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[Rutgers University–Camden](https://www.rutgers-camden.edu/)

Internationally Recognized Artist Mickalene Thomas to Speak at Rutgers–Camden Commencement Ceremony

The award-winning multidisciplinary artist and Camden native was recently named one of Time's 100 Most Influential People.

Camden, NJ – May 14, 2025: Rutgers University–Camden is pleased to announce that internationally recognized artist Mickalene Thomas will serve as the university's 2025 Commencement keynote speaker on Tuesday, May 20 at Freedom Mortgage Pavilion in Camden, New Jersey. She will also receive an honorary doctorate of fine arts at the ceremony.

A Camden native, Thomas was recently named one of *Time's* 100 Most Influential People. Known for complex, thought-provoking art that encompasses a variety of media, including painting, photography, sculpture, and film, Thomas's work explores themes of identity, race, and gender.

A Tony-nominated co-producer, curator, educator, and mentor, Thomas made history in 2023 as the first Black queer femme artist with a Yale University scholarship in her name. Her work is held in prominent collections, including MoMA, the Whitney, and the Smithsonian.

Thomas's commencement speech coincides with Rutgers–Camden's Year of the Arts, an expansive celebration of various forms of artistic expression and their power to educate, inspire, and heal. Her address to the Class of 2025 and the Rutgers–Camden community is part of a broader effort to showcase local talent alongside world-renowned artists on campus.

In addition to Thomas, Rutgers–Camden will welcome several other prominent individuals, including two Rutgers alumni, at individual convocation ceremonies:

- **Rutgers School of Business–Camden**

- **Aaron Chang, President of Jefferson Health–East Region**

- As president of Jefferson Health's east region, Aaron Chang is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of Jefferson's three New Jersey acute care hospitals in Cherry Hill, Stratford, and Washington Township, recently ranked among the top 10 in New Jersey on U.S. News & World Report's "Best Hospitals" list and recipients of "A" grades in the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Report.

Chang earned a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition Science with an emphasis in Biochemistry from the University of California, Davis. He also holds a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration from California State University.

- **Rutgers School of Nursing – Camden**

- **Amy B. Mansue, President and CEO, Inspira Health**

- Amy B. Mansue has served as Inspira Health's President and Chief Executive Officer since August 2020. With nearly 40 years of experience in the health care industry, Amy has built a distinguished career, spanning leadership roles in both the public service space and within prominent New Jersey hospitals and health systems. Mansue holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in social welfare from The University of Alabama.

- **Camden College of Arts & Sciences and University College–Camden**

- **Jacquelyn A. Suárez, Commissioner, NJ Department of Community Affairs**

- Jacquelyn A. Suárez is the first Hispanic commissioner to lead the Department of Community Affairs. As commissioner, she is responsible for a \$1.485 billion operational budget, oversees over 1000 employees, and spearheads various departmental initiatives, including ending veteran homelessness, developing homeownership opportunities, and creating a pipeline for public sector employment. She is a New Jersey native who earned her Juris Doctor from Rutgers School of Law in Camden and her bachelor's degree in communications, legal institutions, economics, and government from American University in Washington, D.C.

- **Rutgers Law School**

- **Brisa De Angulo, Founder and CEO, A Breeze of Hope Foundation**

- Brisa De Angulo is the founder and CEO of A Breeze of Hope Foundation, an organization that seeks to end child sexual violence and promote legislation that protects the best interests of children. As a lawyer, psychologist, and human rights activist, she has dedicated her life to improving access to justice and healing for survivors of childhood sexual violence. De Angulo holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Eastern University, a master's degree from Towson University, and a J.D. from Rutgers Law School.

[LINK TO COMMENCEMENT WEBSITE](#)

[LINK TO PHOTOS](#)

About Rutgers University–Camden

Rutgers University–Camden is a hub of academic excellence and innovation, consistently ranked among the nation’s top public colleges and universities. Proudly recognized as one of the safest campuses in the region, the university is located in the “eds and meds” district of Camden, NJ—a city known for its cultural and historic attractions, vibrant arts community, renowned healthcare institutions, and headquarters of internationally recognized corporations. The campus offers a welcoming and engaging learning environment for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students. Just minutes from Center City Philadelphia—home to a thriving business district and a dynamic cultural scene—the campus also benefits from an array of transportation options for easy access in and around the city.

Home to approximately 6,000 students and more than 1,500 faculty and staff, Rutgers–Camden fosters a close-knit academic community where students enjoy the resources of a world-class research institution. Motivated scholars collaborate with world-renowned faculty, creating an environment defined by discovery and support.

As one of four chancellor-led units in the Rutgers University system, Rutgers–Camden is celebrated as a national model for civically engaged urban universities, earning the prestigious Community Engagement status from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. With its classification as an R2 research university, the campus contributes groundbreaking scholarship and creative output on a global scale.

Ranked among *Washington Monthly’s* “Best Bang for the Buck” universities, Rutgers University–Camden offers an exceptional environment for intellectual growth, community engagement, and personal achievement, empowering students to reach their highest potential.

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