

Introducing the 2025 NAA Awards Recipients

|
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Each year, the Newcomb Alumnae Association (NAA) honors Newcomb and Tulane graduates who have made exceptional achievements in their industries, contributed to their communities, and shown overwhelming dedication to their alma mater.

We are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2025 Newcomb Alumnae Association Awards. These alumnae have represented Newcomb with distinction since their graduation, and all alumnae are invited to celebrate their achievements during Wave Weekend. The Awards Champagne Reception will be Friday, November 14 at 3 PM.

This year's recipients are:

Newcomb Alumnae Association Outstanding Alumna

Nghana Lewis, PhD (NC '94)

Nghana Lewis graduated magna cum laude from Newcomb College with a Bachelor of Arts in English in 1994. She is currently a professor of English and Africana Studies, faculty affiliate of the School of Law, and adjunct professor with the Department of Psychology at Tulane. She also serves as a state district judge with Louisiana's 40th Judicial District Court.

Dr. Lewis's cross-sectional research and teaching interests include black literary & cultural studies, black women's health, and juvenile justice. She is the author of *Entitled to the Pedestal: Place, Race, and Progress in White Southern Women's Writing, 1920-1945* (2009) and *Black Women's Health in the Age of Hip Hop & HIV/AIDS: A Narrative Remix* (2025); she is also a founder and co-organizer of the Black Women's Health Conference Task Force at Tulane University, which biennially convenes the Black Women's Health Conference.

In 2021, Dr. Lewis launched The Literacy Clinic, a court-based prevention-intervention program that supports literacy education for adults and youth involved in Louisiana's criminal and juvenile legal systems and for families with children enrolled in Louisiana's resource-challenged elementary public schools. With funding from The Murphy Institute, she established the Political Economy and Access to Justice Judicial Education Seminar (PEAJES) in 2022, to provide judges an academic framework for examining and formulating best practices for strengthening America's justice system.

A proud native of Lafayette and current resident of St. John the Baptist Parish, Dr. Lewis has devoted her professional life to the State of Louisiana through sustained advocacy, community-based research, and program development. She has mentored and guided the career developments of hundreds of students, who are now educators, lawyers, doctors, and public servants. For her leadership and contributions to her community, Dr. Lewis has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the Roddy Richard Lifetime Achievement Award, the Pro Bono Hero Award, an NAACP Award for Education and Representation, and the Community Award from the School of Liberal Arts at Tulane.

Newcomb Alumnae Association Community Service Award

Dr. Abby Spencer, MD (NC '98)

Dr. Abby Spencer serves as Professor and Vice Chair for Education in the Department of Medicine and as Director of the Academy of Educators at Washington

University School of Medicine in St. Louis. Dr. Spencer graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa with a BS in behavioral neuroscience from Tulane University and received her MD from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. She completed her primary care internal medicine residency at the New York Presbyterian Hospital, Weill-Cornell Medical Center and subsequently completed a fellowship in general internal medicine with a concentration in women's health and earned a master's degree in medical education from the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Spencer enjoys caring for patients in the inpatient and primary care setting with a particular interest in women's health.

Dr. Spencer has dedicated her career to developing curriculum, building teams, mentoring, coaching, leading educational programs, and developing others in medical education. She has delivered over 200 invited faculty development/educational courses and workshops locally, regionally and nationally. She has won numerous national awards for her teaching, educational scholarship, mentorship, sponsorship, and leadership including the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) National Brancati Leadership and Mentorship Award, SGIM National Scholarship in Education Award, Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach Award, American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) inspire award, the inaugural Washington University Advancing Women in Academic Medicine LEAD award and the national APDIM Dema C Daley Founders award for leadership and innovation in medical education. In 2025, Dr. Spencer was recognized as a Fellow in AMWA for her advocacy and community service in supporting women in medicine. She completed the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) fellowship in 2022, serves on the editorial board for the Journal of General Internal Medicine and the AMWA Board of Directors. Dr. Spencer has held leadership positions in many national organizations across academic internal medicine including founding SGIM TEACH faculty, councilor for the Association for Program Directors in Internal Medicine (APDIM) and currently serves as Association of Chiefs and Leaders of General Internal Medicine (ACLGIM) LEAD course director and on the ACGME Internal Medicine Review Committee as Vice-Chair. Her greatest professional joys are mentoring, teaching, sponsoring, and developing others.

Newcomb Alumnae Association Young Alumna Award

Franziska Trautmann (SSE '20)

Over 10 million more pounds of glass would be in landfills if not for Franziska and her team at Glass Half Full. Started in the backyard of a college fraternity house in New Orleans, Glass Half Full recycles glass into sand for coastal restoration, disaster relief, new glass bottles, and more. Fran, a Carencro, Louisiana native, graduated with a degree in chemical engineering from Tulane University. This gave her the skills necessary to help lead a research team backed by the National Science Foundation, conducting novel research on the use of recycled glass sand for coastal restoration. They have completed five coastal restoration projects, restoring thousands of meters of coastline and counting. In her spare time, Franziska makes educational TikToks ranging from recycling to climate change to wastewater treatment. Her page has garnered over 300,000 followers and millions of views.

Newcomb Alumnae Association Live Oak Award

Andrea Ricards Lapsley (NC '72)

Andrea Ricards Lapsley (NC '72) has dedicated her career to expanding access to literacy and public education through libraries, both locally and globally. From early on, she learned the value of philanthropy and community from her parents. Giving of time and treasure has always been part of her life. The importance and value of education and literacy have always been forefront. A former banking and nonprofit executive, she led development and programming for the Houston Public Library for over two decades, where her award-winning initiatives, like the Power Card Challenge, brought over 300,000 new patrons to the system.

She currently serves as the President of the Texas Library and Archives Foundation (TxLAF) supporting the Texas State Library and Archives. She has been on the board since 2016 and president since 2018. Skilled in marketing, PR and fundraising, she has increased the Foundation's membership and development opportunities. She currently is a board of United for Libraries, a division of ALA where she serves on their executive board and is their division councilor to ALA Council, the governing body of the 46,000 member American Library Association. She has been a member of ALA since 1989 and has held several positions including president of the Library Leadership and Management Association. She has served on multiple unit and ALA committees, award juries and presidential task forces.

Andrea has served in leadership roles with the American Library Association and currently leads the Texas Library and Archives Foundation. She began her library

career at the Houston Public Library System where she worked for 20 years as the Assistant Director of Marketing and Development overseeing all library programming, development and public relations/communications. She created the One Book One Community program for Houston. She worked extensively with their Friends of the library group and the library board. Prior to her library work, she worked for the United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast, the Houston Chamber of Commerce, and Fannin Bank. Her advocacy helped secure over \$200 million in state funding to support Texas libraries and archives.

Traveling extensively in South Africa brought her in contact with a rural primary school, Zwelisha, after the end of apartheid. Recognizing the need for books and materials for the students' success, she raised funds to build a library. The library is stocked with books she had donated or bought. Today the library has more than 25,000 books and is used by the 1,400 students and the community. Now in her 29th year of support, she continues to travel there annually.

Andrea also gives back to the Newcomb community by organizing alumnae book clubs. Through every chapter of her work, Andrea has used the power of books to build stronger, more connected communities.