



**UNITY PRAYER  
LUNCHEON**

**Tuesday, January 19, 2021  
11:30 a.m.**

## Program

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Christopher Whitt, PhD  
*Vice Provost for Institutional Diversity  
and Inclusion, Creighton University*

### INVOCATION

Rev. Nicholas Santos, SJ  
*Rector of the Creighton Jesuit Community*

### STOVALL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD PRESENTATION

### REMARKS

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ  
*President of Creighton University*

Jean Stothert  
*Mayor of the City of Omaha*

### DRUM MAJOR AWARD PRESENTATION

### INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Christopher Whitt, PhD

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Barry E. Thomas  
*Director of Equity and Diversity  
for Omaha Public Schools*

### CLOSING SONG



## Keynote Address

### Barry E. Thomas

*Director of Equity and Diversity  
for Omaha Public Schools*

Barry Thomas is director of equity and diversity for Omaha Public Schools in Nebraska. He has served in prior roles as supervisor of social studies and a teacher. Thomas obtained his bachelor's degree from Wayne State College and two master's degrees in educational leadership and curriculum and instruction from Doane College. Thomas was among the inaugural class of African American leaders to participate in the Empowerment Network's Redefine the Game Institute in 2018 and now he has joined Inclusive Community's inaugural group of Lead Diversity advocates. He's also an executive board member of the Omaha Branch of the NAACP.

Thomas has been awarded the Distinguished Support for Geography Education award by the National Council for Geographic Education and the 2018 Leadership Award from Geographic Educators of Nebraska,

the Urban League of Nebraska's African American Leadership Award in education, the Nebraska State Council of the Social Studies Paul Beck Outstanding Social Studies Educator Award, the Nebraska Council on Economics Education Economic Educator of the Year Award, the Frank LaMere Peacemaker of the Year Award from Nebraskans for Peace, and the Superior Service award by his state and the 8th district of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

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## 2021 Stovall Scholarship Award

Jessica Fuertes

Jessica Fuertes is a senior at Omaha South High School and has been a part of the Creighton University TRiO Talent Search program since 2018. The daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico, Fuertes is a very hard worker who has overcome many challenges in her life.

As a young child, her family moved around a lot due to high rent, lack of job opportunities for immigrants, and/or evictions. She witnessed her parent's misery as what little they did make was taken from them by corrupt employers. As a teen she got a job to help her family financially so her family would not struggle as much.

While in high school, Fuertes joined the track and cross-country teams, the National Honor Society, Character in Action, and she serves as a mentor and tutor. Last year, she completed over 150 hours of community service and intends to volunteer

even more this year. Through it all, she has maintained a 4.0 GPA. She plans to attend a four-year university, earn a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering and become a 3D food printer engineer to increase food security for low-income communities.

Jessica Fuertes is truly deserving of the Tamara Stovall-Smith "Fulfill a Dream" Award.

## 2021 Drum Major Award

Douglas County Board of  
Health and Douglas County



As the world watched the multitudes of systematic racial injustice sweep across the United States, close to home, Douglas County Health Department took action by declaring racism a public health crisis on June 17, 2020.

According to its director, Adi Pour, racism has been linked to health disparities, only further highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the declaration comes 22 action steps including a new health equity and racial justice office within Douglas County Health. Additional measures include an assessment of policies, programs and practices for racial equity. These measures will allow the department to fight against racism both internally and externally with community partners.

Douglas County Health has studied the effects of racial disparities in health care for several years. The declaration was expedited with the death of George Floyd and following protests this past summer. By declaring racism a public health crisis, the department raises awareness and further puts the matter in front of government officials, businesses and other local institutions.

## The Drum Major Award

This award acknowledges moral, religious or spiritual leaders who represent the ideals of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The recipient of this award demonstrates qualities promoting social justice, creating a significant impact on the lives of the community and inspiring others to meet the challenges society faces today.

