

THE INAUGURATION OF

Sarah
Willie-
LeBreton

12th President of
Smith College

SATURDAY,
OCTOBER 21, 2023

SMITH COLLEGE.



*The
promise
of education
is not just the creation of
knowledge, but the model
of how to share it for our
mutual liberation and
the collective good.*





Sarah Willie-LeBreton

12TH PRESIDENT OF SMITH COLLEGE



Sarah Willie-LeBreton is the 12th president of Smith College. She earned a bachelor of arts degree from Haverford College in 1986, and an M.A. (1988) and Ph.D. (1995) from Northwestern University, all in sociology. After having taught at Colby College (1991–1995) and Bard College (1995–1997) in tenure-track appointments, she was tenured at Swarthmore, where she served as coordinator of the Black Studies Program and chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology for a total of 17 years. She was appointed as provost and dean of the faculty at Swarthmore in 2018 and served in that role until 2023.

An accomplished administrator, scholar, and sociologist who studies social inequality and race and ethnicity, Willie-LeBreton is known for her commitment to the liberal arts, strengthening community, and energizing the work of equity and inclusion. She is the author of several dozen articles, essays, reviews, and op-ed columns. Her first book, *Acting Black: College, Identity, and the Performance of Race*, examines how the experiences of Black college alumni of a predominantly white institution (PWI) were distinct from those who attended a comparative HBCU from the waning days of the Civil Rights Movement through the country's political turn to the right under the Reagan presidency. Her second book, *Transforming the Academy: Faculty Perspectives on Diversity and Pedagogy*, is a collection of essays that she contributed to and edited. It focuses on the challenges faced by faculty who were previously underrepresented on campuses, including people of color, queer people, neurodivergent people, and people who immigrated to the United States. It explores their experiences as they become participants in dominant spaces within the American Academy.

Willie-LeBreton considers herself an applied sociologist, and she has worked with a broad range of groups and organizations to understand social dynamics and develop strategies to move toward organizational self-awareness, transformation, compassion, and inclusivity. She is a member of and has been active in the Eastern Sociological Society, Sociologists for Women in Society, the Association of Black Sociologists, and the American Sociological Association (ASA). For several years, she reviewed sociology and affiliated departments as a member of the ASA's Departmental Resources Group. Her board service has included the Executive Office and Budget of the ASA, Pendle Hill Quaker Center, Haverford College, Benchmark School, the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, and she sits on the advisory board of the Integrated Impact Group (IIG), which offers consulting for the educational sector.



The Installation of Sarah Willie-LeBreton



Processional

“Triumphal March,” from *Aida*, by Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

“Quick March,” from *Sea Songs*, by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

The Smith College Orchestra

Jonathan Hirsh, Conductor

Order of the Academic Procession

College Marshals

Delegates from Academic Institutions and Learned Societies

Trustees Emeritae/i of Smith College

President’s Team

The Smith College Faculty

The Board of Trustees of Smith College

The Platform Party

Past Presidents of Smith College

The President-Elect and the Chair of the Board

Opening of Ceremony

Elizabeth Jamieson '94, Head Marshal and Professor of Chemistry

Land Acknowledgment

Floyd Cheung, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion and

Professor of English Language & Literature and American Studies

Invocation

Matilda Rose Cantwell, M.S.W. '96

Director of Religious & Spiritual Life and College Chaplain

Greetings

Vanessa Nicole Silva-Burgos '24, President of the Student Government Association

Dawn Hines, Director of Class Engagement & Annual Support and Chair of Staff Council

Darcy Buerkle, Professor of History and Faculty Council Chair

Peggie Ward Koon '74, Trustee and President of the Alumnae Association of Smith College

Edward Wingenbach, President of Hampshire College

Musical Selection

Smith College Glee Club

“Simple Gifts,” traditional Shaker tune, arranged by Aaron Copland

Amy Roberts-Crawford, Pianist

Jonathan Hirsh, Conductor

Welcome

Alison Overseth '80, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Video Greetings

Ruth J. Simmons, Smith College President Emerita (1995–2001)

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts

Sweet Honey In the Rock

“Come Ye” song by Nina Simone

Remarks

Gina-Louise Sciarra '96, Mayor of Northampton
Valerie Smith, President of Swarthmore College
Wendy Raymond, President of Haverford College

Investiture of the President and Presentation of the Symbols of Office

John M. Connolly, Smith College Acting President (2001–2002)
Carol T. Christ, Smith College President Emerita (2002–2013)
Kathleen McCartney, Smith College President Emerita (2013–2023)
Alison Overseth '80, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Inaugural Address

Sarah Willie-LeBreton, 12th President of Smith College

Musical Interlude

“How Can I Keep From Singing” by Robert Lowry, arranged by Rollo Dilworth
Smith College Glee Club
Amy Roberts-Crawford, Pianist
Jonathan Hirsh, Conductor

Benediction

The Reverend Paula Lawrence-Wehmiller

Closing of Ceremony

Elizabeth Jamieson '94, Head Marshal and Professor of Chemistry

Recessional

“How Can I Keep From Singing” by Robert Lowry, arranged by the Podd Brothers
Smith College Glee Club and Orchestra
Jonathan Hirsh, Conductor
Suite of Dances by Florence Price (1887–1953)
I. Allegretto
II. Allegretto
III. Allegro molto
Smith College Orchestra; Jonathan Hirsh, Conductor



All-Community Reception

Immediately following the installation, please join President Willie-LeBreton and her family on Chapin lawn for an all-community reception featuring a live performance from Sweet Honey In the Rock, and campus illumination at 7 p.m.

Academic Costumes and Degrees

In the early Middle Ages in Western Europe, the gown was a common form of dress for those of many ranks. It was thus natural that the first universities should adopt the gown, which they maintained even after the laity had turned to more modern dress. As the first universities were founded by the church, their students, no matter what their future profession, were long considered to be clerics and men of the gown.

Over the centuries, two other items of academic costume developed: the hood and the cap. With the gown, they came to reflect the different academic degrees, just as dress in general reflected the wearer's social status and occupation. Although some institutions and countries adopted colored gowns, black became the standard in America.

Style as well as color has given the gowns distinction. The bachelor's gown is worn closed and sports long, pointed sleeves. The master of arts gown is worn open, with the forearms protruding through slits in the sleeves. Older doctor's gowns are worn open (newer ones tend to be worn closed) with full, round, open sleeves; facings of velvet; and three velvet bars on each sleeve. Originally, the hood was a cowl-like appendage that served as a covering for protection. By the end of the 15th century this function was assumed by the cap, and the hood—while retaining some of its original shape—was draped over the shoulder. In the United States the colored linings of black hoods came to indicate both the institution conferring the degree and the type of degree itself. Today, on a colored robe that signifies an institution, the field in which the degree was awarded may be indicated by “crow's feet” shapes

embroidered in color on the front of the costume. For example, blue in a hood or on crow's feet signifies a doctor of philosophy; green, a doctor of medicine; brown, a doctor or master of fine arts; and golden yellow, a doctor of science. White signifies the liberal arts, and it appears most often in master's and bachelor's hoods.

As the cap functionally replaced the hood, it came to play its part in academic costume, testifying to the young scholar's newfound freedom and independence. The Oxford black mortarboard (whether symbolizing the master workman's mortarboard, the scholar's books, or Oxford's familiar quadrangles, no one quite knows) became more popular than the round velvet cap and eventually acquired colored tassels corresponding to those of the hoods, with doctors being entitled to wear gold tassels. Although much of American academic costume is derived from English universities, those of the continent boasted their own colors, textures, and shapes, which contribute greatly to the pageantry of an academic ceremony.

At Smith in 1894, caps and gowns were dismissed as a passing fad. President Seelye felt that such finery for either faculty or students was ill-suited to a noble, pioneering enterprise. However, as the dress of women members of the faculty became more colorful, the sober black of academic gowns to cover rainbow hues came into favor, and in 1910 the faculty permitted all who wished to do so to wear academic dress for the inauguration of President Burton. For Rally Day two years later, the faculty voted to dress up in what was then referred to as “simply academic evening dress.”

The Presidential Medal

The Presidential Medal was commissioned by the board of trustees in 1995 to be bestowed upon Smith presidents at their installation ceremonies. Ruth J. Simmons was the first president to wear the medal; each medal bears the name of the president and the date of the inauguration.

The medal was designed by noted sculptor and printmaker Elliot M. Offner, who taught at Smith from 1960 until his retirement in 2004. Represented on the face of the medal are the Grécourt Gates, erected in 1924 by the board of trustees in recognition of the

service of the Smith College Relief Unit in France from 1917 to 1920. The gates are an exact reproduction of those before the Chateau of Robecourt in Grécourt, France. The reverse of the medal depicts the tower of College Hall surrounded by treetops.

The Latin phrase on the medal, *Vivat Academia*, may be translated “Long May Scholarship Flourish,” a theme that reflects Smith's goal as an institution of higher learning and the aspiration of each president as the college's leader.

The Smith College Mace

In the late Middle Ages the academic mace became part of the ceremonial insignia of the universities of Western Europe. A direct descendant of the battle mace and the regal scepter, the academic mace has become a symbol of the corporate authority of the

institution and is always carried to open formal ceremonies.

The Smith College mace, carried at the head of the academic procession, was given to the college in honor of Florence Macdonald '32 by the three presidents of

the college and the six women who chaired the board of trustees during her years of service at Smith.

The mace, fashioned chiefly from cherry and maple woods and designed and fashioned by Elliot M. Offner, has decoration that is Celtic in origin. Carved on one side of the caput, or head, is the Macdonald crest and on the other side the Grécourt Gates. The

crowning ornament of the caput is inlaid with end-grain boxwood and bears the dedication to Florence Macdonald as well as the college motto—"to virtue, knowledge" (2 Peter 1:5, King James version)—inscribed in classical Greek. The names of all the presidents of Smith College have been cut into the shaft.



Marshals

Elizabeth Jamieson '94

Head Marshal,
Professor of Chemistry

Will Raven

Deputy Marshal,
Professor of Physics

Patricia Cahn '06

Associate Professor of
Mathematical Sciences

Brent Durbin

Associate Professor
of Government

Randi L. Garcia

Associate Professor
of Psychology and of
Statistical & Data
Sciences

Nicholas Howe

Professor of Computer
Science

Susannah Howe

Design Clinic Director
and Senior Lecturer
in Engineering

Stephanie Jones

Assistant Professor of
Exercise & Sport Studies

Jack Loveless

Professor of Geosciences

Joyce Palmer-Fortune

Senior Lecturer
in Physics



Delegates of Colleges and Universities

1636

Harvard University

Alexandra Keller

1701

Yale University

Meg Kirkpatrick

1740

University of

Pennsylvania

Alexandra Cudby

1766

Rutgers University

Francine Conway

Jonathan Holloway

1767

Columbia University

College of Physicians

and Surgeons

George Lazarus

1780

American Academy of

Arts & Sciences

David W. Oxtoby

1787

Franklin & Marshall

College

Mary Osirim

1793

Williams College

Gretchen Long

1794

Bowdoin College

Sira Berté

1795

Union College

Dianne McMullen

1800

Middlebury College

Eliza Garrison

1816

Harvard Divinity School

Tracey Hucks

1821

Amherst College

Catherine Epstein

1824

Kenyon College

Jessica Moyer

1830

University of Richmond

Ronald Crutcher

1831

Wesleyan University

Anne Martin

1833

Haverford College

Wendy Raymond

David Backus

1837

Mount Holyoke College

Danielle Holley

1838

Duke University

Barbara Brehm-Curtis

1839

Boston University

Suzanne Kennedy

1851

Lasell University

Eric Turner

1855

Bates College

Garry Jenkins

1855

William Paterson

University

Mark Ellis

Continued on next page

1863
University of
Massachusetts Amherst
Javier Reyes

1864
Swarthmore College
Valerie Smith

1865
Cornell University
Debra Shaver

1866
Carleton College
Rob Rothblatt

1870
Hunter College
Peggy Tirschwell

1870
Wellesley College
Andrew Shennan

1877
Rhode Island
School of Design
Crystal Williams

1881
Spelman College
Pamela Scott-Johnson
Beverly Tatum

1885
Bryn Mawr College
Jennifer Walters

1885
Stanford University
RoAnn Costin

1887
Clark University
Margaret Guzman

1887
Pomona College
G. Gabrielle Starr

1889
Barnard College
Jennifer Fondiller

1901
California Polytechnic
State University
Camille O'Bryant

1903
Skidmore College
Joshua Woodfork

1912
Rice University
Amy Vollmer

1918
American Council on
Education
Terry W. Hartle

1919
Emmanuel College
Amy Hagan-Brown

1919
The New School for
Social Research
Renée T. White

1926
Sarah Lawrence College
Kanwal Singh

1934
Salve Regina University
Kelli J. Armstrong

1946
Holyoke Community
College
George Timmons

1965
Five College Consortium
Sarah Pfatteicher

1965
Hampshire College
Edward Wingenbach

1974
Consortium on Financing
Higher Education (COFHE)
Janet Rapelye

1989
Beacon College
George Hagerty



Smith College Board of Trustees

Anu Aiyengar '91
New York, NY

Deborah N. Archer '93
New York, NY

Andrea Auerbach '91
Menlo Park, CA

Johan C. Aurik
London, UK

Lisa Black '81
New York, NY

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White Plains, NY

Molly Burke '76
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Compton '72
Vice Chair
Fort Worth, TX

Denise Conway '80
Plandome, NY

Pam Craig '79
Spring Lake, NJ

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Lile R. Gibbons '64
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Ann Silverman '96
New York, NY

Emily B. van Agtmael '70
Bethesda, MD

Sarah Willie-LeBreton
Northampton, MA

Ling Yang '02
Hong Kong, SAR

The Platform Party

Darcy Buerkle

Professor of History and
Faculty Council Chair

Matilda Rose**Cantwell, M.S.W. '96**

Director of Religious &
Spiritual Life and College
Chaplain

Floyd Cheung

Vice President for Equity
and Inclusion and
Professor of English
Language & Literature
and American Studies

Carol T. Christ

Smith College President
Emerita (2002–2013)

John M. Connolly

Smith College Acting
President (2001–2002)

Dawn Hines

Director of Class
Engagement & Annual
Support and Chair of
Staff Council

Peggie Ward Koon '74

Trustee and President of
the Alumnae Association
of Smith College

**The Reverend Paula
Lawrence-Wehmiller**

Kathleen McCartney
Smith College President
Emerita (2013–2023)

Alison Overseth '80

Chair of the Board
of Trustees

Wendy Raymond

President of
Haverford College

Gina-Louise Sciarra '96

Mayor of Northampton

**Vanessa Nicole
Silva-Burgos '24**

President of the Student
Government Association

Valerie Smith

President of
Swarthmore College

Edward Wingebach

President of
Hampshire College



Past Presidents of Smith College

Laureus Clark Seelye

1873 to 1910

Marion LeRoy Burton

1910 to 1917

William Allan Neilson

1917 to 1939

Herbert John Davis

1940 to 1949

Benjamin Fletcher Wright

1949 to 1959

Thomas Corwin

Mendenhall

1959 to 1975

Jill Ker Conway

1975 to 1985

Mary Maples Dunn

1985 to 1995

Ruth J. Simmons

1995 to 2001

John M. Connolly

Acting President,
2001 to 2002

Carol T. Christ

2002 to 2013

Kathleen McCartney

2013 to 2023



History of Smith College

Smith College founder Sophia Smith had a daring vision—that through education, women’s power for good would be “incalculably enlarged.” For Sophia, knowledge was a potent force for progress. Educated women, she believed, were the courageous agents of change the world needed most. Now, more than 150 years later, Smith College is still nurturing leaders and visionaries, empowering the loud voices that inspire change as well as the quiet ones who instill it.

Since its founding in 1871, Smith, its faculty, staff, students, and alums have worked to address society’s most complex, urgent problems. Throughout its history, Smith has lived its values, providing women with opportunities previously unavailable to them and using its resources to make change in the world beyond its Grécourt Gates. In the mid-1920s, Smith became a pioneer in global education, launching one of the

first study abroad programs in order to help students actively engage in the world. More recently, Smith recognized the urgent need for more women leaders in STEM fields and was the first women’s college to grant degrees in engineering (2004) and data science (2020). Today, Smith continues to innovate by becoming one of a select few colleges to eliminate loans from its financial aid packages and taking active steps to reach carbon neutrality by 2030 without carbon offsets.

Smith alums have used their education as Sophia Smith intended, “to do the most good to the greatest number.” As visionaries (Julia Child ’34, Betty Friedan ’42, Gloria Steinem ’56), policymakers (Tammy Baldwin ’84, Adrienne Todman ’91), artists and creators (Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy ’02, Kimberly Drew ’12), scientists and STEM pioneers (Evelyn Boyd Granville ’45,

Continued on next page

Annie De Groot '78), and business leaders (Dolores Kunda '77, Anu Aiyengar '91), Smithies are emboldened by an education steeped in the liberal arts to create a better world.

Certain enduring constants have long defined the Smith experience: a dedication to the importance of the humanities, arts, and sciences; an uncompromising defense of academic and intellectual freedom; an attention to the relationship between college education and the larger public issues of democracy and human

dignity; and a concern for the rights and privileges of women. Today, Smith is one of the largest women's liberal arts colleges in the United States. It enrolls more than 2,500 students from nearly every state and more than 65 other countries to develop global citizens able to address today's challenges. As a global community of scholars, entrepreneurs, artists, scientists, activists, and humanitarians, Smith is fulfilling its founder's hope that her namesake college would be a "perennial blessing to the country and the world."



Search Committee for the 12th President of Smith College

Anu Aiyengar '91

Trustee

Deborah Keiko Reeves Berger '86

Trustee

Darcy Buerkle

Professor of History and
Faculty Council Chair

Mattie Peterson Compton '72

Vice Chair of the
Board of Trustees

David DeSwert

Executive Vice
President for Finance
and Administration

Terry W. Hartle

Trustee

Peggie Ward Koon '74

Trustee; President of the
Alumnae Association of
Smith College

Daphne Lamothe

Professor of
Africana Studies

Tiffany Lin '24

Student Representative

Susan May Molineaux '75

Vice Chair of the Board
of Trustees; *Chair of
the Presidential Search
Committee*

Alison Overseth '80

Chair of the Board
of Trustees

Kate Queeney

Professor of Chemistry

Kimberly Scott '91

Trustee

Deborah Weinberg '81

Trustee

Gregory White

Mary Huggins Gamble
Professor of Government

Elena Palladino

(staff support), Secretary
of the Board of Trustees
and Secretary of the
College



Inauguration Steering Committee

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Executive Assistant
to the President

Andrea Fernandes

Director of Events
Management

Dawn Hines

Director of Class
Engagement and Annual
Support, Chair of Staff
Council

Elizabeth Jamieson '94

Head Marshal,
Professor of Chemistry

Ashley Keedy

Associate Director of
Alumnae and Donor
Relations

Denise Wingate Materre '74

Vice President for
Alumnae Relations

Susan May Molineaux '75

Vice Chair of the Board
of Trustees, *Co-Chair of
the Inauguration Steering
Committee*

Alison Overseth '80

Chair of the Board
of Trustees

Elena Palladino

Secretary of the Board of
Trustees and Secretary of
the College

Beth Raffeld

Senior Vice President for
Alumnae Relations and
Development, *Co-Chair of
the Inauguration Steering
Committee*

Vanessa Nicole Silva-Burgos '24

President of the Student
Government Association

Michael Thurston

Helen Means Professor of
English Language &
Literature, Provost and
Dean of the Faculty

Julia Yager

Vice President for
College Relations and
Communications

Mandy Duffy

(staff support),
Executive Assistant for
Advancement

Elizabeth Secchia

(staff support),
Administrative Assistant,
Board of Trustees Office



