

Newcomb Institute honors student and faculty award recipients with a virtual celebration

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Every May, Newcomb Institute honors the students and faculty who participate in Newcomb programming. This year's celebration was held virtually, and students received awards in 13 categories ranging from displays of exceptional character to female athlete of the year. (Image provided by Newcomb Institute)

While practicing social distancing, graduating senior Emma Rosenthal has found solace in a quote by poet Maya Angelou: "I can be changed by what happens to me, but I refuse to be reduced by it."

As the featured senior speaker for the Newcomb Institute virtual awards ceremony, Rosenthal invoked Angelou and other famous feminists while discussing resilience

and leadership.

“In our current circumstance, resiliency is seeing the interconnectedness of our world,” Rosenthal said. “In solitude, we are closer than ever in realizing that each of us is responsible for each other’s humanity.”

Rosenthal is a Newcomb Scholar, Public Leadership Education Network grant recipient and Oak Wreath award recipient. She is one of many students whose participation in Newcomb Institute programs shaped her undergraduate career.

The Newcomb Institute mission to educate undergraduates for gender equity involves a range of programs providing opportunities for students to combine curricula, research, and community engagement through close collaboration with faculty. Every May, the institute honors the students and faculty who participate in Newcomb programming.

This year’s [virtual celebration](#) honored award winners, student organizations, grant recipients, student interns, and the graduating class of Newcomb Scholars.

In addition to Rosenthal, speakers included Newcomb Institute Executive Director Sally J. Kenney and Newcomb College alumna and Newcomb Alumnae Association (NAA) president Lisa Rice, who welcomed the Class of 2020 to the NAA.

Tulane faculty and staff from a variety of departments were honored, including Michele Adams, PhD, of the Department of Sociology; Dr. Mollye Demosthenidy, of the Department of Health Policy and Management; Tim McLean, PhD, of the Department of Biology; and Executive Director for Campus Accessibility Kathryn Fernandez. An additional 24 faculty were honored by student Oak Wreath award recipients, who were asked to name the professor who most impacted their time at Tulane.

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Recipients include senior Simrain Jain, Award for Exceptional Character; sophomores Talazia Manuel and Deja Wells, Class of 2005 Jennie C. Nixon Award; seniors Pritika Sharma, Eva Dils, Ishanya Narang and Sarah Jones, Class of 1909 Prize to the Outstanding Senior; student organization Students United for Reproductive Justice (SURJ), Cynthia B. Taffaro Memorial Award; athletes Bridget Lee and Olivia Johnson,

Doris K. Joffrion Award; Allison Foster, Gifford Darling Riess Award; junior Anusha Rahman, Newcomb Institute Resident Advisor Award; junior Sydney Sheffield and graduate student Maya Cohen, Shelley Coverman Memorial Award; juniors LaKia Williams and Emma Brick-Hezeau, Dorothy Young Memorial Award; first-year student Theo Mathurin, Shirley Gauff Award; senior Grace Hindmarch, Sylvia Dreyfus Memorial Award; and senior Amy Vertacnik, Under the Oaks Award.

Tulane cheerleader Bridget Lee, one of two recipients of the Doris L. Joffrion Award for female athlete of the year, credited her involvement with Newcomb Institute in providing a framework for her passion for social justice and sexual violence activism.

“Newcomb’s guidance and advising has challenged me to think deeply and thoroughly about the things I am most passionate about,” Lee said. “I have been given a platform through Newcomb to learn and talk about sexual violence in a constructive way that really benefits the communities I work with.”

In addition to her involvement with Tulane’s Title IX office, Lee has worked tirelessly to bring sexual violence awareness to elementary schools in her hometown of St. Louis, Missouri.

“I believe that I have made change in the communities I have been invited into, and I look forward to continuing this work for the rest of my life,” Lee said.

In her remarks to award recipients, Newcomb Institute Executive Director Sally J. Kenney expressed regret for her inability to congratulate graduates in person but reflected on how the virtual experience can provide new opportunities for connection and growth.

“While painful, we need not fear or avoid sadness, as it teaches us about what we value... While I am sad over what we have lost, I am proud of what we have found; learning together over these last four years.”

View the awards ceremony by [clicking here](#).