





*Physician Assistant
Commencement Exercises*

2025

Saturday, September 6

10 a.m.

William A. Passavant Memorial Center

 *The Order of the Exercises* 
September 6, 2025

***Proclamation**

Faculty Marshal, Candidates for Degrees, Faculty, Platform Party
Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1 in D (*Edward Elgar*)

***Placing of the College Mace** Jared Johnson, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English, Faculty Marshal

***Invocation** The Reverend Brenda D. Martin
Campus Pastor

Welcome Robert D. Burns, M.D. '74 H'22
Chair, Board of Trustees

President's Remarks Susan Traverso, Ph.D.
President of the College

Presentation of Honorary Degree Recipient James E. Tkacik, D.M.Sc., PA-C
Department Chair and Program Director

Conferring of the Honorary Degree Chairperson Burns

Commencement Address Robert B. Morgenstern, M.D.

Student Remarks Madeline Lauther M.S. '25

Awards & Recognition Dr. Tkacik

Alysandra Andrusky, MPAS, PA-C
Director of Clinical Education

PAEA Pi Alpha Honorary Society Induction Dr. Tkacik

Presentation of the Class Sheila Nowinski, Ph.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the College

Distribution of Alumni Flowers David Hummel '83
Director of Alumni Relations

Physician Assistant Professional Oath..... Jessica Sloan, PA-C
Director of Didactic Education
Clinical Assistant Professor of Physician Assistant Studies

Conferring of Degrees..... President Traverso

Special Announcements..... Dr. Johnson

***Hail, Alma Mater**..... All Attendees
(Music by Friedrich F. Flemming, lyrics by E. Grace Hunton 1900)

Hail, Alma Mater
Thiel College Alma Mater
from the Hymn Tune "Integer Vitae"

Hail, Alma Mater, on thy hill enthroned,
Firm as a mountain, may'st thou stand enduring
Fair as the valley of thine own Shenango.
Hail, Alma Mater!

Hail, Alma Mater, may thy torch forever
Shed light resplendent for thy God and Country;
Send the flame onward to all generations.
Hail, Alma Mater!

Hail, Alma Mater, we thy children pledge thee
Here our devotion, loyal, true, and tender;
Thee will we cherish, praise thy name forever.
Hail, Alma Mater!

***Closing Prayer**..... Rev. Martin

***Recessional**..... Dr. Johnson
Crown Imperial March *(William Walton)*

*The audience is invited to rise.

HONORARY DEGREE CANDIDATE

Robert B. Morgenstern, M.D.

Keynote Speaker



A board-certified internist, **Robert B. Morgenstern, M.D.**, has served the Shenango Valley for more than 40 years as a compassionate clinician and respected medical leader. From 2012 to 2020, he was chief medical officer at Sharon Regional Medical Center, where he guided clinical quality assurance and helped the institution navigate key periods of growth and change.

As the founding medical director of the Thiel College Physician Assistant Program, Morgenstern was instrumental in establishing the program's clinical and academic standards. In retirement, he continues to teach in the Principles of Medicine course, sharing his expertise in pathophysiology and cardiology. His mentorship and advocacy for the physician assistant profession have influenced generations of students and practicing clinicians and strengthened the program's partnerships across the region.

A western Pennsylvania native, Morgenstern graduated from Sharon High School and Westminster College, earned his medical degree from the University of Pittsburgh, and completed his internal medicine residency at Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh. He and his wife, Mary Ann Palitti, D.M.D., a retired orthodontist, reside in the area and have two children.

At today's ceremony, Thiel College recognizes Morgenstern's enduring service to patients, his leadership in regional healthcare, and his steadfast support of physician assistant education by conferring upon him an honorary degree and inviting him to address the graduating class.

Master of Science Physician Assistant Studies

James Nicholas Abicunas
Ringtown, Pa.

Sophia Gail Antonopoulos
Towson, Md.

Miranda Nicole Behe
Franklin, Pa.

Harmony Mung Jun Brewer
Leetonia, Ohio

Jada Marina Clendenin
New Philadelphia, Ohio

Brent Clutter
Washington, Pa.

Marissa Leeann Cupp
Saint Clairsville, Ohio

Kara Michelle Davis
Beaver, Pa.

Autumn Jaclyn Duncan
Youngstown, Ohio

Feven Seleshe Kahsay
Silver Spring, Md.

Kalissa Marie Krapf
Milmy, N.J.

Ja Ding Pan Lahpai
Springfield, Va.

Fiona Lam
New York, N.Y.

Madeline Paige Lauther
Sharpsville, Pa.

Maria Christine Lawhorne
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Caroline Julia Lawrence
Galena, Ohio

Anthony Dominic Lefoer
Poland, Ohio

Mackenzie Elizabeth Maasen
Scottsdale, Ariz.

Zachary Michael Malicky
Northern Cambria, Pa.

Kayla Annabel Martinez
Aurora, Ill.

Bryan Josue Merino
Jacksonville, Fla.

Aliya Cheyenne Mitchell
Troy, Ohio

Brady Lawrence Moore
Tabernacle, N.J.

Mariah Renee Mosier
Towanda, Pa.

Katelyn Noel Norris
Fayetteville, N.C.

Brooke L. Phelps
Linesville, Pa.

Jack Prothero
Cranberry Township, Pa.

Johnathan Edward Rabon
Hershey, Pa.

Samuel Gregory Sargent
South Weber, Utah

**Tony Alejandro Silva
Fernandez**
Miami, Fla.

Jonathan Joseph Stemm
Darville, Pa.

Danielle Renee Sterling '23
Sharon, Pa.

Jake J. Weber
Boardman, Ohio

AnnaLynn Wharry
New Castle, Pa.

Stanley Woo
Staten Island, N.Y.

Marissa Wuilliez
Farmington, N.Y.

Special legacy photographs will be taken for those graduates whose immediate family members are Thiel College alumni. Please meet in front of the stage following the ceremony.

Physician Assistant Faculty and Staff

James E. Tkacik, DMSc, PA-C

*Department Chair and Program Director
Associate Professor of Physician Assistant Studies*

David Shellenbarger, MD, FACEP

*Medical Director of Physician Assistant Studies
Adjunct Professor*

Alysandra Andrusky, MPAS, PA-C

*Director of Clinical Education
Clinical Assistant Professor of Physician Assistant Studies*

Daniel Dankovich, DC

Clinical Associate Professor of Physician Assistant Studies

Brittany Gladysz, MPAS, PA-C

*Clinical Coordinator
Clinical Assistant Professor of Physician Assistant Studies*

Gregory Hellier, DO, FACEP

Lecturer of Physician Assistant Studies

Mary Honard, MPAS, PA-C

Clinical Assistant Professor of Physician Assistant Studies

Omar Malik, MD

Clinical Assistant Professor of Physician Assistant Studies

Jennifer Shellenbarger, MPAS, PA-C

*Director of Admissions
Assistant Professor of Physician Assistant Studies*

Jessica Sloan, PA-C

*Director of Didactic Education
Clinical Assistant Professor of Physician Assistant Studies*

Faith Winner

Administrative Assistant

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Physician Assistant Professional Oath

I pledge to perform the following duties with honesty and dedication:

- I will hold as my primary responsibility the health, safety, welfare and dignity of all human beings.
- I will uphold the tenets of patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence and justice.
- I will recognize and promote the value of diversity.
- I will treat equally all persons who seek my care.
- I will hold in confidence the information shared in the course of practicing medicine.
- I will assess my personal capabilities and limitations, striving always to improve my medical practice.
- I will actively seek to expand my knowledge and skills, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- I will work with other members of the health care team to provide compassionate and effective care of patients.
- I will use my knowledge and experience to contribute to an improved community.
- I will respect my professional relationship with the physician.
- I will share and expand knowledge within the profession.

These duties are pledged with sincerity and upon my honor.



THIEL COLLEGE
Office of the President

Dear Class of 2025,

Welcome to a community of more than 14,000 active Thiel College alumni.

We celebrate your academic accomplishments! We—the alumni and members of Thiel College’s faculty, staff, and trustees—will follow your future endeavors with great excitement. We hope you remain connected to the Thiel community and the friends you have made at the College.

We encourage you to continue to use the resources we have for you on campus, especially Alumni Affairs and the Career Development Center. Stay in touch with the faculty and staff who have taught and encouraged you. They will be happy to support you in the next phase of your life.

Before you know it, you can return for the alumni tradition of Homecoming on Sept. 26-28, 2025. We look forward to having you back on campus for that exciting alumni gathering.

Sincerely,

Susan Traverso, Ph.D.
President
Thiel College

James Frank '88
President of the Alumni Association
Board of Directors

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