



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 9, 2024

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New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Tahesha L. Way Named 2024 Commencement Speaker at Ramapo College of New Jersey

Mahwah, N.J.- Ramapo College is honored to announce that **New Jersey Lieutenant Governor Tahesha L. Way** will address the Class of 2024 at its **Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony**.

"Lieutenant Governor Way is an inspiring public servant and sincere advocate for the students of New Jersey. We are honored to have her celebrate this day with us," said President Cindy Jebb, adding, "She is a leader who exemplifies Ramapo College's commitment to developing empathetic problem solvers, ethical change agents, and responsible leaders. Her influence and decision-making continues to enhance the quality of life for all New Jerseyans."

The lieutenant governor's commitment to education and leadership mirrors the values of Ramapo College. "I am thrilled to join Ramapo College later this month to provide commencement remarks to the Class of 2024," said Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way. "As this year's graduating class looks to set out into the world, representing the best of what an education from a New Jersey institution has to offer, I look forward to providing words of encouragement as they enter the next chapter of their lives. This talented group of graduates will undoubtedly make their mark as the future leaders of our state and country."

The ceremony will be held at Prudential Center in Newark on **Wednesday, May 29, 2024**. Doors will open at 7:30 a.m. The ceremony will begin with the academic processional at 8:40 a.m. Persons unable to attend may enjoy the ceremony via livestream on ramapo.edu/commencement.

The Class of 2024 includes more than 1,160 degree candidates. Nursing major and first-generation student **Nashari Payano** of South Amboy, N.J. will address her classmates as the Undergraduate Student Speaker.

The Honor Guard is composed of graduates selected by their respective school deans for their scholarship and contributions to Ramapo College. The following students will lead their schools during the ceremony by carrying their school's gonfalon and addressing their peers:

- **Dynazia Holness** of Camden, N.J., School of Social Science and Human Services
- **Rojja Kharel** of Kathmandu Nepal, School of Humanities and Global Studies



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- **Anna Kozan** of Lincoln Park, N.J., School of Theoretical and Applied Science
- **Mia Schutz** of Metuchen, N.J., School of Contemporary Arts
- **Chris Vedra** of Maywood, N.J., Anisfield School of Business

Madison Weeks of Mount Laurel, N.J. was selected by the Student Government Association to carry the Ramapo College gonfalon.

The Ramapo College **Graduate Programs Commencement** will be held on its beautiful Mahwah campus on **Wednesday, May 22, 2024**. The degrees of more than 280 [master's and doctoral](#) students will be conferred this year. Doors will open at 4 p.m. and the academic processional will begin at 5:15 p.m. The graduates will be led by **Kelly O'Reilly** of Wayne, N.J. and **Joan Pollner** of Phillipsburg, N.J., who comprise the Honor Guard. The 2024 Graduate Student Speaker is two-time alumnus and Ramapo College EOF Student Development Specialist **Keivon Hemmings** of Newark, N.J., who also served as the 2018 Undergraduate Student Speaker. Tickets are required for all guests. Additional information can be found on the Ramapo College Commencement website: ramapo.edu/commencement.

Tahesha L. Way, Esq.

Tahesha L. Way serves as New Jersey's 3rd Lieutenant Governor. She was appointed to the position by Governor Phil Murphy on September 8, 2023.

A lifelong public servant, Lieutenant Governor Way has devoted her entire career to improving the lives of her fellow New Jerseyans. Over the past two decades, she has served at numerous levels of local and state government.

As Lieutenant Governor, Ms. Way brings her extensive experience to bear on addressing the greatest challenges facing New Jerseyans — from making life more affordable, to protecting fundamental freedoms—like access to reproductive health care and equality under the law — to maintaining New Jersey's reputation as the best and safest state to raise a family.

In addition to her role as Lieutenant Governor, Ms. Way also serves as New Jersey's 34th Secretary of State — a position she has held since the beginning of the Murphy Administration.

As Secretary of State, Ms. Way leads one of the nation's oldest constitutional offices and directs a department with a diverse portfolio. In her capacity as New Jersey's top election official, she has overseen the state Division of Elections and its work in securing our democracy and



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ensuring broad, fair access to the right to vote. In addition to the critical work protecting what lieutenant Governor Way calls the “fraternal twins of democracy,” she also oversees the state government offices supporting New Jersey’s vibrant arts, culture, history, and business communities. Under her leadership, the state’s tourism economy has generated record-high revenues.

Following her 2022-2023 service as the first Black person and first Secretary from New Jersey to lead the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) as President, Lieutenant Governor Way continues to serve on the NASS Executive Board as Immediate Past President.

Lieutenant Governor Way is a graduate of Brown University, where she served as Vice President of the collegiate chapter of the NAACP, President of the Iota Alpha chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. taught religious education, and was a radio announcer for WBRU-FM. She holds a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law at Charlottesville, where she clerked for the Virginia Legal Aid Society and the United Steelworkers of America.

Lieutenant Governor Way lives in Wayne, New Jersey with her husband Charles and their four children Fallon, Farrah, Faythe, and Fiona. She was raised in the Bronx by her late parents, Robert and Rosa Wright, who also devoted their careers to public service as employees with the New York City Transit Authority.

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ABOUT RAMAPO COLLEGE

Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state’s premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The comprehensive college is situated among the beautiful Ramapo Mountains, is within commuting distance to New York City, was named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *CondéNast Traveler*, and boasts the best on-campus housing in New Jersey per Niche.com. Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor’s degrees in the arts, business, data science, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master’s degrees in Accounting, Applied Mathematics, Business Administration, Contemporary Instructional Design,



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Computer Science, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a Doctor of Nursing Practice.