

# James Farmer Multicultural Center

## ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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### Outstanding Graduating Senior Receives 6th Annual Grace Mann Launch Award

Established in 2015 in honor of the legacy of Grace Mann, a junior at UMW who was very involved in social justice issues, the Grace Mann Launch Award is given to a graduating senior who has demonstrated consistent engagement and leadership as a social justice activist and looks to continue that work upon graduation.

The recipient this year was Jessica Lynch, a graduating senior in Historic Preservation and American Studies, and an active student leader. Throughout her tenure at UMW, Jessica has worked to enhance her leadership skills and embrace her passions by participating in many activities and projects on campus. In just her second year, Jessica became the president of Students Educating and Empowering for Diversity (SEED) club and Talk to the Hands club, where she served two terms with both clubs. In addition, she was on the executive board of People for the Rights of Individuals of Gender and Sexual Minorities (PRISM) for two years. She has implemented campus-wide cultural programming events (such as the hugely popular Cross-Cultural BBQ, Day of Silence observance, and events for the Disability Awareness Month celebration), as well as served on campus-wide committees. In addition, Jessica has sponsored or co-sponsored several social justice and diversity programs, researched and prepared presentations for the campus community, and engaged other student leaders as facilitators in these events.

Jessica also worked with the James Farmer Multicultural Center and the Office of Student Involvement, serving two years as a Resources Inspiring Student Excellence (RISE) peer mentor and orientation leader, respectively. Additionally, in the JFMC, Jessica was a member of the student subcommittee for the Social Justice and Leadership Summit. In this role, she significantly contributed to the planning and implementation of this successful event.

Lynch stated, "I believe the passions that I fostered within my academic career and extracurriculars embodies the legacy of Grace Mann and her courage in upholding feminine pride and power during her tenure at Mary Washington... I hope that my experience creating an environment that rejects the institutions and policies that Grace fought against would honor her life. As a fellow American Studies major, I feel especially connected to her and her pursuit of interdisciplinary studies that span history, sociology, women's and gender studies, and so much more."

For information about upcoming events and programs at the James Farmer Multicultural Center, visit our website at [students.umw.edu/multicultural](https://students.umw.edu/multicultural) or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!



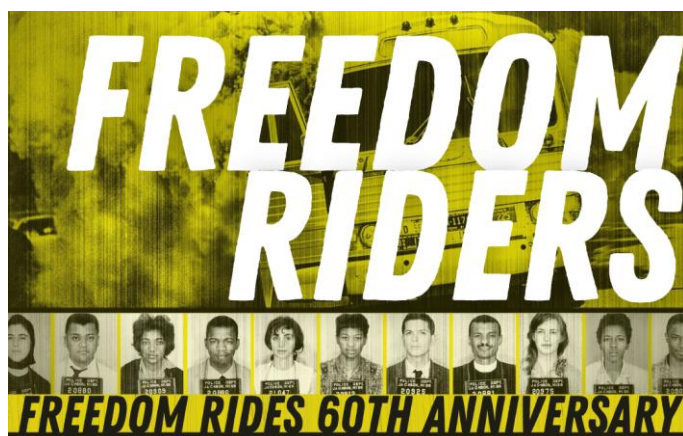
### Senior Recognition Program

For the graduating seniors, the end of this year marks the first step into a new and exciting life beyond UMW. These graduates have demonstrated leadership and commitment by showcasing aspects of cultural differences, as well as engaging the campus community in meaningful education and dialogue through a variety of programs, activities, and projects. We applaud this cohort of leaders for their efforts to ensure that no culture is forgotten and that everyone is enriched by being exposed to diverse perspectives. As engaged students, they have added their own unique voices, capitalized on their own experiences, and have truly embraced the essence of the principles and values Mary Washington has articulated and promoted. The work of the James Farmer Multicultural Center has been greatly enhanced by the contributions of these students. We thank them and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Please see the next page for a list of our graduating seniors.



## JFMC Commemorates the 60th Anniversary of the Freedom Rides



As the founder and director of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), one of Dr. Farmer's signature accomplishments in 1961 was the Freedom Rides. The Freedom Rides was a movement to enforce the federal government to desegregate interstate travel. The late civil rights icon, Congressman John Lewis, Rep-GA, was one of the original Freedom Riders. This journey was originally scheduled to leave Washington, D.C. on May 4, 1961 to travel through the Deep South and arrive in New Orleans on May 17, 1961. Due to acts of violence and resistance along the way, they encountered many delays to their destination. There was a national documentary about this experience produced by PBS as part of their American Experience series called "The Freedom Riders" (season 23, episode 11). (Credit: UMW VP/EE/CDO and Univ. Relations)

In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Freedom Rides, the James Farmer Multicultural Center will host a film showing and discussion of this PBS documentary, *Freedom Riders*, on Tuesday, May 4th at 6:00 pm. *Freedom Riders* is the powerful harrowing and ultimately inspirational story of six months in 1961 that changed America forever. From May until November 1961, more than 400 black and white Americans risked their lives—and many endured savage beatings and imprisonment—for simply traveling together on buses and trains as they journeyed through the Deep South. Deliberately violating Jim Crow laws in order to test and challenge a segregated interstate travel system, the Freedom Riders met with bitter racism and mob violence along the way, sorely testing their belief in nonviolent activism.

From award-winning filmmaker Stanley Nelson (*Wounded Knee*, *Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple*, *The Murder of Emmett Till*) *Freedom Riders* features testimony from a fascinating cast of central characters: the Riders themselves, state and federal government officials, and journalists who witnessed the Rides firsthand. The two-hour documentary is based on Raymond Arsenault's book *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*. (Credit: PBS)

## 2021 Graduating Seniors

**Rachel Benoudiz**

**Lundyn Henry**

**Angel Pitts**

**Lucy Bondje**

**Nathalie Herrera**

**Jaelynn Scott**

**Casey Burgess**

**Sky Horne**

**Kate Seltzer**

**Andy Chen**

**Hawase Jima**

**Leon Sepherar**

**Rachein Childress**

**Jessica Lynch**

**Caylie Sims**

**Olayemi Fadahunsi**

**Mala Meeran**

**Angela-Marie Sokpolie**

**Makayla Ferrell**

**Amicha Morgan**

**Emily Voorhis**