

Newcomb Institute Honors Graduating Student Leaders, Interns, Newcomb Scholars, and Class of 1974

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On May 16, Newcomb Institute hosted its annual Under the Oaks celebration, an awards ceremony honoring the achievements of outstanding Newcomb Institute

student leaders, interns, and the 2024 Class of Newcomb Scholars. Dating back to commencement ceremonies for Newcomb College, Under the Oaks also features a special 50th reunion for Newcomb College graduates, this year recognizing the class of 1974.

In addition to the award recipients, all Newcomb Institute outstanding students were recognized, including students who received grants, served as interns, and those selected for Oak Wreath, a group of graduating seniors who have distinguished themselves through an engaged pursuit of learning, leadership in student activities, and service to their communities. Alyssa Bockman, Susan Worley, and Ifeoma Osakwe were three of the over 140 students recognized at Under the Oaks.

Newcomb Student Leader Spotlight

Alyssa Bockman received the Under the Oaks award. Alyssa held numerous leadership roles in engineering student organizations, serving as president of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), and Theta Tau's Nu Epsilon chapter. Through SWE and K-12 STEM outreach, she mentored local middle and high schoolers in robotics, and fostered young girls' interest in science and engineering. She dedicated herself to the toddler mobility trainer project, designing and producing innovative wheelchairs that enable children with disabilities to move independently and interact with other children as equals. She was also recognized as a Newcomb grant recipient, Newcomb Intern, Newcomb Student Leader, and Oak Wreath recipient.

"It's huge to get to the end of four years and feel like you put in extra effort in places that people acknowledged it," Alyssa said. She will be going on to work in Caterpillar Inc.'s Parallel Co-op Program, a talent development program for students where Alyssa has previously held internships.

Newcomb Scholar Spotlight

Newcomb Scholar Susan Worley appreciated the recognition she received as a Scholar and for her work as a research assistant and feminist leadership summer intern. She was also selected as a member of Oak Wreath. "It felt like the culmination of a lot of hard work. It feels wonderful when you're recognized for everything you've put into something." Worley, who double majored in sociology and social policy and practice, along with a minor in political science, was also honored with the Class of 1909 Prize for Outstanding Senior. Speaking of her time as

a Newcomb Scholar, Susan said, “There are some incredible minds in the Newcomb Scholars program who all see things differently, and because it’s an interdisciplinary cohort, you get perspectives on your work that come from different backgrounds in academia.”

“While the Newcomb Scholars is an academic program, you get to build such great friendships with everyone,” Worley said. “It’s really great to be recognized for the award, but this award could’ve gone to all of these incredible students because I definitely couldn’t have done it without them.”

Newcomb Student Intern Spotlight

Ifeoma Osakwe, a rising senior majoring in cell and molecular biology, was awarded the Dorothy Young Memorial Award during the 2024 Under the Oaks ceremony. The Dorothy Young Memorial Award is presented to a junior student who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, scholarship, and service during their time at Tulane. Over the summer, Osakwe conducted research and completed a program at Memorial Sloan Kettering’s Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, an endeavor funded by the Newcomb Institute.

“Under the Oaks is a really important tradition to continue because it’s a good way to recognize students for all of the hard work that they’ve done over their four years at Tulane, and it introduces them to the existing alumni network,” Osakwe said. “It was really impactful for me to see how the leaders at Newcomb Institute feel about Newcomb's initiatives and the future of the Newcomb Institute from a student perspective.”

Newcomb Institute strives to strengthen the Newcomb network across generations and maintain the legacy of Newcomb College through events like Under the Oaks.

The women’s movement of the 20th century encouraged Newcomb College students to pursue fields traditionally dominated by men. Graduates of Newcomb College have received Pulitzer Prizes, Academy and Emmy Award nominations, high-level positions in government, higher education, and the arts, and inductions into the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine.

“It was very cool to see where the women that have graduated from Newcomb College have gone. Newcomb Institute works so hard to make sure that we promote women in leadership on campus, so seeing that extend post-grad was really cool,”

Bockman remarked. "A lot of graduates and I are not thrilled with the world that we're entering. I have no idea what the next five years are going to hold for me or the world in general, but having a send-off like Under the Oaks not only acknowledges that position but also demonstrates that we are capable of handling it and ideally fixing it," Bockman said.

To learn more about Under the Oaks and the history of the Newcomb Institute, **visit newcomb.tulane.edu/undertheoaks**.