

Alfred University announces Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior Award recipients

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Amber Smith (left) and
Anastasia "Mulan" Campbell

ALFRED, NY — Alfred University students Anastasia “Mulan” Campbell and Amber Smith have been selected to receive the 2020 Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior Award. The pair was chosen from among 14 exceptional nominees for the prestigious award.

“Amber and Anastasia are great selections for our 2020 Marlin Miller Outstanding Seniors, out of a highly competitive group of candidates,” said Dr. Kimberly Guyer, vice president of Student Affairs. “Both students have been extremely involved on campus and in the community, having given their time, talents, positive attitudes, and desire for change in support of their fellow students while maintaining excellent GPAs. They will continue to do us proud as they make the transition to Alfred University alumni, and we look forward to seeing what their future holds.”

Winners of the Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior Award are chosen based on scholarship, extracurricular achievement, personal character and conduct and nominations by faculty, students, staff, or alumni. The award was established to honor Alfred University alumnus Marlin Miller ’54, H ’89, H ’19 one of Alfred University’s most generous supporters. Miller has been a member of Alfred University’s Board of Trustees since 1972.

Campbell, from Rochester, NY, is a criminal justice studies major (public law minor) who has a cumulative GPA of 3.70 and has been named to the Dean’s List during her time at Alfred University. A graduate of Wheatland-Chili High School, she is the daughter of Ka’Niyha Edwards, Robert Brown, and Michael Campbell. She was raised with great influence by her grandmother, La’Tanya Banks.

“Winning the Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior Award means the absolute world to me,” Campbell said. “I came to AU, a shy reserved student afraid that she would not make it passed the first semester and I stand today as an outstanding senior who has taken advantage of each and every opportunity Alfred University had to offer. The love and support I have received from my community over the years are what got me here and I am and will always be a proud Saxon.”

Campbell has held several leadership roles on the Alfred University campus and during a study abroad experience to England, including the Criminal Justice Club (treasurer), the Caribbean Student Association (secretary), International Student Network, University of Plymouth, England (vice president), Alfred University Conduct/Peer Review Board (student representative), and Dean of Student Wellbeing Search Committee (student representative).

Campbell is also a graduate of the Women's Leadership Academy, and serves as vice president of Sister Circle, a student organization that aims to create a positive environment for minority women. In the summer of 2019, she completed a Lex Fellowship—an immersive legal education program for undergraduate students of law and students interested in law—in Barcelona, Spain; and in the fall of 2018, she completed a study abroad experience with coursework in criminology at the University of Plymouth, England.

In 2018, Campbell was selected to the inaugural President for a Day, a program in which the Mark Zupan, University president, and a student switch roles for a day. Based on that and subsequent opportunities to get to know and work with her, Zupan noted that “Anastasia has become one of our top students, notwithstanding coming to campus with some self-doubts about her capacity to succeed in college. Her intellectual curiosity is remarkable as is the breadth of her academic interests.”

“I have no idea how Anastasia finds the time to do it all given the number of jobs she works on campus and the variety of clubs she is actively engaged in,” Zupan commented. “She is a remarkable leader and will do our University immensely proud as an alumna.”

Campbell has been actively involved on campus as a student worker—serving as resident assistant, public safety officer, student ambassador for the Office of Admissions, and peer advisor for the University's Opportunity Programs — and in the summer of 2018, she served as a legal intern at the law offices of Connors & Ferris, LLP, in Rochester. Greg Connors, a 1992 Alfred University graduate and chair of the University's Board of Trustees, is a partner in the firm.

She has also been involved in social justice initiatives, as community activist and educator for Art Force 5 and personnel director for the Institute for Cultural Unity. In her role with Art Force 5, a program at Alfred University that uses community-based art to inspire discussion on topics of equality and social justice, Campbell served as social justice mural workshop co-facilitator at the SUNY Diversity Conference in 2017 in Albany and at the NAACP 108th Annual Convention in Baltimore, also in 2017.

In nominating her for the Marlin Miller Award, Corey Fecteau, service learning coordinator in the Alfred University Career Development Center, cited Campbell's service and concern with justice and equity—which helped her earn an AU Student Spirit of Service Award in 2019. She is also a Potter Scholarship recipient and a 2019 inductee into Omicron Kappa Delta, the National Leadership Honor Society.

“Mulan is an active and effective voice for students who are underrepresented,” Fecteau said. “She knows what is right and she does not back down: her vision for our University community is inclusive and expansive.”

Beryl Torthe '18, a Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior Award recipient in 2018, nominated Campbell for this year's award.

“As a Marlin Miller Award recipient myself, I believe Anastasia fully embodies the award. She eats, sleeps and breathes Alfred and it has been a privilege to watch her grow into a well-adjusted and successful senior,” Torthe said. “She has maintained a high GPA while remaining an active community member on campus and has made the most of her Alfred experience through study abroad, internships, and community involvement.”

Amber Smith, from Prattsburgh, NY, is a biomaterials engineering major, minoring in business administration, chemistry, biology, and mathematics. She has a 3.5 GPA and has been named to the University's Dean's List. The daughter of Thomas and Cheryl Smith, she is a graduate of Prattsburgh Central High School.

“I am honored to be named a Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior. To know that my dedication and instincts to participate and support Alfred University, students and the community has made a positive impact brings me immense happiness,” Smith commented. “I am forever appreciative of the encouraging faculty, staff and students that have helped me grow and mature in my time here at Alfred. I look forward to further honing my skills and advocating for the Alfred University Mission Statement as I go into the world and aim to make it a better place for everyone.”

Smith’s leadership roles on campus include serving the Office of Residence Life for multiple years, as a resident educator for Ford Street Apartments (2019-20), community assistant for the International House (2018-19), and as resident assistant for Openhym residence hall (2017-18); and as a university ambassador for the Office of Admissions. She is involved with the Judson Leadership Center, where she served as a summer intern in 2018, and is a graduate of the Women’s Leadership Academy. Through the Academy, she completed a capstone project which established welcome kits for international students.

Smith is a four-year member of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and Chemistry Club, serving this year as SWE club president. She is active in research, serving as a Biomaterials Lab researcher in the summer of 2018. She was the recipient of a research grant through the Judson Leadership Center, using funding to investigate the STEM gender equity paradox by collecting and analyzing data from the United States and Kazakhstan. Her findings were presented at the Women and Gender Studies Roundtable. She also received an Applied and Experiential (APEX) Learning Program grant.

Nurila Kamar ’19, who was named a Marlin Miller Outstanding Senior Award recipient last year, nominated Smith for this year’s honor.

“Amber took over a major leadership role as president of the Society of Women Engineers and as treasurer of Tau Beta Pi honor society this year,” said Kamar, who was Smith’s teammate on the Saxon women’s tennis team. “It would take too long to describe all of her involvement that has contributed to the AU community, but I must say, Amber was engaged in every aspect of it.”

She has served as a tutor in the Math Lab, as an economics teaching assistant, and as a General Chemistry Lab teaching assistant. Her work as Math Lab supervisor and tutor earned her the Kazuo Inamori Undergraduate Tutor Award in 2017-18. In 2018-19, she earned the Howard R. Neville Award for Excellence in Economics.

“I believe that Amber became a great role model not only for her fellow classmates but also everyone at Alfred University who has had a chance to work with her,” Kamar said. “She brings a lot of new ideas and sparks change that is needed for a better student experience. I truly believe her efforts are worth noting as outstanding achievements for future generations of Saxons.”

Alfred University alumnus Ben Sennett ’19 cited Smith’s involvement in research, teaching, and mentoring in nominating her for the award.

“You can find Amber most nights tutoring students in the Math Lab. When she isn’t, she is meeting with SWE to plan events that give engineering students opportunities to better their college career at Alfred,” Sennett said. “Amber will go the extra mile and out of her way to make sure anyone’s day is better. She is a joy to be around.”

Amber is a member of the Honors Program at Alfred University and is an inductee into the Phi Beta Kappa honor society. She is also a member of the Tau Beta Pi (an engineering honor society) and Omicron Delta Kappa honor society. A member of the women’s tennis team at Alfred University, she has been inducted into the Chi Alpha Sigma national student-athlete honor society and has been named to the Empire 8 Conference President’s List for academic excellence.

“Amber is intelligent, friendly, polite, and embodies what the Alfred University experience is all about,” commented Garrett McGowan, chemistry professor, in nominating her for the Marlin Miller Award. “We are fortunate to have her in our cohort and to soon call her an alumna.”

