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For Immediate Release

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Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine Graduates 134 New Doctors

LAS CRUCES – On Friday, May 5th, 134 students in the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine officially became doctors. The commencement ceremony, where students received their Doctorates of Osteopathic Medicine, took place at 10 a.m. MDT at NMSU’s Pan-American Center. The event was also live-streamed on the College’s Facebook page.

John Hummer, president of the College, delivered the ceremony’s welcome remarks to the graduating class. In those remarks, he stated, “I cannot help but recall the amazing fact that as a Class, you came into your studies just months before the arrival of a global pandemic, where the world was filled with uncertainty and the healthcare industry was stretched beyond its limit. Medical school is an immense challenge. Add on the dire circumstance humanity was faced with in 2020, and it is a feat unlike any other. Despite this, you persisted. Despite this, you succeeded!”

The students, along with their families and friends, celebrated their graduation from medical school, donning their regalia and processing through the Pan-American center amidst fanfare from all sides of the stadium. The national anthem was performed by Class of 2023 graduate, Monica Tavaréz. On stage, the students received their Doctorates of Osteopathic Medicine and were subsequently hooded with the traditional green doctoral hood. Several students chose to be hooded by a physician from their family or close friends.

Bill Pieratt, DO, dean of the College, presented the Class of 2023 for the conferral of degrees. He also led the graduates in reciting the Osteopathic Oath, where students restated their pledge to provide empathetic, expert care to all their future patients. Dr. Pieratt encouraged the graduates to reflect on the words of the oath and to realize their commitment to their future patients, even though there may be times when fatigue, stress, and other circumstances may tempt them to give less than their best. “Your patients and your profession are counting on you to practice medicine with integrity and a spirit of service.”

This year’s keynote speaker was William Baker, DO, a Las Cruces native who followed his father, Lory Baker, DO, into medicine, to care for generations of Las Cruces families. Dr. Baker is active in the community and has served as the team physician for New Mexico State University since

1990 and was inducted into the New Mexico State University's Athletics Hall of Fame in 2011. He has held the position of chief of staff at both MountainView Regional Medical Center, as well as

Memorial Medical Center. He also serves as chairman of the board for the Coalition for Osteopathic Excellence, whose mission is to improve healthcare through the financial support of medical education and health-related endeavors for students including providing avenues for medical research.

In his message to the Class of 2023, Dr. Baker shared his journey of becoming an osteopathic physician and the inspirational lessons he learned from his father, Dr. Lory Baker. In closing, he told the Class of 2023, "I found my dream forty-three years ago and I am still following it. It may not be what I thought it would be when I started, but it has been good for me. I hope all of you find your dream, but in the words of a Rolling Stones song, "You can't always get what you want, but sometimes you get what you need."

The Commencement also heard from John Harris, the chairman of the Burrell Board of Trustees, and Gina Sun Gilderman, president of the Burrell College's Student Government Association and graduating member of the Class of 2023.

The night before commencement, the Class of 2023, their families, and friends, joined the faculty and staff of the Burrell College at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Museum for the pre-commencement reception. At the pre-commencement reception, awards were given to the winners of the Distinguished Student Awards, the President's Award, the Dean's Award, the Excellence in Diversity & Inclusion Award, and the Leonard Tow Humanism Awards. In addition, White Sands Missile Range's Garrison Commander, Colonel David Mitchell conducted the commissioning ceremony for 7 graduates joining the United States Airforce (2) and Navy (5).

The Class of 2023 submitted their applications to residency programs across the nation and 100% of the Class were subsequently placed in programs in thirty-one states. Graduate Medical Education placements included numerous unique specialties, such as neurology, pathology, and orthopedic surgery. Forty-three of the members of the Burrell College will remain in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, helping to address the physician scarcity in the Southwestern United States. This includes pursuing their residencies at Las Cruces' MountainView Regional Medical Center and Memorial Medical Center; Albuquerque's University of New Mexico School of Medicine; Santa Fe's Northern New Mexico Family Medicine; and El Paso's HCA Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare, Texas Tech Health Sciences Center (both El Paso and Lubbock) as well as the University of Arizona in Tucson.

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About the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine

Located in Las Cruces, New Mexico, the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine was established in 2013 to improve the health of the Southwestern U.S. and its border with Northern Mexico. The four-year, private osteopathic medical school is student-centered, utilizing the latest medical education technologies and methods to ensure student success in all fields of medicine – from primary care to subspecialties like surgery, anesthesiology, and emergency medicine. The Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine is a freestanding college with clinical training locations in New Mexico, El Paso (TX), Rockledge (FL), and Tucson (AZ). Learn more at www.burrell.edu