



UNH Announces 2023 Granite State Award and Honorary Degree Recipients

Friday, April 28, 2023



DURHAM, N.H.—In recognition of their achievements, the University of New Hampshire will award honorary degrees to its

[commencement speakers](#) as

well as to a USDA forest service researcher and a philanthropist at commencement ceremonies across its campuses this May. A Granite State Award for outstanding contributions to the state will also be presented to Deo Mwano, a social-impact innovator whose work is focused on education, technology, business, community, and individual development.

Bill Leak will be awarded an honorary degree for his 65 years of producing science that is used to manage New England forests.

Described as “the consummate research forester,” his



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accomplishments include more than 180 research publications on topics including New England Forest site classification/land typing, site-related silvicultural practice, stand dynamics, modelling and integrated habitat management. Delivering science to forest managers has been an integral part of Leak's career, and his silvicultural craft has best been practiced through field visits to state and federally managed forests, industrial forest holdings and numerous non-government organizations and privately-owned woodlands.

Dana Hamel will be awarded an honorary degree in recognition of his philanthropic commitment to the university. In 2008, he and his family established the Dana A. Hamel Scholarships and Scholars Program to attract and retain the state's best and brightest graduating high school seniors for study at UNH and to recognize outstanding juniors for exceptional leadership and academic accomplishments. The program has offered renewable scholarships to more than 300 first-year students and rising juniors over the past 15 years. The scholarships and scholars gift follows two earlier Hamel family gifts to benefit students at UNH—the Hamel Student Recreation Center and the Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research, which provides resources and financial support for student research.

A Granite State Award will be presented to Mwano, CEO, founder and managing principal of Deo Mwano Consultancy. A social-impact innovator whose work is focused on education, technology, business, community and individual development, he has worked for the federal government, nonprofits, educational institutions and tech startups. Working with organizations nationally and internationally, Mwano is a sought-after speaker, program designer, community builder and performer. He runs his own consultancy firm, offering services including speaking, training, creating empowerment content and leading workshops for businesses and nonprofits. A gifted performer and presenter,

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**Mary Johanna Brown
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Holloway Entrepreneur
of the Year**

May 11, 2023

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Mwano connects with others through dance and motivational speaking.

The University of New Hampshire inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top-ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. A Carnegie Classification R1 institution, UNH partners with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, and received \$260 million in competitive external funding in FY21 to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

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University of New Hampshire

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