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2022 commencement singers announced



[Governors State University](#) (GSU) is proud to announce the commencement singers for spring 2022: Ramona Hernandez, [Interdisciplinary Studies](#) student and Brave Fung, a [Community Health](#) student.

GSU Newsroom sat down with both as they prepare for the ceremony in May.

Ramona Hernandez

Ramona Hernandez, an [Interdisciplinary Studies](#) major, says singing The National Anthem at commencement is an honor.

After graduating from high school, Hernandez earned her associate in arts at Richard J. Daley College. She wanted to continue her education at Governors State University (GSU), but “with life’s transitions” including working in the corporate world and raising a daughter, her education was put on hold.

She found her enthusiasm for school again after talking with people in GSU’s Registrar’s office.

“This has been a long journey for me,” Hernandez, 51, said. “What has always been a thorn in my side is my degree. I never took the time to get it done. I was blessed to have

a job. It's kind of balanced the degree thing out, but when things happened, I said 'I've got to get this degree'"

Hernandez has been a member of the Chicago Mass Choir for 15 years. She also sings in the choir at her church, Fellowship Chicago, 4545 S. Princeton Ave.

"I just love music, period. I just love to sing," said Hernandez.

Her favorite singers include Yolanda Adams, CeCe Winans, Anita Baker, Gladys Knight and, of course, the legendary Queen of Soul Aretha Franklin. "I love all the soulful singers"

She's always wanted to sing the Star-Spangled Banner - perhaps at a baseball game - but never had the opportunity. She will finally sing that song at commencement.

Being selected to sing for her GSU peers when they receive their diplomas "is such a humbling feeling," she said.

"I don't get nervous. If I feel the song, passion about it, it just comes out," Hernandez said. "I'm so happy. This is something that's a God moment. It just fell right in place."

Brave Fung

Brave Fung, a [Community Health](#) major, began singing when he was a boy. Now he is a guest vocalist for one of the May 14 graduation ceremonies at Governors State University (GSU).

To say he is thrilled would be an understatement.

"It really is an amazing opportunity," said Fung, who is graduating from the College of Health and Human Services with a 4.0 GPA. "It's pretty awesome."

Fung, who was born in Miami, grew up in Colombia with his mother's family. Now the 47-year-old lives in Flossmoor, and works in the Payroll Department at GSU.

Getting his college degree has him feeling "grateful Governors State is an institution that works with people like me. Once you take that first break, most of us will not go back (to college)."

Fung wants to use his degree to help people cope with substance abuse, drawing from his own journey of recovery, he said.

"I didn't get sober until later on in life. I was 37," he said. "Even people who have not gone through it, they can help as long as they get in touch with their own brokenness."

Fung appreciates how GSU welcomed him as an older student, and prepared him for life after classes are done.

"To me, being a Jaguar means not giving up, being resilient, getting up when we stumble, having a purpose, and supporting others on the journey," he said. "It means leaving a 'paw print' on the path or better yet, forging our own path."

He sometimes thinks of two conversations “that kept coming up and will continue to be key principles” for him.

“One of them was the concept of meeting people where they are on their journey so that we can effectively help address their specific needs, and create solutions that make sense.”

“Each individual is different and has their own unique set of gifts and challenges, and one size solutions do not fit all,” he said.

“The second one is the importance of finding the strength within each person and build from the inside out. Growth and positive change come from within and when we can inspire that, we can help others build self-efficacy and in turn build healthier communities.”

Fung says he loves “that our faculty bring real world practical experience to the classroom,” adding “there are so many that I have come to respect and look up to.”