

ALUMNI *of* DISTINCTION Awards

On February 11, 2022, Mercy College honored five exemplary alumni for their accomplishments at the virtual 2022 Alumni of Distinction Awards. The annual event celebrates Mercy alumni for their contributions to the community and their dedication to strengthening the College's programs. The event raised funds to support the Mercy College Alumni Legacy Scholarship Fund, established by the Mercy College Alumni Advisory Council, to support the children of Mercy College alumni. The Scholarship Fund is the only fund designed specifically to provide educational support to second-generation Mercy students.

The 2022 Alumni of Distinction Awards honorees and Class of 2022 inductees into the Mercy College Alumni Hall of Fame are:



Curtis L. Archer '79
President
Harlem Community Development Corporation

Archer has devoted his career to public service in the field of community and economic development. Since 2006 he has served as president of the Harlem Community Development Corporation, performing an essential role in enhancing the economic climate for businesses and residents in the greater Harlem community.

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Jacqueline Cassagnol '09, M.S. '10, P.M.C '11
Founder and President
Worldwide Community First Responder

Cassagnol is the founder and president of Worldwide Community First Responder (WCFR), Inc., a non-profit organization that has trained

more than 400,000 community members to provide health education, first aid and disaster-preparedness training. She has presented locally, nationally and internationally at nursing conferences about WCFR's collaborative efforts to improve global health outcomes.



Justin Gerrish '06
Audio Lead
Equinox Media

Gerrish is a sound mixer, producer, engineer and audiophile with more than 15 years' experience in the music industry. Currently, Gerrish serves as audio lead for Equinox Media's Digital App, Equinox+, where he develops

and oversees all audio recording, mixing and production processes. He began his career at Avatar Studios (now Power Station) where he worked alongside many of the industry's most-renowned producers and engineers.



Melissa Meza Melkonian, M.S. '05

Founder and Head of School
American Dream Charter School

Meza Melkonian is founder and head of school of the American Dream Charter School (ADS) in the South Bronx, a school for English language learners and immigrant students. Since founding the

American Dream School in 2014, Melkonian has guided the institution in helping students succeed in two languages through a dual-language model and balanced educational practices.



Nneka Bell '17, M.B.A. '19
Small Business Owner
Celebrities Fashion Group, Inc.
Celebrities Quality Painting, Inc.

Bell is a military veteran, entrepreneur and educator. After an unplanned pregnancy as a teenager forced her to drop out of high school, Bell joined the U.S. Navy where she was stationed

on the U.S.S. Nimitz out of Norfolk, Virginia. Following her honorable discharge, she worked for the New York City Transit Authority for more than a decade. In 2012, she turned her attention to entrepreneurial pursuits, transforming a food truck into a mobile fashion and accessories store, Celebrities Mobile Boutique.