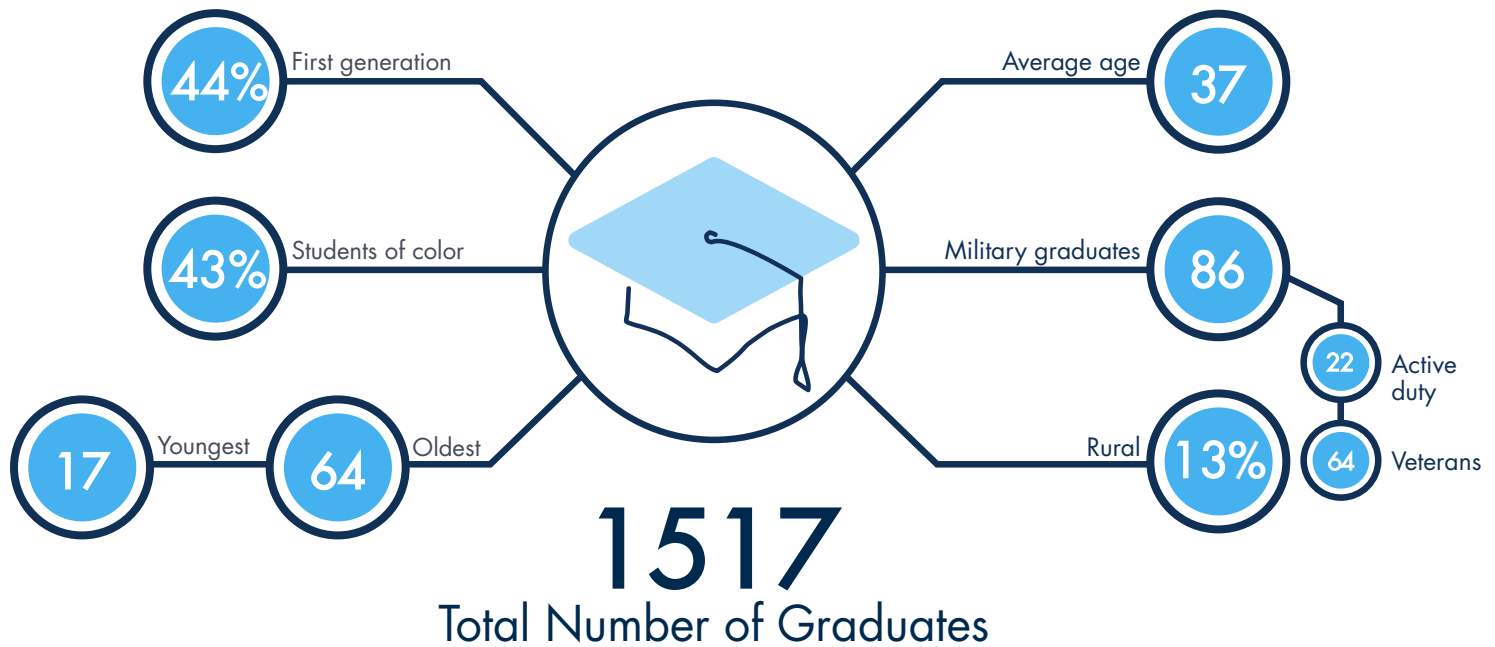
# COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER CONT'D

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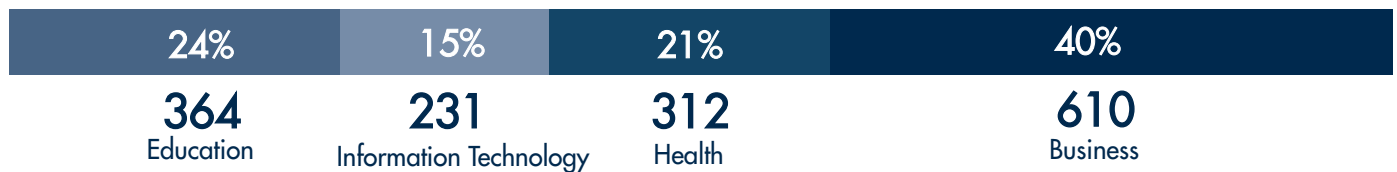
KimArie has received several awards and accolades, including being named one of Michigan Chronicle's Women of Excellence (2020), Savoy Magazine's "Most Influential Women in Corporate America" (2019) and "40 Under 40" by the Michigan Chronicle for her exceptional achievements and community service (2018). In addition to her roles at Rocket Companies, she serves on Siena Heights University's Board of Trustees.

KimArie earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Wayne State University. She also earned a Master of Arts in Adult Education and Training, a Master of Business Administration, Master of Management and Administrative Sciences from the University of Texas at Dallas. Most recently, she completed her Doctorate in Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

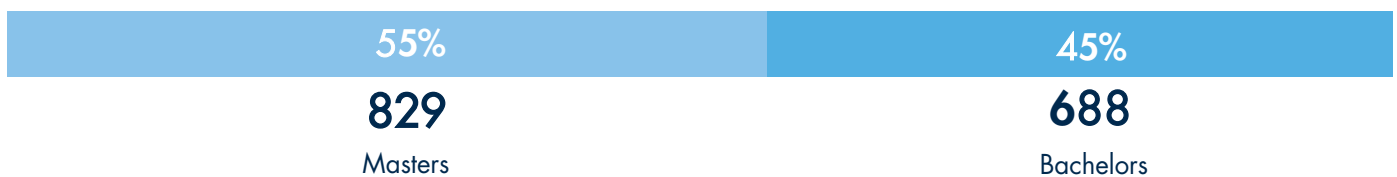
# 2023 COMMENCEMENT IN CHICAGO GRADUATING CLASS PROFILE



## Degree distribution by college:



## Degree type:



**21%**

Percentage of graduates  
from Illinois

**2,141**

Furthest distance traveled  
from St. Croix, U.S.  
Virgin Islands

**49**

Number of states represented  
(including U.S. territories)

# Master's Ceremony Program

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## OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT

**Jessica Denham**

Director, Midwest

## ANTHEM SINGER

**Nathalie Alcime, Spring Valley, NY**

M.A. Teaching, Elementary Education

## WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

**Dr. Terrance Hopson**

Regional Vice President, Midwest

## GRADUATE SPEAKERS

**Leonard Kalimasi, Salt Lake City, UT**

M.S. Data Analytics

**Sahar Hassan, Buffalo Grove, IL**

Master of Business Administration

## COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

**KimArie Yowell**

Chief Diversity of Rocket Companies and  
Chief Learning Officer of Rocket Central

## CONFERRAL OF DEGREES

**Dr. Sarah DeMark**

Interim Provost

*College of Business*

*Michael O. Leavitt School of Health*

*College of Information Technology*

*School of Education*

## CLOSING REMARKS

**Scott D. Pulsipher**

President

# Bachelor's Ceremony Program

## OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT

**Jessica Denham**

Director, Midwest

## ANTHEM SINGER

**Marly Alvarez, Wichita Falls, TX**

B.S. Nursing

## WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

**Dr. Terrance Hopson**

Regional Vice President, Midwest

## GRADUATE SPEAKERS

**Michael Cooper, Hot Springs, AR**

B.S. Business Management

**Jessica Kiesling, Oregon, IL**

B.A. Special Education

## COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

**KimArie Yowell**

Chief Diversity of Rocket Companies and  
Chief Learning Officer of Rocket Central

## CONFERRAL OF DEGREES

**Dr. Sarah DeMark**

Interim Provost

*College of Business*

*Michael O. Leavitt School of Health*

*College of Information Technology*

*School of Education*

## CLOSING REMARKS

**Dr. Sarah DeMark**

Interim Provost



# MEMBER GOVERNORS

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**The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt, Chairman Emeritus**

Governor, Utah 1993–2003

## **Alaska**

The Honorable  
Michael J. Dunleavy

## **Indiana**

The Honorable  
Eric Holcomb

## **Oregon**

The Honorable  
Tina Kotek

## **Arizona**

The Honorable  
Katie Hobbs

## **Montana**

The Honorable  
Greg Gianforte

## **South Dakota**

The Honorable  
Kristi Noem

## **California**

The Honorable  
Gavin Newsom

## **Nebraska**

The Honorable  
Jim Pillen

## **Texas**

The Honorable  
Greg Abbott

## **Colorado**

The Honorable  
Jared Polis

## **Nevada**

The Honorable  
Joe Lombardo

## **Utah**

The Honorable  
Spencer Cox

## **Guam**

The Honorable  
Lou Leon Guerrero

## **New Mexico**

The Honorable  
Michelle Lujan Grisham

## **Washington**

The Honorable  
Jay R. Inslee

## **Hawaii**

The Honorable  
Josh Green, M.D.

## **North Dakota**

The Honorable  
Doug Burgum

## **Wyoming**

The Honorable  
Mark Gordon

## **Idaho**

The Honorable  
Brad Little

## **Oklahoma**

The Honorable  
Kevin Stitt

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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## **Chairman**

### **Dr. Charles Sorenson**

President and CEO Emeritus, Intermountain Healthcare

### **John W. Bluford III**

President and Founder, Bluford  
Healthcare Leadership Institute

### **April Chou**

Chief Strategic Growth Officer,  
OneTen

### **Cole Clark**

Managing Director,  
Higher Education, Deloitte

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Professor of Management Practice  
and Co-Director of the Managing  
the Future of Work Project,  
Harvard Business School

### **The Honorable**

### **Jim Geringer**

Former Governor of Wyoming  
(1995–2003)

### **Kerry Healey**

Former Lieutenant  
Governor of Massachusetts

### **The Honorable**

### **Eric Holcomb**

Governor, State of Indiana

### **Lenny Mendonca**

Former Chief Economic and Business  
Advisor, State of California

### **Talia Milgrom-Elcott**

Founder of The Starfish Institute,  
Co-Founder and Executive Director,  
100Kin10

### **The Honorable**

### **Jared Polis**

Governor, State of Colorado

### **Scott D. Pulsipher**

President, Western Governors University

### **David Simmons**

Chairman, CEO,  
Simmons Media Group

### **Dr. Samuel H. Smith**

President Emeritus,  
Washington State University

### **Jessie Woolley-Wilson**

CEO and President,  
DreamBox Learning



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# CONGRATULATIONS, NIGHT OWLS! YOU DID IT!

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Welcome to our growing alumni network,  
now more than 325,000 strong.

Stay connected, network with colleagues, and learn  
about the many resources and benefits available to you:

Visit [wgu.edu/alumni](https://wgu.edu/alumni)

## GET SOCIAL

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**WGU**  | ALUMNI