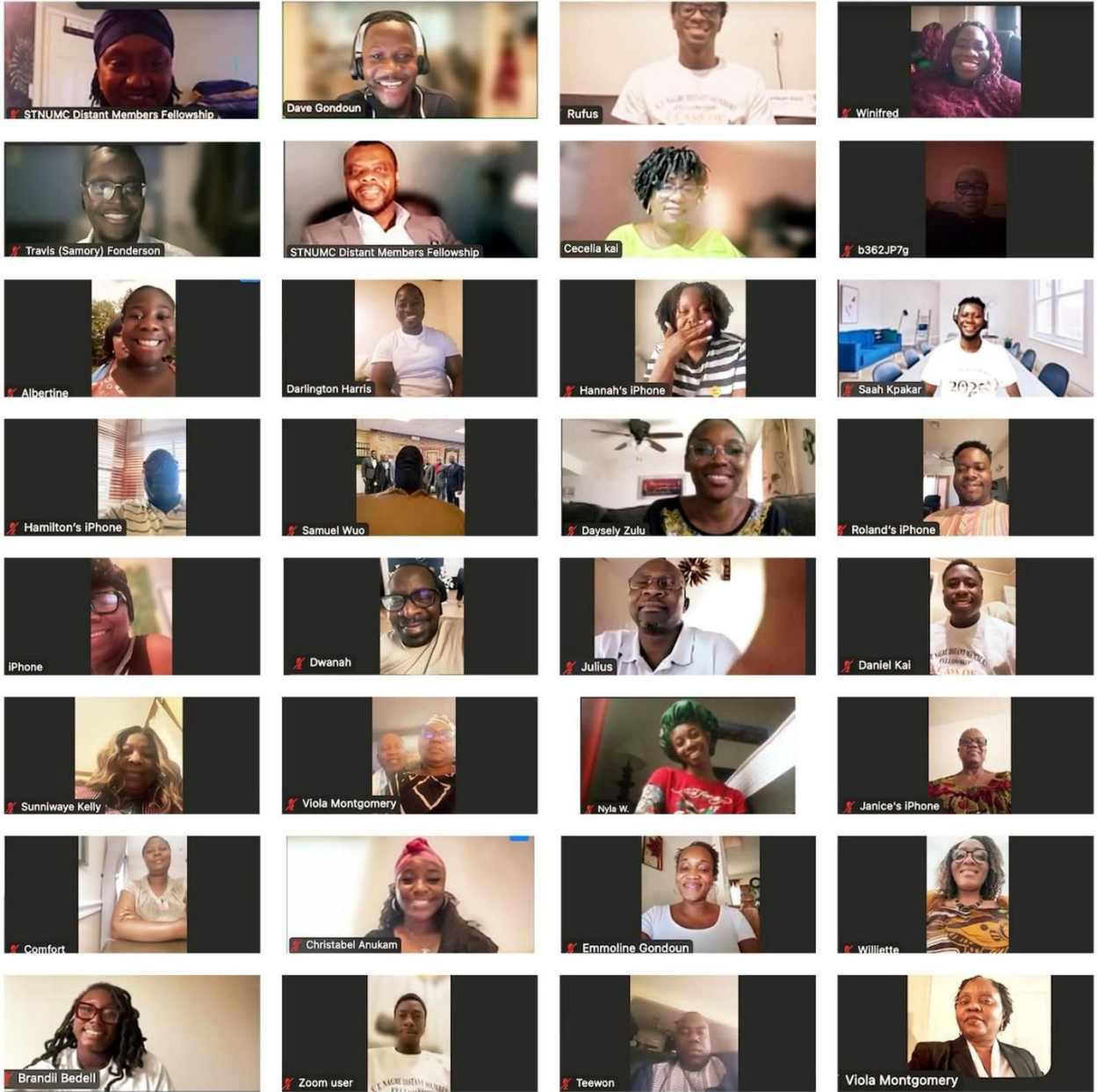


Class of 2025: A Legacy of Excellence

S T NAGBE DMF BRIDGING THE GAP CLASS OF 2025 YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS GRADUATION CELEBRATION



Honoring the Distant Members Fellowship Class of 2025

The Distant Members Fellowship (DMF) convened its annual virtual celebration on Friday, August 22, 2025, recognizing the achievements of eleven distinguished graduates spanning middle school, high school, and college levels. The event featured a keynote address delivered by Dr. Saah Kpakar, an accomplished Fellowship member and recent Ph.D. graduate in Higher Education.

Keynote Address by Dr. Saah Kpakar

Dr. Kpakar commenced his remarks by acknowledging the leadership of the Fellowship's King and Queen, Teewon Dolopei and Cecelia Kai, for their role in organizing the event. He extended congratulations to the graduates and expressed sincere appreciation to the families, friends, and supporters who contributed to their success. Recognizing the graduates' dedication and perseverance, Dr. Kpakar encouraged them to thoughtfully reflect on their accomplishments and to approach the future with confidence and resilience.

Guidance for Emerging Leaders

Addressing the middle and high school graduates, Dr. Kpakar underscored the significance of their achievements amid challenges such as bullying and discrimination. He advised them to set ambitious, practical goals, foster self-reliance, and confidently develop their own voices as they transition to adulthood. He further recommended prioritizing higher education and seeking guidance when necessary, emphasizing the importance of persistence and aspiration with the message: "dream big and be very persistent."

Preparation for Future Success: Building Resilience

Dr. Kpakar acknowledged that the path forward would present significant challenges, but assured graduates that these experiences represent valuable opportunities for personal and intellectual development. He encouraged them to perceive setbacks as learning experiences and to remain dedicated to their objectives, regardless of adversity. Dr. Kpakar emphasized that by fostering perseverance and adaptability, the graduates would be well-positioned to thrive in any professional or personal environment.

When addressing bachelor's degree recipients, Dr. Kpakar recognized their graduation as evidence of their determination and ability. He challenged them to demonstrate innovation and to set personal standards for achievement, reminding them of the skills and confidence they possess to pursue their ambitions unapologetically. Whether entering graduate school or joining the workforce, Dr. Kpakar highlighted lifelong learning as a critical factor for ongoing success, observing that those who remain inquisitive and adaptable will distinguish themselves. He also offered guidance on personal branding and reputation management—both online and offline—describing this as “the resume that comes before the actual resume.”

Dr. Kpakar subsequently turned his attention to the college graduates, acknowledging the complexity of balancing academic, personal, and transitional responsibilities. He noted that graduation marks a major milestone and the start of new opportunities and obligations. Dr. Kpakar encouraged them to pursue knowledge

continually, take on leadership roles, and make meaningful contributions to their communities. He also stressed the importance of adaptability and resilience as they prepare to address evolving challenges beyond academia and recommended the development of professional networks and the pursuit of mentorship for continued growth.

Inspiring the Next Generation

In conclusion, Dr. Kpakar reinforced the importance of personal branding and maintaining belief in their own potential. He quoted former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf: “If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough.” Following his address and the applause it received, the celebration featured a personal testimony from Darlington and a video montage, “Faith, Purpose, Legacy,” created by youth to honor the graduates. The program concluded with a Prayer of Commissioning led by Florence Fonderson and final remarks from Elizabeth Kelly, formally closing the DMF Class of 2025 celebration.