

PAUL QUINN

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Paul Quinn's 2022 Graduating Class Receives \$250,000 Investment from Alfred Street Baptist Church

Southwest Airlines, Vistra, and artist Ryan Parker among those honored with President's Award at 145th Commencement

Dallas – May 7, 2022 – Paul Quinn College, the creator of the Urban Work College model and one of the most celebrated colleges in the country, continues its commitment to fighting intergenerational poverty by announcing the formation of an investment fund for the graduating class of 2022 seeded by a \$250,000 gift from Alfred Street Baptist Church's Seek 2022 initiative.

Reverend Dr. Howard-John Wesley, senior pastor of the historic Alfred Street Baptist Church and Paul Quinn's commencement speaker, made the first-of-its kind surprise announcement to graduates, parents and friends during commencement exercises Saturday, May 7. The class of 2022 is the largest graduating class from Paul Quinn since 2008 and continues the College's steep upward trajectory.

"We are truly grateful to Alfred Street Baptist Church and my friend, Dr. Wesley. The vision needed to make this type of investment is as uncommon as it is generous," said Dr. Michael J. Sorrell, president of Paul Quinn College. "With this gift, we will be establishing a trust fund for the Class of 2022. In doing so, we are making available the type of wealth management/building tool that is not commonly available to first generation college graduates and Pell Grant recipients. The number one tool in the fight against poverty is access to capital. Together, Alfred Street and Paul Quinn are making sure that PQC's class of 2022 begins their post-college lives on the right foot. We can never say 'thank you' enough to Dr. Wesley and his extraordinary congregation."

The investment fund will be managed by JP Morgan Chase and will be accessible to the 2022 graduates in 10 years. The goal is to build upon Alfred Street's gift by securing additional contributions and thereby increasing the fund's value. The fund will provide a tangible, monetary gift that will go directly to students and grow as the students continue in their educational or professional pursuits.

"Congratulations to the Class of 2022! This graduating class has spent at least half of their college career in a global pandemic navigating an immense amount of stress and hardship. We know the impact this has had on our mental and physical health and especially the impact it has had on the Black community. These resilient students deserve to be celebrated in a one-of-a-kind way and I, along with the incredibly giving community of Alfred Street Baptist Church, am excited to bless these bright young leaders who have the brightest future ahead. Our hope is that this gift will sow a seed into Paul Quinn students, allowing them to become all that God has called them to be," said Revered Dr. Howard-John Wesley, senior pastor of Alfred Street Baptist Church.

Paul Quinn College Honorary Degree and President's Awards

Paul Quinn presented Dr. Wesley with an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree in recognition of his tremendous contributions to society. Honorary degrees are conferred on individuals who have made distinguished contributions in scholarship, music, the arts, business, the professions, or social service.

Also at the ceremony, Paul Quinn honored Southwest Airlines and Vistra with the President's Corporate Partner Award and Ryan Parker with the President's Community Partner Award. These distinguished awards honor the organizations and individuals who have made a significant contribution to Paul Quinn, its students, and staff, and have enhanced the campus experience in impactful ways.

- [Southwest Airlines](#) generously provided travel for the Paul Quinn men's basketball team to the USCAA national championship tournament. Southwest Airlines also hosted a welcome home celebration at Dallas Love Field when the team returned home after winning the national championship.
- [Vistra](#) has invested heavily in both the Paul Quinn campus and students, establishing the Vistra Scholars Program and donating over 60 new trees to beautify and enhance the grounds. The investment in Paul Quinn is part of Vistra's overall \$10 million commitment to organizations working for social justice and equity.
- Ryan Parker founder of [FreeKeyThree Creative](#), designed the basketball court in Paul Quinn's new Health and Wellness Center. The court's striking black and white theme incorporates archival photos of the Dallas skyline prior to integration, grounding the College's newest building in a defiant recognition of its resilient past. The court became a viral sensation on social media when it was revealed in October of 2021 and has been widely described as "the best basketball court in America."

"We are eternally grateful for having partners and advocates like Southwest Airlines, Vistra and Ryan Parker," said Dr. Sorrell. "Each of them shares our values and belief that people deserve to be treated fairly and with dignity."

Paul Quinn College 2022 Valedictorian

Pricilla Deyanira Aguilar is Paul Quinn's 2022 valedictorian and a first-generation American and first-generation college student. Aguilar's parents are from Mexico, and she was born and raised in Oak Cliff. Aguilar is graduating with a major in Business Management. She was captain of the women's soccer team and interned with JP Morgan Chase in the company's Consumer & Community Banking sector.

About Paul Quinn College

Paul Quinn College is a private, faith-based, four-year, liberal arts-inspired college that was founded on April 4, 1872, by a group of African Methodist Episcopal Church preachers in Austin, Texas. The school's original purpose was to educate freed slaves and their offspring. Today, we proudly educate students of all races and socio-economic classes under the banner of our institutional ethos, WE over Me. Our mission is to provide a quality, faith-based education that addresses the academic, social, and Christian development of students. Under President Sorrell's leadership, Paul Quinn has become one of the most innovative and respected small colleges in the nation and now serves as a model for urban higher education. *Fortune* magazine recognized President Sorrell's work and the College's transformation by naming him one of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders. President Sorrell is also a three-time award winner of HBCU Male

President of the Year by HBCU Digest, was selected as 2018-2019 President of the Year by Education Dive and named by *Time* magazine as one of the “31 People Changing the South.”

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