



RISE

UNLV | COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION

*Recognizing & Inspiring
Student Excellence*

Volume V

FROM THE DEAN

Dear Friends of the UNLV College of Education,

As we wrap up another impactful year, I want to personally thank you for your generosity and the trust you have placed in our students and mission. In 2024, your support has been more than a gift. It has been a catalyst for progress, helping us prepare the educators, mental health professionals, and leaders our communities need now more than ever.

Higher education is a bridge between talent and opportunity. For students pursuing careers in teaching, mental health, sport, and leadership, your investment means access to the kind of learning that changes lives—both their own and those they will serve. With your support, we are providing access to higher education for many students who have never had the opportunity to attend college.

This year alone, hundreds of future teachers, mental health workers, and educational leaders have benefited from scholarships, fellowships, and hands-on learning experiences. Made possible through your generosity, our students are already uplifting entire communities across Nevada.

We are proud to share the fifth edition of RISE with you. It highlights just a few of the many students whose dreams are being realized thanks to your belief in them. Their accomplishments are your legacy.

On behalf of our entire college, thank you for walking alongside us in this work. If you would like to hear more about how scholarships and other supports have helped our students and Nevada's communities, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.



In community,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danica G. Hays".

Danica G. Hays, Ph.D.
Dean

O

ffering innovative, academically robust undergraduate- and graduate-level programs, we are proud to prepare a future workforce of educators, researchers, and clinical/service professionals throughout Nevada.

Our college resides within the culturally diverse Las Vegas community, which is also home to one of the largest school districts in the United States. This provides a unique learning environment to prepare students in PK-20 education, mental health, and collegiate and professional sport. We also offer national and international immersive opportunities to help students grow beyond the boundaries of southern Nevada.

Our mission as an HSI & AANAPISI College of Education is to prepare learners to address contemporary challenges by advancing equity and access through innovative scholarship, practice, and advocacy; enhancing our communities through collaborative outreach and engagement; and delivering high-quality services, educational programs, and initiatives that promote social justice and well-being.



DEPARTMENTS

Counselor Education, School Psychology, and Human Services

We offer bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs as well as graduate certificates, we prepare advocates and leaders who apply theoretical, educational, and clinical models to practice and research within a variety of mental health and human service professions.

Early Childhood, Multilingual, and Special Education

We are dedicated to preparing professionals for specialized services in schools, community agencies, and higher education settings. In our bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs, as well as two dual Ph.D./J.D. degrees and graduate certificates, we promote cultural diversity and affirm our commitment to the ethical standards of our respective disciplines.

Educational Psychology, Leadership, and Higher Education

We provide instruction in and the delivery of innovative research to inform the educational process from early childhood through higher education via our master's and doctoral degree programs as well as graduate certificates, including the Intercollegiate and Professional Sport Management program.

Teaching and Learning

We are focused on educational research and the preparation of educators at all levels. In addition to our bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs, our professional education programs focus on essential knowledge, established and current research findings, and sound professional practice.

2024-25 SCHOLARSHIPS

Dr. Bea Babbitt Scholarship

Micah Galang

Ned and Eva Bortman Scholarship

Reina Shinohara

Monti Carlin Tettamanti Scholarship

Justice Ewing
Lina Garcia
Ana Gutierrez

Dorothy A. Dawson Estate Scholarship

Jaylin Abalos
Monserat Avelar
Mackenzie Baack
Piper Baack
Graciela Cardoza
Claudia Chilson
Ayitah Emmanuel
Lorena Garza
Alejandro Gonzalez Perez
Makanalei Kao
Maia Kenney
Binish Khan
Ghazanfar Khan
Grecia Llanes
Leslie Marin
Adam Marker
Kaitlyn McDowell
Torie Thompson
Alyssia Valdez
Kaya Vestuto

Chris Giunchigliani Special Education Graduate Scholarship

Rachel Thompson

Rosemarie Hartle Scholarship

Tanisha Cruz

Barbara L. Lochridge Memorial Scholarship

Danielle Sharp

Edward Pierson Memorial Scholarship

Nayeli Arias
Julissa Arroyo
Anika Erickson
April Ursula Fox
Evelyn Gamez Flores
Wendy Garcia Mata
Caleb Hull
Dilara Kara Zorluoglu
Hailey Kelsheimer
Hailee Moss

Evelyn Semling Scholarship

Eden Wolde

Chester D. Simms Scholarship

Justus Harris

Catherine Vaglio Scholarship

Graciela Cardoza
Jacqueline Chamale
Sara Elshaal
Andrea Mendoza Hernandez
Jaqueline Roa
Eden Wolde

John M. Vergiels Scholarship

Ana Gutierrez
Richardson Reese

Wolzinger Family Foundation Education Scholarship

Lydia Berhanu

WITH GRATITUDE

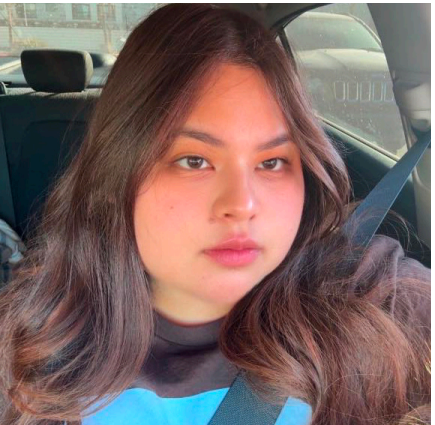


Receiving the Dorothy A. Dawson Scholarship has been a life-changing opportunity. These funds have allowed me to focus on my passion for education without the overwhelming burden of financial stress. With this support, I am one step closer to achieving my dreams of shaping the future as an educator—dedicated to uplifting and inspiring the next generation.

- Torie Thompson

In the summer of 2023 my mom, who has been a devoted elementary school office clerk, was diagnosed with breast cancer. This wonderful gift means so much to me because it has helped me continue pursuing my education and also is a testament to my mother and all those like her who devote their life to education while fighting life-threatening diseases.

- Jatzryi Martinez



Without these scholarships, I don't think I'd be where I am today. I am grateful for the organizations and people that fund these scholarships because they have given me the opportunity to succeed in life and follow my passion of being a teacher!

- Makanalei Kao



By awarding me the Edward Pierson Scholarship, you have lightened my financial burden, which allows me to focus more on the most important aspect of school, learning. I hope one day I will be able to help students achieve their goals just as you have helped me. Thanks to you, I am one step closer to that goal.

- Dilara Kara Zorluoglu

I'm incredibly grateful to have received the Rosemarie Hartle Memorial Scholarship. As a first-generation Latina student, the road to higher education hasn't always been easy, but this support has made it so much more doable. I know the little girl I once was is looking at me with pride, watching her dreams unfold. Scholarships like this don't just lift financial burdens—they make it possible for students like me to turn dreams into reality.

- Tanisha Cruz

BRANDON RAYMOND WILSON

Raymond “Ray” Wilson has heard the phrase, “Put your money where your mouth is,” more times than he could count. So, when he decided to make his first personal gift to support UNLV, the Silver State Schools Credit Union (SSSCU) senior vice president and chief financial officer (SVP/CFO) chose to instead put his money where his heart is—with his son, Brandon.

In addition to a very early autism diagnosis, Brandon benefited from parents who were aware and engaged in finding an effective treatment for their son. His mom, Kathryn Wilson, was a nurse at the Cleveland Clinic, and Ray became an advocate within Brandon’s school community. “Brandon almost had his own classroom, as well as a tutor assigned to him,” Ray recalls. Brandon, now 34, lives semi-independently in California, working in the consumer retail industry and training in the motion picture industry. Having seen the power of knowledge, resources, and advocacy in Brandon’s life, Ray is investing in the power of special education for others.

A Career Driven by Giving Back

Philanthropy and community give back have always played a role in Ray’s work. “When I first came to Las Vegas the thing that shocked me the most was the challenges facing teachers, students, and the state’s education ranking,” he reflects.

In addition to his role as SVP/CFO, Ray also serves as the president of the SSSCU’s People Over Profit Foundation. The foundation oversees numerous

projects and initiatives to support educators and students, as well as to improve education standards statewide.

As he approaches his retirement, Ray is looking for ways to make a difference on a more personal level. He has seen a lot of growth and progress in Southern Nevada over the years, but the region’s education challenges persist. “There are a lot of positive things happening in Las Vegas, but we still have to find ways to continually grow and uplift education,” Ray notes.

Putting a FOCUS on Special Education

Motivated to make a difference in special education, he committed to funding the Brandon Raymond Wilson Special Education Scholarship for two students pursuing careers in this field each year.



SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

In addition, the scholarships will also support two students with intellectual and developmental disabilities pursuing post-secondary learning opportunities each semester through the College of Education’s Project FOCUS program. The comprehensive post-secondary education program provides inclusive, accessible, and productive career education for Southern Nevada’s adult college-aged students with intellectual/developmental disabilities. In addition to building confidence and job readiness skills, participants are prepared for competitive, paid employment and independent living in an inclusive community setting.

“I want to give an opportunity to those who, in the absence of a scholarship or access to the FOCUS program, would either be in financial hardship or not have the chance to continue their studies at all.”

Ray is a big believer that we’re all blessed with a skill set that can be used to help support and lift up others. Grateful to be in the position that he is after a successful career, and proud of his son’s resilience, he looks forward to contributing to the collective effort of the college through this new scholarship. “I’ve always wanted to do something to create a legacy on Brandon’s behalf,” he shared. Noting the vital role of special education teachers, “I believe in progress and that there are others who care about the educational landscape, but it takes a village.”

DONOR FEATURE STORY

Story by Kia Cummings

“I BELIEVE IN PROGRESS AND THAT
THERE ARE OTHERS WHO CARE ABOUT
THE EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE,
BUT IT TAKES A VILLAGE.”

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT FEATURE STORY

Story by Kia Cummings

WHEN THE OVERFLOW HEALS

She survived sexual assault and a suicide attempt, substance abuse, and an autoimmune disease diagnosis. All of these things could define Mardae Castro, but this human services major is shifting her identity beyond survivor to helper and advocate, focused on serving the Filipino community.

"My culture doesn't believe in mental health. Getting help just isn't something that exists for us," Mardae admitted. Faced with all this, some might give up entirely, but after surviving a failed attempt on her life, Mardae chose a path to restore herself and others. And thanks to financial support from the College of Education's field experience scholarship, she's focusing on changing mental health mindsets on addiction and family services.

When Healing Becomes the Priority

After being diagnosed with Graves' disease and post-traumatic stress disorder, Mardae took a hiatus from her initial path toward a nursing career to focus on her own health. She connected with social workers and therapists, and while these human service professionals were helpful, something was still missing. "None of them looked like me, and so much of my therapy journey was me trying to explain the cultural aspects behind what I was going through."

From the Front Desk to the Front Lines

Five years later, as she took baby steps to get back into the rhythm of life, she resumed her studies while working as a receptionist at the UNLV

PRACTICE—a community mental health clinic.

The experience opened her eyes to the real impact culturally-responsive mental health professionals could have. "I could see the students coming in regularly, and how it was actually making a difference." From there, she transitioned to working at various private practices in Las Vegas, where she was the first point of contact for people seeking help—guiding them through uncertainty and connecting them to the right clinician.

Healing that Starts with Awareness

Mardae knows firsthand that managing stress and anxiety without healthy coping skills is next to impossible and can lead to unhealthy behaviors. While experiencing the highs and lows of her initial academic pursuit, she knew when something was off. "I noticed that I couldn't handle the stress [of school] or any stress at all." She felt the toll academically, socially, and mentally. The strain of everyday tasks led her immune system to attack itself.

Her work now aims to get ahead of situations like this for the populations she works with. She also serves as the human services honor society president, a UNLV Human Services Advisory Board representative, a Filipino-American Student Association member, and mom to a 6-year-old son.



"IF I
COULDN'T
FIND A
FILIPINO
THERAPIST,
THAT MEANS
NOBODY
ELSE CAN."

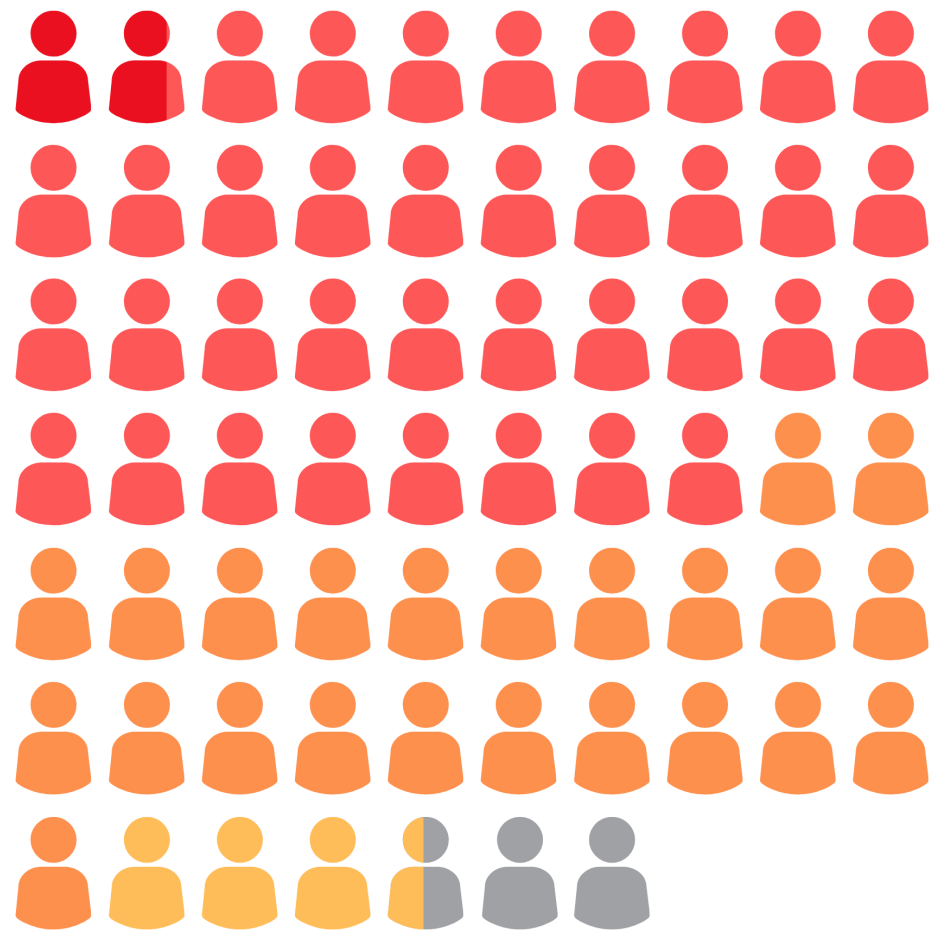
Pouring Into Her Purpose

With most of her coursework done, she's beginning to put theory into practice. In her internships, she shadows therapists in both individual and group settings—particularly with young adults. "Watching their progress and seeing how much they trust their therapists, I knew I wanted to be part of that kind of healing."

Students often hit a financial roadblock when they reach the field experience requirement of their program. For a single mom like Mardae, the financial support she's receiving from her scholarship helps her balance her academic, professional, and family commitments. "I didn't have to pay out of pocket for these last two

semesters. And my son loves doing homework because he sees me doing it too. He's like, 'Mommy, we can do homework together!'"

Mardae's journey to fulfilling her dreams continues to challenge her, but she's working to strike her perfect balance. However, it's filling up her cup and her purpose that drives her to be her best self. "In this field, all we really do is pour into other people. So I think it's super important to participate in all the things I do because they fill my cup so that I'm not pouring from empty."



2024

DEGREES CONFERRED

DOCTORAL DEGREES - 37

MASTERS DEGREES - 726

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES - 460

GRADUATE CERTIFICATES - 65

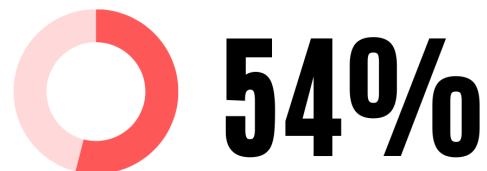
UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE - 41

BY THE NUMBERS

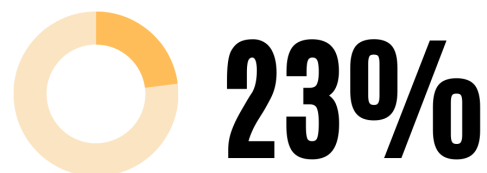
\$441,534

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED BY 150 DONORS

ABOUT OUR STUDENTS



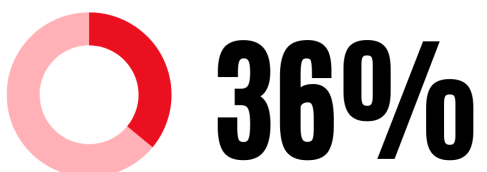
are first-generation students



are under age 25



are ages 25 and up



are in apprenticeship programs

39

UNDERGRADUATES

'24 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

10

GRADUATES

33

SCHOLARSHIP DONORS

unique donors brought in over \$57,000 in new funding dedicated exclusively to scholarships for our traditional undergraduate and graduate students.



200,000+ hrs

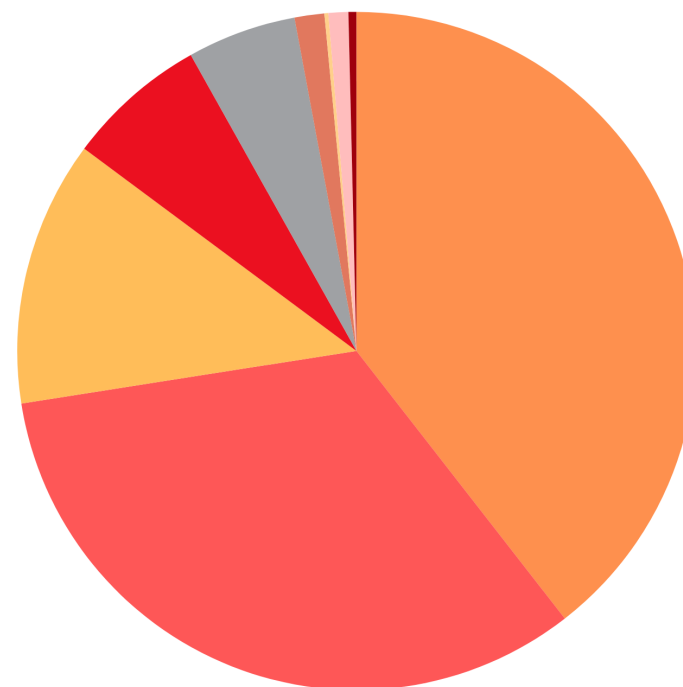
PRACTICUM / INTERNSHIP HOURS
INVESTED IN THE COMMUNITY

RODMAN SCHOLARS

49



students received funding to study autism or emotional/behavioral disorders to increase the number of teachers in CCSD classrooms as part of the Nevada Collaborative on Autism and STAR Endorsement program.



ASIAN - 6%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN - 13%
LATINA/O/X - 33%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER - 0.2%
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS - 0.9%
TWO OR MORE RACES - 7%
UNKNOWN - 1.4%
WHITE - 39%

WHAT GIVING MAKES POSSIBLE

GRADUATE STUDENT FEATURE STORY

Story by Kia Cummings

A first-generation doctoral student reinvests generosity, care, and mentorship with her peers and students.

Winning the 2025 Sam Lieberman Regents' Award is far from Nicole Thomas' first big achievement. The 29-year-old educational psychology doctoral student's academic career is studded with accolades, including the Edward Pearson Memorial Scholarship and two highly competitive Nevada NASA Space Grant fellowships. Yet, Nicole's gratitude isn't just for the honors or funds received—it's for what they've made possible.

"Staying enrolled is the main thing for me," she explained. "Scholarships and fellowships have allowed me to move out of my parents' house, conduct research projects, and start my own life."

Inspirational Mentorship

Initially earning her bachelor's degree in life sciences at UNLV, Nicole hadn't considered a future in education. That changed when she met Tina Vo, a teaching and learning associate professor with a background in science. Tina immediately saw potential in Nicole as a science educator. "Her projects have always focused on supporting folks to learn about the world around them, help them grow, and think critically," Tina said. "She is so community-oriented that it makes every space she is a part of better."

A simple conversation over coffee opened her

eyes to what she could do with her skills and interests, leading her to pursue a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. She loved her UNLV experience so much, she continued her studies as a Ph.D. student. Beyond graduate apprenticeship opportunities, "the mentorship here is incredible," she said. "Faculty members truly care about you as a person. Faculty and financial support made it clear this was the best place for me."

Paying it Forward

In addition to balancing rigorous coursework and research, her commitment to service and advocacy keeps her busy and fulfilled. As a beneficiary of state and donor funding, she helped other graduate students get the additional financial support and attention they needed to succeed. As the president of the Graduate and Professional Student Association from 2021 to 2024, she spearheaded a major campaign to increase graduate assistant stipends. She organized a lobbying trip to the Nevada State Legislature that resulted in a \$20 million funding increase for graduate assistants statewide.

Jon Hilpert, Nicole's Ph.D. advisor who encouraged her to apply for the Sam Lieberman Award, praised her leadership and impact.

"Nicole is a model student, demonstrating what can be achieved through hard work, dedication, and a deep understanding of how higher education systems work," he said. "Her academic excellence and service to the graduate student community are truly inspiring." Nicole always encourages her peers to put themselves out there.

"There are so many opportunities that we just don't know about," she explains. "It can be scary applying for things but it always feels good once I am done applying."

Long-Term Re-Investment Strategy

As Nicole approaches the final year of her Ph.D. program, she remains focused on her goals. "Graduating is, of course, the big one," she said. "But I also want to publish one more paper and continue mentoring my students. If even one of them feels like I've been a good mentor, I'll consider that a success."

The Sam Lieberman Regents' Award for student scholarship affirms the hard work Nicole has poured into her studies, research, and community leadership. Earning a doctorate has been a journey marked by pride and humility for the first-generation college student. "Sometimes I walk around my house and think, 'I can't believe I'll be a doctor. My family didn't even know what grad school was when I started.'"

Looking ahead, Nicole envisions a future in public education, as either a faculty member or an administrator. "I believe strongly in the power of public education. Every student deserves access to a great education and faculty who are passionate about teaching. That's what I want to be a part of." Nicole's story is a reminder of the transformative power of education and the importance of investing and lifting others along the way.



HOLMES SCHOLARS

As a member institution of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, professional development, and networking opportunities. These resources are tailored for



Claudia Chiang-Lopez

Claudia is a queer and multiply disabled first-generation scholar and Asian-Latinx immigrant. They are a Ph.D. student in Multicultural Education and a graduate certificate student in Higher Education. In addition to being a Holmes Scholar, they are a Mellon Foundation Crossing Latinidades Fellow. Their research focuses on the relationship between abolition and dis/ability critical race studies in education. They have been published in *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, and *Sociological Focus*. She's grateful for the mentorship and support she's received through the Holmes program, as this has opened many doors for her.



Mayra Marquez-Mendez

Mayra is a doctoral candidate in educational psychology. Her research examines how elementary and middle school science teachers' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness influence their support-seeking behaviors and engagement with mentorship systems.

"Being a Holmes Scholar has allowed me to engage with fellow scholars from various institutions across the country. We support each other through mentorship, conferences, and writing groups to unlock the hidden curriculum of academia and networking."



Craig Hall

Craig is a doctoral candidate in teaching and learning, specializing in teacher education. His research focuses on how secondary teachers can build better relationships with their students. This research combines the skills he learned in his higher education endeavors.

"Having the Holmes Scholars Program pay for conferences is invaluable. Networking with other scholars, and exchanging knowledge with one another has made my Ph.D. journey better. Those experiences have been priceless."



Monique North

Monique is a multidimensional activist and researcher with a unique academic flavor. With nearly 20 years in top-tier magnet, International Baccalaureate, and STEM learning spaces, Monique understands the complex pathways into STEM education and careers. Her research critically examines how systemic barriers impact Black girls and gender-expansive individuals in STEM, aiming to address input disparities and diversify the workforce.

"As a Holmes Scholar, I am proud to lead by serving marginalized communities. The program has also helped me empower people and organizations to acknowledge the cultural capital and ways of knowing that can only come from the lived experiences of the Black diaspora."



Lissa P. Love

Lissa is an experienced special education professional with 12 years of service in the Clark County School District. She is currently serving as a special education autism teacher at Gunderson Middle School and a fourth-year doctoral student specializing in early childhood, multilingual, and special education. As a Holmes Scholar, she researches Black families' experiences in the Pre K-20 education system. Her goals focus on preparing preservice teachers and building strong partnerships between Black families and schools.



Anel Rojas

Anel is a higher education doctoral student researching equity, representation, and community voice. Her work explores the underrepresentation of Latinx/a/o/é student affairs professionals, focusing on systemic barriers to retention and advancement. She is also conducting an oral history of the Latino Youth Leadership Conference in Southern Nevada, emphasizing the lived experiences of these students.

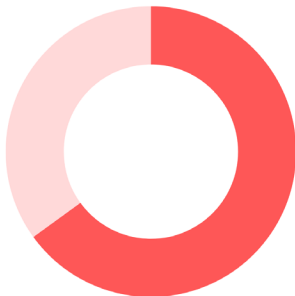
"Being a Holmes Scholar connects me with a diverse network of peers and mentors committed to equity in education. It's a space where I can grow as a scholar, build community, and contribute to a collective effort to transform academia."

2024
DEGREES CONFERRED

SPRING - 194

FALL - 139

200
ACTIVE APPRENTICES



65%

of students are from underrepresented backgrounds.

35% OF STUDENTS TEACH IN NORTHERN AND RURAL NEVADA

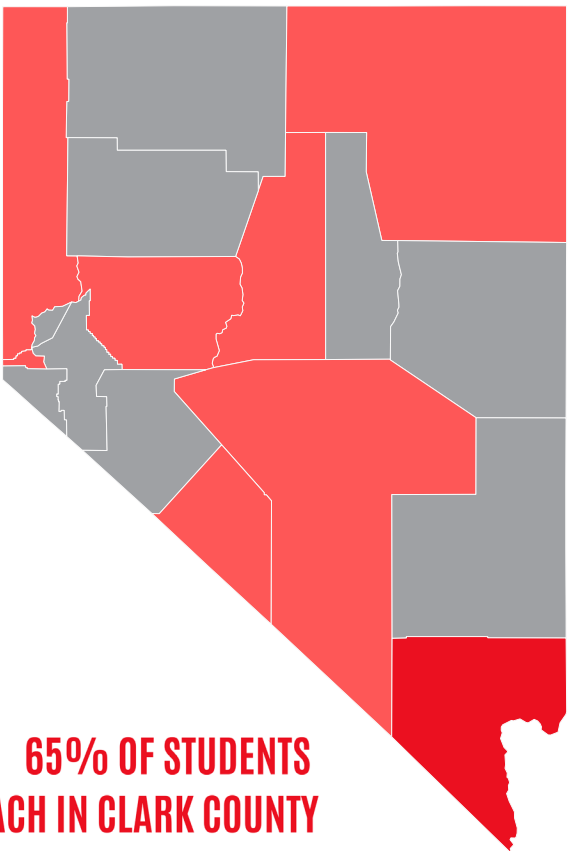
GRADUATION RATE

97%

Our alumni currently serve at over 325+ schools across 10 counties, as well as the Nevada State Charter Authority.

NV | FORWARDTM

We are tackling the teacher shortage through our NV | ForwardTM initiative. This statewide apprenticeship program is the first of its kind in the western U.S.—enabling paraprofessionals, substitutes, and other school support staff to earn their teaching degrees while maintaining their employment.



65% OF STUDENTS TEACH IN CLARK COUNTY

WHERE GENEROSITY TAKES OUR GRADS

"I would have never completed a master's or a Ph.D. had it not been for scholarships and graduate assistantships." Elizabeth León Zaragoza, two-time UNLV graduate, didn't beat around the bush when explaining the role funding played in her academic journey.

By the time Elizabeth got to UNLV, she was eager to find a solution to two persistent challenges: how to make athletic training education more inclusive and how to use skills from athletic training to serve non-athlete members in the community. The barriers she uncovered and experienced firsthand were significant.



I WOULD HAVE NEVER COMPLETED A MASTER'S OR A PH.D. HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS.

Raising the Bar

Two years into her undergraduate degree in athletic training at Eastern Kentucky University, the industry's professional certification organization announced a major change. Going forward, anyone entering the field would need a master's degree to operate as trainers and undergraduate athletic training programs were to be phased out. The decision, aimed to align athletic training with other health professions, raised concerns for Elizabeth. "It looks good on paper," she says, "but it's a moving target for students, especially those from low-income backgrounds. Scholarships and graduate assistantships made it possible for me to meet those demands, but I know many others aren't as fortunate."

Sharing Knowledge. Saving Lives.

The second obstacle she looked to overcome hit closer to home. As a daughter of immigrant farm workers, she recognized how her unique skill set could serve a population near and dear to her. "One of my uncles died while working in the fields," Elizabeth shared. Knowing the difference she could make, she began working to find ways to support Black and brown people, especially those in rural areas—helping them to develop life-saving CPR and first aid skills. "Preventing heat exhaustion and cardiac death is a lot of what we face as athletic trainers. I'm in a unique position to teach these skills and improve outcomes for survivors," she explained.

Elizabeth's game plan was coming together and, with faculty encouragement, she got to work on a higher education Ph.D. She sought out ways to diversify the playing field. Her research zeroed in on access to health care in athletic training, particularly for populations from rural and low socioeconomic backgrounds. "In supporting athletes, we're often supporting people from underserved communities," she shared.

"I wanted to pursue a line of research that would help me to provide solutions for how athletic trainers as healthcare providers could do better outside of sports."

Investment Drives Success

Elizabeth also acknowledges that the generosity of donors and mentors can sometimes feel daunting. As a Holmes Scholar and multiple award winner she knew that, "when someone invests in your dreams, there's immense pressure to perform." But that's what scholarships are for—to help students fulfill their dreams. "Hopefully, your dreams include giving back to your community and helping others," she continued.

Today, Elizabeth serves as an assistant professor of athletic training for the Human Biology Department at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and is committed to paying it forward. Beyond the classroom, her research continues to address the disparities and downfalls she has witnessed firsthand. One project is specifically working to train farmworkers in CPR and first aid skills that are often inaccessible to communities in remote areas.

Her advice for current and future scholarship recipients is simple: "There's no gatekeeping here. Share opportunities. Lend a hand. Build a better academic environment for everyone." Elizabeth's own journey is a testament to what's possible when generosity meets determination. Through her teaching, research, and advocacy, she's ensuring that the next generation of athletic trainers is more diverse, compassionate, and prepared to serve.

**ALUMNI
FEATURE STORY**

Story by Kia Cummings



**BACK TO SCHOOL:
LYNN MANNING JOHN'S
LIFE COMES FULL
CIRCLE**

**Lynn Manning John
'04 M.Ed. Education
College of Education
Alumna of the Year**

It long ago became cliché to label educators as “difference makers,” but just because it’s trite doesn’t mean it’s untrue. And there’s no better example of a difference-making educator than Lynn Manning John.

Look no further than Manning John’s recent efforts to secure state funding for a long-overdue new home for Owyhee Combined School, a K-12 institution that sits on the ancestral lands of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation in northeastern Nevada, just below the southern border of Idaho.

Manning John’s lobbying of and testimony before the 82nd Nevada State Legislature in 2023 was hugely instrumental in the passage of Assembly Bill 519, which establishes provisions for capital projects in the state’s school districts. The measure passed both legislative chambers with near unanimous support. And folded into the bill was nearly \$65 million in funding for the Elko County School District.

That’s the district that operates Owyhee Combined School. It’s the place where Manning John began her scholastic journey as a kindergartner, where she graduated in 1994, and where she had been serving as vice principal

until June — when she was promoted to principal.

It’s also where recent students — most of them Native Americans — have been forced to attend classes in an archaic building that’s been standing for more than 70 years. One whose exterior is riddled with bullet holes, and whose interior has no air-conditioning, no screens covering the windows, and bat colonies residing in the ceilings.

On top of all that, the school’s remote location has never been within walking distance of the residential communities where its students live.

Soon, though, all of this will change. Because a good chunk of that \$65 million in state funds from Assembly Bill 519 is being used to build a new state-of-the-art, easily accessible Owyhee Combined School. When it opens in a few years, current and future generations of Owyhee students will have — thanks in large part to Manning John’s hard work, passion, and dedication — the kind of educational leg up that eluded previous generations.

It’s all incredibly gratifying for Manning John. Not just because she’s now in charge of the school she attended throughout the formative years of her life, but because she is a member of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe, having grown up on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. “I am humbled to have been involved in

the efforts to lobby for and obtain legislation to build a new school for my community,” Manning John says. “It’s a legacy that will be felt by my community for years to come.”

Manning John’s tireless fight for a new school is but one of many instances in her career in which she has worked to make a transformational difference in the lives of young learners — particularly those from oft-ignored Indigenous communities.

For example, shortly after finishing her master’s at UNLV in 2004, Manning John was hired as project facilitator for the Clark County School District’s Indian Education Opportunities Program, becoming the first Native person to hold the position.

Manning John’s primary responsibility was to work with Clark County’s reservation communities — as well as the greater urban Indian population throughout Southern Nevada — to create programming and opportunities for Native students. She also was charged with spreading awareness about Native people — specifically Native people of Nevada.

More recently, Manning John reconnected with the UNLV College of Education on a workforce development program that’s designed to put Owyhee students on the path to professional success. Through the mutually beneficial

partnership, students will learn valuable skills in such fields as community health, cybersecurity, social services, and education — all of which face critical employment shortages in Nevada — while at the same time gaining exposure to a world-class university they might someday choose to attend.

The fact that Manning John’s fingerprints are all over these (and countless other) initiatives that are designed to uplift a traditionally disenfranchised community — not to mention positively alter the futures of its people — is nothing short of inspiring.

She indeed epitomizes the cliché “difference-making educator.” Which is why she was selected as the 2024 UNLV College of Education Alumna of the Year.

It’s an honor that Manning John is deeply grateful to receive. Just don’t expect her to sprain a shoulder patting herself on the back for all that she’s done.

“When it comes down to it, like everyone else from my community, I am a ‘rez kid,’” Manning John says, referencing her Native upbringing. “I try to stay grounded, not put myself above or before anyone, and support the efforts of the next generation. And when kids from that next generation succeed, I feel like I have succeeded.”

ALUMNI

We want to hear from you!

Submit your news, appointments, accomplishments, honors, and awards with the QR code below. We’ll share your news with alumni and current students on our website and in our college alumni e-newsletter, EduAction.

Rebels Forever

From the moment you graduate, you’re automatically a member of the UNLV Alumni Association and the College of Education’s Alumni Chapter. This means you have access to benefits and services including career services, a Rebel Alumni GMail account, events, discounts, and more.

Get Involved

With the expansion of our research and academic programs, there are a number of ways to get involved with the College of Education. We’re looking for alumni who want to:

- Serve on the alumni chapter board
- Participate on a panel or at networking events
- Mentor pre-service and new teachers
- Participate in research opportunities
- Support our recruitment efforts by meeting with prospective students

Learn more and connect at unlv.edu/education/alumni.



Story by Matt Jacob
Photo by Michael Roberts

DEAN’S LIST

Spring & Fall 2024

Students taking a minimum of 12 credits and earning at least a 3.50 semester grade point average are awarded Dean’s List honors.

Chelsea Ackerman Destiny Adams Nicole Aguayo Villatoro Denise Aguilera Anna Aguirre Jailene Aguirre Diana Agustin Pedro Shaada Ahmad Jazmin Alatorre Soulang Albitar Gabriela Aldus Mayra Alejo Alexyss Allen Amanda Allota Elizabeth Alquicira Alicia Alvarado Diana Alvarado- Garcia Alejandra Alvarez Martha Alvarez Bella Amburgey Eunise Ancheta Brandon Anderson Hailyn Anderson Gaby Andrade Andrea Andrews Kaylee Archuleta Brittney Arena Isabel Argumaniz Cecilia Arias Brandon Arnold Amanda Arrechavala Ashley Arredondo Daniela Arrieta Mariela Arrieta Garcia Julissa Arroyo Renee Arroyo Gina Ashley Mercy Ashton Crystal Avans Kara Avecilla Montserrat Avelar Eddie Avelar-Avila Cristina Avendano Vivian Avila Emma Awwad Dalyla Ayala Abel Ayalewu Neisha Ayers Mackenzie Baack Piper Baack Rylia Babas-Yamaguchi Bianca Baca Helena Baird Julia Bak Shelly Baker Marisol Ballesteros Valerie Banks Marilyn Barajas Chloe Barber Amber Barker Aurora Barker Jason Barr David Barrett Gabrielle Barrett Abbey Barry Kassidy Barton Sabrina Basharyar Aldred Basco Brianna Baskin Nicholas Basso Gyzelle-Paris Bato Kaelli Bauman	Adrienne Bautista Carly Bavaro Maison Bavaro Billy Bayliss Kendra Beach Stephanie Beall Patty Bean Karen Beauchamp Joe Becerra Yesenia Becerra Lopez Zorayda Becerra-Jamie Kaitlyn Beckham Emily Bennliih Sarabia Talesha Bennett Lydia Berhanu Yossari Beristain Meredith Berlau Maranna Berry Miguel Betancourt Kenley Bickmore Markeisha Biggers Autumn Binghamon Saff Bintali Mallory Birch Breanna Blanks Kyra Bogaard-Lund Thomas Bohannon Brenda Bojado Amy Boluna Britney Borja Heather Bormann Lauren Bosco Justin Bound Kelsey Boykin Cecilia Boysen Victoria Bramhall Sissy Brancheau Emily Braunberger Noheми Bravo Yaminah Bravo Austin Breer Tina Breithaupt Zander Bretza Ashlynn Brewer Eliza Brink Shannon Brokaw Jordyn Brooks Johnny Brooks III Sidney Broome Gracyн Brown Kaylee Brown Lacey Brown Natalie Brown Sabrina Brown Sarah Brown Talisa Brown Hannah Buban Shannon Bull Dillan Burkhardt 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Gonzalez Jizel Gonzalez Natalia Gonzales Jasmine Gonzalez Teresita Gonzalez Montserrat Gonzalez-Lara Erika Gonzalez Moreno Alejandro Gonzalez Perez Eddie Gonzalez-Ramirez Brandon Goodwin Allyana Gorospe Allison Gotham Kevin Graeser Sonia Grasso Meisha Gray Ajanae Green Mia Green Alex Groat Natalie Guardado Nicole Gubbels Hannah Gubler Danielle Fioге Rebecca Fischer Alexa Flack Mia Fleming Tara Fliss Andrea Flores Fernando Flores Isabel Flores Susan Flores Neyta Flores Esquer Aishlinn Flores Moran Julia Florez Emily Foreman Morgan Foster Rachelle Fournier Savannah Frailey Ricardo Franco Maria Hamilton Kalyne Hammond Sydnee Hansen Alexis Hardin Tracie Harmsma Justin Harp Elaina Haymore Ashley Hendrickson Amiyah Henly Danelle Henry Ardra Hernandez Dezarae Hernandez Dulce Hernandez Emeli Hernandez Margarita Hernandez Neiko Hernandez Rosario Hernandez Yvette Hernandez Veronica Herrera Mayra Heynen Arianna Hicks Sasha Hinkel Stephanie Hodnett Makenna Hoekendorf Emma Hoff	Desirae Leiningер 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Kleveland Kristie Knott Montana Koplin Cody Koslowski Mikaela Kovalovich Skye Kuka Jaiden Kurz Phoenix Kwan Ng Kenedi La Porte Kelly Labounty Kaylee Lacayo Sabine Lamay Tyler Landvogt Joey Latina Maddie Laux Emmanuel Lawson Michael Lawson Haymanot Laykun Aleiya Lazaro William Ledesma Annaliese Lee Brittany Legrain Julie Legrand	Jessie Mejia Maribel Mejia Lizbeth Mejia R. Ambareen Memon Josue Mena Ochoa Andrea Mendez Hailey Mendez Berenice Mendoza Ectna Mendoza Esteban Mendoza Maria Mendoza Yoselin Mendoza Billing Jaden Mercado Emerald Merle Caity Meyer Severina Mijan Dimiana Mikhael Julie Milerlei Alexander Miller Autumn Miller Chelsea Miller Jason Miller Jenn Miller Jocelyn Miller Tina Miller Shelby Millsap Karla Lopez Trevino Briindee Loveless Giselle Lowe Fernanda Lozano Juarez Ashlee Lucero Roman Lucero Ava Lukasik Lillian Luke Hope Lumpkin Margaret Luna Abigail Luna-Hernandez Lucia Lundstrom Lopez Dalen Lutes Isiah Macapagal Jazmyn Macias Jazz Macias Karina Madeira April Madrid Cristina Magallon Jonathan Magallon Monica Magana Clarence Magdael Marianna Magdaleno Jackson Mainguy Lizzie Maley Mackenzie Malia Colton Malis Cooper Manwarren Seth Maokhamphiou Kevin Kelly Sera Kelly Hailey Kelsheimer Maia Kenney Binish Khan Safa Khan McKinzee Kiehl Kaitlyn Kingsbury Jourdan Kinsler Ariana Kirk Shay Kivi Martina Klcova Amanda Kleveland Kristie Knott Montana Koplin Cody Koslowski Mikaela Kovalovich Skye Kuka Jaiden Kurz Phoenix Kwan Ng Kenedi La Porte Kelly Labounty Kaylee Lacayo Sabine Lamay Tyler Landvogt Joey Latina Maddie Laux Emmanuel Lawson Michael Lawson Haymanot Laykun Aleiya Lazaro William Ledesma Annaliese Lee Brittany Legrain Julie Legrand	Brianna Ocegueda Camdan O'Kelley Connor O'Leary Yiselle Olivas Ruiz Martynique Oliver Ismael Olivero-Jimenez Christopher Olsen Amanda Orozco Mayerli Orozco Obdulia Orozco Alexa Ortiz Alexia Osborn Aaron Osborne Maganey Osman Kiarra Osotio Nancy Osorio Alonso Osorio-Kalawe Fernando Ostorga Carley Owens Kimberly Pacheco Analia Palmer Deandrea Palmer Jason Palmer Melissa Parker Noah Parker Damien Pascual Cannon Patton Alexis Payne Emily Pearson Alex Peay Emely Pelayo Marco Penaloza Pete Penksa Anahi Perez Anniela Perez Christian Perez Elaine Perez Frida Perez Jose Perez Mario Perez Octavio Perez Rosa Perez Soleil Perez Laura Perez Hernandez Brenda Perez Roman Gabriela Perez Villarreal Mackenzie Perry Shalee Peterson Sammi Phillips Christine Pierce Alison Pilkington Paulina Pitch Faith Pitman Tyler Plateroti Emercyn Plunkett Nubia Ponce-Silva Alejandra Porras Jonathan Portillo Ashley Potter Mariah Prasad Brooke Price Noreen Punzalan Traniah Quinine Dercia Quinn Jacqueline Quiriarte Gracyн Radke Tatum Rafalski Marissa Ragsdale Macy Rainford Dhamar Ramirez Jasmine Ramirez Jayzen Ramirez Maria Ramirez Melitza Ramirez Samantha Ramirez Sariah Ramirez Stephanie Ramirez Vanessa Ramirez Alexandra Ramirez Rabines Andrea Ramirez Sanchez Maria Ramos Jolyn Raniaga Monique Raven Aubree Rawley Janila Rawls Jasmine Rayas Jennifer Rayburn-Sanchez Franchesca Razon Jenny Recarey Elysia Reckenwald
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Dean’s List (Continued)

Olivia Reece
Danielle Reis
Andrea Rendon
Tori Renel-Suslo
Danica Rensi
Cesar Renteria
Christopher Rentsch
Amanda Reppert
Alita Requena
Andreah Reyes
Cristian Reyes
Lizeth Reyes
Madison Reyes
Melissa Reyes
Michelle Reyes
Rebecca Reyes
Adele Reynoso
Roya Riaz
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Sabrina Richards
Gena Richardson
Raiden Richardson
April Rideout
Madison Riggs
Nathalia Rios
Catherine Rising
Jetsam Risvold
Haley Rivas
Angelina Rivera
Eliana Rivera
Jose Rivera
Rheanna Rivera
Jamie Rizer
Jaqueline Roa
Hannah Roberts
Brandon Robinson
Melvin Robinson
Madalyn Robles
Olivia Rock
Alahriz Rodriguez
Brianna Rodriguez
Daissy Rodriguez
Diana Rodriguez
Grecia Rodriguez
Marcela Rodriguez
Lesly Rodriguez-Garcia
Madison Rojas
Zachary Roland
Amanda Roller
Megan Roma
Christina Romero
Jordan Roncal
Jeanell-Jasmine Ronolo
Steven Rosalimsky
Mia Rosario
Ebonie Rose
Jenaiya Ross
Heather Rossi
Brittney Roth
Shirley Ruben
Daisy Ruiz
Hope Ruiz-Mcglohon

Hannah Rupert
Ayesha Rush
Nicholas Rush
Amanda Russette
Bettina Ryan
Jonathan Ryan
Jenny Sabelko
Raisa Allysa Sabiano
Jose Sahagun
Joselyn Salas-Chavez
Daisy Salazar
Ivana Salazar
Lizeth Salazar
Kyanna Saldana
Sydney Saldania
Samantha Salinas
Jaecyn Salomon
Nova Samuels
Elizabeth Sanchez
Jennifer Sanchez
Leslie Sanchez
Nick Sanchez
Nora Sanchez
Samantha Sanchez
Terese Sanchez
Stacey Sanchez-Rios
Deniz Sanchez Sosa
Courtney Sandoval
Karen Sandoval
Bianca Santana
Veronica Santana
Gabriela Santiago
Marisol Saucedo
Kaitlyn Savella
Spencer Schaff
Jenny Schler
Hailey Schmaltz
Kaitlyn Schoeb
Endya Scott
Sandra Scott
Samantha Scroggins
Alexis Seabra-Nelson
Joy Marie Segelstrom
Samuel Self
Sandra Serrano
Christian Sevilla
Reina Sevillano
Zivon Sewell
Amanda Sexton
Breea Sheard
Julia Sheldon
Donna Shelton
Isabella Shenouda
Brock Shepherd
Gary Sherfield
Killena Sherwood
Joshlyn Shewmaker
Amber Shewman
Sayaka Shichiri
Reina Shinohara
Lindsay Shires
Sofia Shortsleeve

Kylie Showler
Fiona Sibelrud
Jasmin Silva
Izzy Silver
Claudia Similie
Isa Simpson
Alexis Singer
Sierra Sjolie
Isabella Skrinjaric
Elaine Slikkerveer
Alayna Smith
Alicia Smith
Aubrey Smith
Crystal Smith
Kayla Smith
Melissa Smith
Nichole Smith
Timothy Smith
Elizabeth Sanchez
Tristan Snyder
Jess Sobel
Ivette Solis
Sam Solis
Yailin Solis
Heather Sorensen
Erika Sotelo
Nathaly Soto
Kristofer Souder
Rachel Spindel
Preston Spragling
Jamie Sprague
Madison Spronk
Izabella Stahlberger
Stan Standifer
Kara Stephenson
Emma Stevens
Tami Stilson
Emily Stinnett
Nate Stone
Angela Stoneback
Kah'Myah Stuart
Craig Stuber
Mya Sutherland
Micah Suzuki
Natalie Swett
Melanie Tanko
Leonard Tanuvasa
Aracely Tarin
Tamika Tatum
Khaya Tawatao
Joey Taylor
Marketh Taylor
Megan Taylor
Quinn Taylor-Chont
Gina Ternora
Matthew Terry
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Elsie Thompson
Nicole Thompson
Torie Thompson
Noah Thornhill
Alethia Thurston

Erika Tobar
Ryan Tomlinson
Ana Topete
Kate Topete
Alex Topps
Alondra Torres
Alva Torres
Bianca Torres
Emma Torres
Michael Torres
Joan Townsend
Kyle Tracy
Chastine Tran
Ryan Tran
Alyssa Trujillo
Amber Trumble
Vianey Ulloa Pedroza
Francisco Ulloa Tapia
Stephanie Upton
Sarena Uzueta
Kim Vaca
Alyssia Valdez
Anita Valdez
Yara Valdez
Shania Valencia
Siboney Valencia
Valeria Valencia-Abarca
Kamilah Valentine
Lirio Valenzuela
Manuel Vazquez
Mel Vasquez
Meredith Vasquez
Gladys Vazquez Rodriguez
Analicia Vela
Asia Velis
Paige Venuti
Abigail Vertiz
Kaya Vestuto
Brianna Victorino
Sofia Vieira
Crystal Villa
Melissa Villa
Victoriana Villa
Arianna Villanueva
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Ariana Walcott
Lindsey Wall
Austyn Walters
Riley Wargo
Allexus Warren
Mackenzie Warrick
Abbey Webb
Averi Webb

Delaney Weinrich
Dazamarie Wells-Dismukes
Laura Wenzinger
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Devon Wheeler
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Kenadee Winfrey
Sandra Winters
Michalina Wloch
Eden Wolde
Ashley Wolff
Edrecka Wolridge
Madison Wong
Jonathan Wood
Ernest Woodard
Belisse Woodworth
Samara Woolfolk
Carolyn Wright
Michelle Wright
Kayla-Keowta Xaypanya
Tianhui Ye
Bianca Yegutkin
Yordanos Yemane
Jacqueline Yeoman
Susan Yorgason
Reyann Young
Katie Youngson
Paul Yu
Cynthia Zack
Maria Zamora
Michael Zamora Vixtha
Yaritza Zanabia
Suerny Zapata
Vianey Zapata Ortega
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