

HAMPTON UNIVERSITY PRE-LAW INSTITUTE

SENIOR RECOGNITION GAVEL CEREMONY



HONORING THE CLASS OF 2026 PRE-LAW GRADUATES

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026 2:00 PM
OGDEN HALL

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

(Assistant Professor & Director of the Hampton University Pre-Law Institute, Damien L. Bevelle, Esq., Hampton U. c/o 1996)

Salutations to the Hampton University Pre-Law Institute Class of 2026:

Under the leadership of our 13th President LTG. (Ret.) Darrell K. Williams and First Lady Myra Williams, Hampton University is well into its next era of elevating our Standard of Excellence, producing the next generation of transformational servant-leaders, and above all—delivering the No. 1 student experience in America!

The graduating class of 2026 will forever hold a special place in my heart, as we began this journey together four years ago! When you arrived at your new Home by the Sea for New Student Orientation week, I had just returned back to my—I'm sorry, our—alma mater to assume stewardship of the Hampton University Pre-Law Institute (HUPLI); so, yes, we were “first-years” together. It has been a tremendous privilege to see each of you grow as scholars and as individuals over these past four years. As you matured, HUPLI evolved alongside you. Since August 2022, our pre-law community has grown exponentially—from approximately 90 pre-law students to over 300 scholars now pursuing the Pre-Law Concentration.

During your time at Hampton, we have experienced many historic 'firsts' together. By HUPLI hosting the Court of Appeals of Virginia and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, you witnessed high-level appellate arguments and engaged directly with federal and state judges. While here at Hampton, you have benefitted from a record number of campus law school visits—including visits from Yale, Harvard, and Columbia. You also had the opportunity to connect with practitioners from prominent national firms such as Proskauer Rose, Ogletree Deakins, and Ballard Spahr, among others. Many of you delved deeper into legal studies and the profession through programs like the Summer Immersion Program at George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School. Others demonstrated our 'Standard of Excellence' through competition, finding success in the VFIC Applied Ethics Bowl, the HBCU National Speech & Debate Competition, and the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge. These experiences have bathed your time at our Home by the Sea in rigor and purpose. It is my sincere hope that your experience in HUPLI has been educationally enriching, inspiring and rewarding!!

I will be forever grateful to the class of 2026 for welcoming me back to this beloved institution and entrusting me with your development as a student of the law. You embraced the programmatic changes and met the new challenges in the way we as Hamptonians do—you rose to the occasion! Again, I thank you for trusting me to help guide you on your academic and professional journey. I have every confidence that each of you are prepared and poised to realize your full potential whether in the noble profession of law or in any field you decide to make your mark. Finally, know that your departure from your Home by the Sea is not “goodbye,” as I look forward to supporting and assisting you as you take the next steps toward fulfilling your divine purpose. Please know that I love, respect and cherish you as young scholars and as future servant-leaders. It is my sincere hope that each and every member of HUPLI's Class of 2026 chases your wildest dreams while affirming and representing in all you do HUPLI's ethos:

*Justitia et Aequitas per Veritas et Rationem
(Justice and Equity through Truth and Reason)*

Lastly, as your time at Hampton has likely revealed, life will present many, often unexpected, challenges. Thus, I leave with you words from the great Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to guide you through the personal and professional challenges that you will surely encounter:

“COWARDICE asks the question, 'is it SAFE?' EXPEDIENCY asks the question, 'is it POLITIC?' VANITY asks the question, 'is it POPULAR?' But, CONSCIENCE asks the question, 'is it RIGHT?' There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because one's conscience says that it is right.”

With Love, Support & Gratitude,



Atty. Damien L. Bevelle, Asst. Professor &
Director, Hampton University Pre-Law Institute

RASHIDA STEVENS, ESQ.

(HAMPTON UNIVERSITY PRE-LAW ADJUNCT FACULTY)



ATTORNEY RASHIDA J. STEVENS is the Associate General Counsel at Hampton University, where she provides in-house legal counsel to the university. A Hampton Roads native, Atty. Stevens's path to the law was shaped in part by her participation in Upward Bound at Hampton University – making her return to HU both full circle and deeply personal. Before joining Hampton University, Atty. Stevens spent six years at some of the nation's most prestigious law firms, including *Troutman Pepper, Baker McKenzie,* and *Mayer Brown,* where she advised public and private companies on complex executive compensation, employee benefits, and ERISA matters. Her legal expertise is further distinguished by her prior career as a Certified Public Accountant.

Atty. Stevens holds a Juris Doctor from North Carolina Central University School of Law, a Master of Science in Accountancy from Wake Forest University, and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from North Carolina A&T State University.

In addition to her role in the Office of General Counsel, Atty. Stevens serves as an adjunct faculty member at Hampton University. Her commitment to education traces back to law school, where she tutored fellow students in contracts, property, constitutional law, trusts & estates, and tax law. On a personal note, Atty. Stevens is proof that there is no single timeline for pursuing your goals as she made the decision to attend law school as a mother of a four-year-old, 5 years post undergrad.

KENDRA BROWN, ESQ.

(HUPLI ALUMNI ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER)



KENDRA BROWN currently holds the role of Vice President – Community & Belonging for Mastercard. She is the Immediate Past Chair of the Maryland State Advisory Committee of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. Previously, she was the Chief of Staff for Representative G. K. Butterfield (NC-01) in the United States Congress and Senior Director for Diversity, Inclusion and Affinity for the Washington College of Law at American University. A former National Chair of the National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA), Kendra completed her undergraduate studies at Hampton University, her Master of Divinity at Howard University Divinity School, and received her law degree from Vermont Law School. She will complete her

Doctorate of Ministry in Soulcare at Wesley Theological Seminary in May 2026.

Kendra is committed to community engagement and empowerment and is the Immediate Past President of the Upsilon Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in Baltimore County, MD and is a member of the Baltimore Chapter of The Links, Incorporated and the Greater Suburban Maryland Chapter of Jack & Jill of America. She is a member of the board of Vermont Law and Graduate School, the Y of Central Maryland, the Public Affairs Council and Maryland Humanities. She is a proud member of Onyx V, the Class of 2002.

PROGRAM

May 7, 2026 2:00PM

“Justitia et Aequitas per Veritas et Rationem”

OPENING REMARKS Damien L. Bevelle, Esq.,
Asst. Professor of Political Science & History and Director of the Hampton University Pre-Law Institute

INVOCATION Elvin Dowling,
Senior Advancement Writer, Office of Advancement & External Engagement and Senior Pastor, Queen St. Baptist Church, Hampton, VA

MUSICAL SELECTION Led by Pre-Law Choir Members
Lift Every Voice

FACULTY REMARKS Rashida Stevens, Esq.,
Associate General Counsel-Hampton University

INTRODUCTION OF FACULTY HONORE Isaac Williams,
PROFESSOR NOVELLE DICKENSON *Political Science, Class of 2026;*
Tonya Ford, JD
Political Science, Class of 1996

ALUMNI REMARKS Kendra Brown, JD,
Member, HUPLI Alumni Advisory Council

PRESENTATIONS OF AWARDS

Special Awards Damien L. Bevelle, Esq.

Gavels, Certificates & Cords Damien L. Bevelle, Esq.

CLOSING REMARKS Damien L. Bevelle, Esq.

2026 FACULTY HONOREE



NOVELLE JAMES OLIVER DICKENSON is a graduate of both Hampton University (B.A.) and Howard University (M.A.), focusing his studies of political science in American Government and Politics, Political Administration, Comparative Politics and Politics of Development. Over the course of his distinguished career, Professor Dickenson has served Hampton University in numerous instructional and leadership capacities that shaped generations of students and strengthened the Hampton University community.

Notably, Prof. Dickenson was the visionary of the comprehensive pre-law curriculum and he was the inaugural Pre-Law Advisor, working tirelessly to establish the foundation of the program we celebrate today. Prof. Dickenson saw the need to create an infrastructure to support and prepare Hampton University students who aspire to attend law school and enter the legal profession. To further these objectives he engaged law school admissions offices, the Law School Admissions Council (LSAC), and organizations such as the Thurgood Marshall Legal Fund, the Council on Legal Educational Opportunity (CLEO), just to name a few. Prof. Dickenson also secured travel grants to take students to law school recruiting activities as well as the LSAC Regional conferences. It was a usual occurrence for Prof. Dickenson or “Mr. D” as he was affectionately known to students and colleagues, to rent a van and drive students to events in cities such as Boston, Atlanta, and New York. Soon, law school admissions officers began making what became an annual “pilgrimage” to Hampton to court the “best and brightest” Hampton University students. Once the various pre-law activities began to take on organizational form when, what was the political science club, was renamed the political science and pre-law club. Soon, there was a need to hire a full-time faculty member also served as the university’s “Pre-Law Advisor.” The program continued to evolve as evidenced by the inauguration of the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity chapter at Hampton University. The curriculum conceived by Prof. Dickenson and his student-centric focus became institutionalized and ultimately morphed into what is now known nationally as the **Hampton University Pre-Law Institute (HUPLI)**, which through its carefully curated, rigorous course offerings and other critical components, affords all Hampton University students a unique pathway to law school and the legal profession.

Beyond his vision, passion, and efforts to lay the foundation for HUPLI, Prof. Dickenson has demonstrated leadership in intercollegiate athletics serving as President of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) and as a member of the NCAA Academic/Eligibility and Compliance Cabinet. He is also dedicated to community involvement as he served as the first Vice President of the Hampton, VA branch of the NAACP. He is currently a member of Hampton’s Town and Gown Committee, and he serves as the President of the Delta Beta Lambda Chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Over more than four decades of service, Prof. Dickenson has built a distinguished legacy defined by academic excellence, leadership, and commitment to service at his Home by the Sea and beyond.

Today we recognize Prof. Dickenson’s foundational role in building what is now the Hampton University Pre-Law Institute with the **NOVELL DICKENSON LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE AWARD**. This award is presented to a graduating Pre-Law Scholar who exemplifies the ethos Professor Dickenson established — academic excellence, integrity, service, leadership, and a commitment to advancing justice through law.

THE HUPLI DIRECTOR'S AWARD

The HAMPTON UNIVERSITY PRE-LAW INSTITUTE DIRECTOR'S AWARD recognizes a Pre-Law Scholar who has demonstrated exceptional determination, growth, and commitment throughout their HUPLI experience. This award honors a Pre-Law Scholar who has overcome challenges, remained committed to growth, and embodied the spirit of perseverance through their journey toward the legal profession.



JORDAN HALL is the recipient of the **2026 HUPLI DIRECTOR'S AWARD**. Jordan is a graduating Senior, Political Science major with a Pre-Law Concentration from Sicklerville, NJ. Mr. Hall serves as a Golden Key Honor Society member, a Pre-Law Institute Ambassador, Peer Mentor, and President of Student Support

Services. In the summer of 2024 he was selected to participate in the George Mason Antonin Scalia Law School Immersion program. Outside of Hampton University, he volunteers with the Camden School Foundation non-profit organization. He has earned internship experience through *Afonso and Archie Law Firm*, 1st Colonial Bank, and the 5th Legislative District Assembly Office. Jordan has been accepted and plans to attend Rutgers University Law School in preparation of pursue a career in civil litigation.



THE INEZ FIELDS ACADEMIC TRAILBLAZER AWARD



INEZ FIELDS, daughter of George Washington Fields, was a Hampton Institute graduate (c/o 1914) and attorney who broke racial and gender barriers in the legal field. After receiving her law degree from Boston University, she became one of the first African American women to be a second generation lawyer, and was

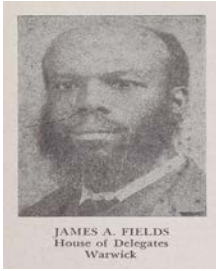
admitted to both the Massachusetts and Virginia state bars. Throughout her career she advocated for equal pay, voters' education, and civic engagement in her community. This award is named in her honor to celebrate her trailblazing contributions to the legal profession. The award goes to a graduating pre-law student who embodies academic excellence in her pursuit of being a trailblazer in the legal field.



REAGAN CARTER is the recipient of the **2026 INEZ FIELDS AWARD**. Reagan is a graduating senior Strategic Communications major with a Pre-Law Concentration from Alexandria, Virginia. As her time as a Hampton student comes to an end, she has firmly established herself as a dedicated student leader

for the university. She has maintained a 4.0 GPA throughout her time at Hampton and was recognized last school year at Honors Day with the Strategic Communications Department Award for having the highest GPA in the department. Her commitment to excellence extends beyond the classroom, as she currently serves as Vice President of the Senior Class, Fundraising Co-Chair of Women's Caucus, the 2025-2026 Miss Phi Beta Sigma and is a proud Spring 2026 Initiate into the Gamma Iota Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. Reagan has gained professional experience through internships with the Los Angeles Lakers and the Baltimore Ravens, as well as her involvement at the 2025 NBA All-Star Weekend and the Fall 2025 Black Sports Business Academy cohort. After graduation, Reagan will be attending the University of Maryland Carey School of Law in Baltimore, Maryland and plans to become a sports attorney.

THE JAMES A. & GEORGE W. FIELDS ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD

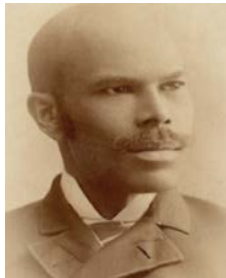


JAMES A. FIELDS and **GEORGE WASHINGTON FIELDS** were brothers born into slavery who became among the early generation of African American lawyers following the Civil War.

JAMES A. FIELDS was a graduate of Hampton Institute's inaugural class of 1871. He went on to study law at Howard University School of Law and became a prominent attorney in Hampton Roads as well

as an educator and member of the Virginia House of Delegates. By all available historical accounts, **JAMES A. FIELDS** was the first Hamptonian to pursue a law degree and enter the practice of law, thereby establishing what has become a long, unbroken tradition of Hampton University being an incubator for lawyers who continue to make their mark in the legal profession and in society at large.

GEORGE WASHINGTON FIELDS followed his older brother, graduating from Hampton Institute in 1878. He was part of Cornell University Law School's inaugural class, graduating in 1890 with the distinction of being Cornell Law School's first African-American graduate. He joined his older brother in private practice in Hampton Roads and became a leading lawyers with an expansive practice that served both black and white clients. This award is named in their honor to recognize their lasting legacy and to celebrate a student who reflects their commitment to academic excellence in pursuit of a career in the legal field.



NICHOLAS SUTTLES is the recipient of the 2026 J.A. & G.W. FIELDS AWARD. 2nd Lieutenant Nicholas Suttles, a native of Dalton, Georgia, is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and a minor in Army Military Leadership. He was accepted for an Educational Delay from the Army to attend law school this Fall. Throughout his time at Hampton



University, he has been an active member of the Hampton community, participating in SGA, Pi Sigma Alpha, Army ROTC, and The National Society of Pershing Rifles, Inc., all while maintaining a high GPA that earned him a spot on the Dean's List for multiple semesters.

THE NOVELLE DICKENSON LEADERSHIP & SERVICE AWARD

The **NOVELLE DICKENSON LEADERSHIP & SERVICE AWARD** is given to the graduating Pre-Law Scholar who exemplifies virtues of academic excellence, integrity, service, leadership established by Hampton University alumnus and longtime Professor, Novelle Dickenson. This year's recipient was selected by the Director of the Hampton University Pre-Law Institute and honors the continuation of Professor Dickenson's vision of preparing students for their success for law school and in the legal profession.



KE'MYA SUTTON is the recipient of the 2026 **NOVELLE DICKENSON LEADERSHIP & SERVICE AWARD**. Ke'Mya is a graduating senior, Psychology major with a Pre-Law Concentration from Elloree, South Carolina. She is a member of several organizations including Army ROTC, Phi Eta Sigma, The Freddie T. Davy Honors College, The Good

Girl Movement, Black Women in Law, Legal Minds, and Campus Curlz. During her time at Hampton University, she has received a 3-year scholarship from Army ROTC, a scholarship from Project Global Officer Language Immersion, and has been recognized for two departmental awards from the Department of Military Science and The Pre-law Institute. Ke'Mya has just commissioned into the Army as a Second Lieutenant. After graduation, Ke'Mya plans to attend law school in pursuit of a career as a JAG Officer in the United States Army.

2026 PRE-LAW GRADUATES

Simone Baldwin

*International Studies
Wake Forrest, NC*

Leonni Burton

*Psychology
Philadelphia, PA*

N'Dia Cash

*Sociology
Cockeysville, MD*

Brynn Concepcion

*Criminal Justice
Monterey Park, CA*

Cloriesa Darden

*International Studies
Jacksonville, NC*

Jordan Fielding

*Criminal Justice
Virginia Beach, VA*

Matthew Fleming

*Political Science
Marlboro, MD*

Layah Fortune

*Criminal Justice
Buffalo, NY*

Kelsey Garcia

*International Studies
Kansas City, KS*

Jordan Hall

*Political Science
Sickerville, NJ*

Patricia Joseph

*Criminal Justice
Spring Valley, NY*

Lauren Buncum

*Political Science
Mt. Pleasant, SC*

Reagan Carter

*Journalism
Lorton, VA*

Dmyra Champagnie

*Criminal Justice
Montclair, NJ*

Joshua Copeland

*Criminal Justice
White Plains, MD*

Mia Diaz

*Criminal Justice
Los Angeles CA*

Naaja Flowers

*Journalism
Brooklyn, NY*

Henry Foster

*Political Science
San Diego, CA*

Laila Green

*Criminal Justice
Henrico, VA*

Hadarrah Hamilton

*Political Science
Plano, TX*

Jordan Lawrence

*Strategic Communication
Stonecrest, GA*

Sabrina Meachem

*Psychology
Westbury, NY*

Natalia Mccullough

*Psychology
Bronx, NY*

Ukemeabasi Offiong

*Journalism
Fort Worth, TX*

Daizha Rattley

*Criminal Justice
Kernersville, NC*

Sarah Ringwood

*Criminal Justice
Hampton, VA*

De’Juan Simmons

*Political Science
Dual, MN*

Tin’ Ajah Stanley

*Political Science
Waldorf, MD*

Ke’Mya Sutton

*Psychology
Elloree, SC*

Indigo Williams-Brown

*Political Science
Marrietta, GA*

Isaac Williams

*Political Science
Marrietta, GA*

Arienna Neal

*Criminal Justice
Detroit, MI*

McKenzie Prince

*Criminal Justice
Powhatan, VA*

Nia Reaves

*Political Science
Paterson, NJ*

(Adisa) Ronald Roberts

*Marketing
St. Louis, MO*

Roszaria Simmons

*Criminal Justice
Moncks Corner, SC*

Nicholas Suttles

*Political Science
Cohutta, GA*

Genesis Turner

*Political Science
Birmingham, AL*

Janiyah Webb

*Psychology
Brooklyn, NY*

Jasmine Word

*English
Lynchburg, VA*



HUPLI ALUMNI ADVISORY COUNCIL

HUPLI has grown by leaps and bounds during the last four years. The progress we have achieved would not have been possible without the passion, commitment and generosity of the HUPLI ALUMNI ADVISORY COUNCIL.

On behalf of Director Bevelle, and HUPLI's students,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!



Sissy Adams-Jones

*Hampton University, Class of 1995
Florida Coastal School of Law*



Kendra Brown

*Hampton University, Class of 2002
Vermont Law School*



Tasha "Coach TC" Cooper

*Hampton University, Class of 1996
Columbia Law School*



Peyton Farley

*Hampton University, Class of 2017
Regent University School of Law*



Rex Flynn

*Hampton University, Class of 1997
George Mason University
Antonin Scalia Law School*



Nicole Hagan

*Hampton University, Class of 1995
Howard University School of Law*



Ashley Howlett

*Hampton University, Class of 2008
Harvard Law School*



Karlyn Hunter

*Hampton University, Class of 1996
Columbia Law School*



Lavonne Idlette

*Hampton University, Class of 2007
Florida A&M University College of Law*

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Mechelle Johnson Webb
Hampton University, Class of 1989
University of Baltimore School of Law



Angela D. Minor
Hampton University, Class of 1993
UDC David A. Clarke School of Law



Daria Neal
Hampton University, Class of 1996
University of California Los Angeles
School of Law



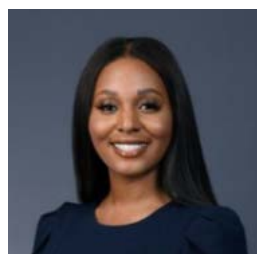
Spencer Overton
Hampton University, Class of 1990
Harvard University School of Law



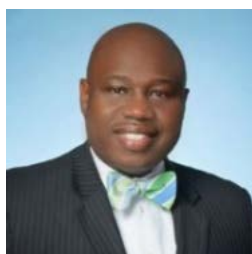
Jaaye Person-Lynn
Hampton University, Class of 2004
Howard University School of Law



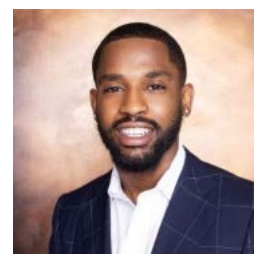
Aaliyah Pichon
Hampton University, Class of 2023
George Washington Law School, 3L
NAACP LDF MARSHALL-MOTLEY SCHOLAR



Keatrice Robertson
Hampton University, Class of 2012
Northwestern Law School, JD/MBA



Jimmy F. Robinson, Jr.
Hampton University, Class of 1995
William & Mary Law School



John T. Rose
Hampton University, Class of 2014
Emory University School of Law School



Rashida I. Sims

*Hampton University, Class of 2000
University of Arkansas
William H. Bowen School of Law*



Ambur C. Smith

*Hampton University, Class of 2015
Georgetown Law School*



Nicole Stallworth

*Hampton University, Class of 1996
Fordham University School of Law*



Jason Vives

*Hampton University, Class of 1996
Cardoza Law School*



David Whitted

*Hampton University, Class of 1990
William & Mary School of Law*



Cherina Wright

*Hampton University, Class of 2011
Suffolk University Law School*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Office of the President (Ret.) LTG. Darrell K. Williams
Mrs. Myra Williams
Mrs. Joy Jefferson
Ms. Apryl D. Roberts
Mr. Kenneth Williams
Office of the Executive Vice President & Provost Dr. Betty Stewart
Dr. Caroline Kingori
Dr. Vera Campbell
Mrs. Delcenia Hobson
Office of the General Counsel Faye Hardy-Lucas, Esq.
Rashida Stevens, Esq.
Office of Advancement & External Engagement Dr. Marc A. Newman
Mr. Matthew White
Office of Strategic Communication & Marketing Ms. Richelle Payne
Mr. James Parker
Office of Administrative Services Dr. Barbara Inman
University Administration and Faculty Mr. Robert Pompey
Ms. Denise Nichols
Dr. Linda Malone-Colon
Dr. Sherree Davis
Dr. Freda-Bev Jackson
Dr. David P. Taylor
Dr. Janneice Haughton
Dr. Takia Anthony
Dr. Jarris Taylor
Dr. Scott Challenger
Dr. Catherine Porter
Dr. Jade Caines Lee
(Ret.) Professor & Adjunct, Ava Marrow, JD; Michele Sorenson, JD/RN
Ms. Karin Owens & Ms. Kelsey Riley

SPECIAL THANKS

AccessLex Institute Ms. Bernadette Walsh *et al.*
Law Firm of *Ogletree Deakins* Jimmy Robinson, Esq.
Law Firm of *Ballard Spahr* Virginia G. Essandoh *et al.*
Commonwealth's Attorney Office Anton Bell, Hampton, VA
Ramin Fatehi, Norfolk, VA
LDF- Marshall Motley Scholars Program Adria Kimbrough, JD
George Washington Law School Amanda Compton, Esq. *et al.*
Law School Admissions Council (LSAC) Katherine Valasek, JD *et al.*
William & Mary Law School Dean Benjamin Spencer
Dean Isabella DiScullo
Southern Association of Pre-Law Advisors (SAPLA) Marcy Burden, J.D., LL.M *et al.*
Yale University Assistant Provost, Dr. Lakia Scott

!!YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF HUPLI IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!!

ALMA MATER

Words by: Sarah Collins Fernandis (1882)

Music by: Chauncey Northern (1924)

O Hampton, a thought sent from heaven above,
To be a great soul's inspiration;
We sing thee the earnest of broad human love,
The shrine of our heart's adoration.
Thy foundation firm and thy roof tree our spread,
And thy sacred altar-fires burning,
The sea circling 'round thee, soft skies overhead,
Dear Hampton, the goal of our yearning!

Refrain:

O Hampton, we never can make thee a song
Except as our lives do the singing,
In service that will thy great spirit prolong,
And send it through centuries ringing!

Kind mother, we'll treasure the dear happy days
We've spent here in life's preparation
Yet go with brave hearts upon our chosen ways
Of service to God and our nation
Still wearing thy colors, the Blue and the White
As pledge that our fond hearts will cherish
A love which for thee ever shines true and bright
A loyalty that ne'er can perish

Refrain