

Today the MALS Committee presents the name of the last student to receive a Master's of Liberal Studies from Skidmore College. The MALS Program will officially close in February 2020 after 27 years, and the Committee would like to recognize the outstanding contributions of all the students, faculty, and staff, who have made this important and pioneering program possible. Skidmore initiated MALS in an effort to extend the benefits of a Skidmore liberal arts education to "non-traditional" students. From 1993 to today, 204 students have received a Master's degree. 133 faculty have served as advisers for MA theses on topics ranging from African Studies, Exercise Science, Museum Administration, and Organizational Management to Fashion and Sustainability, Theological Responses to Suffering, Native American Women's Lives, and Oral History of War Veterans. In addition, 31 faculty have offered MALS Seminars with intriguing titles like "Nothing Doing," "What's Left of Enlightenment?" "Crafting Public History," and "Class Matters: Probing the American Dream." 7 directors and 4 staff administrators have tirelessly overseen the program. Current director Jacqueline Scoones reminds us that MALS has not only enriched our students' lives: "We, too, [as faculty] have benefited from the presence of those adult learners occasionally among us; mature students who came to us desiring an intellectual life shaped by their own curiosity and sense of purpose, and requiring something unique from us in return. Each of their journeys required us to reflect and learn, and to evolve, too, and that is one of the most inspirational legacies of Skidmore MALS." It is fitting that Anna Taft is the last student to graduate from the MALS Program. Her thesis director, Sheldon Solomon characterizes her study—*Bringing the Personal into Public Life: How Relational Morality and Meaningful Action Can Enrich an Organization's Work*—as a "remarkable synthesis of Anna's philosophical, anthropological and psychological interests with her work as the Founding Director of the Tandana Foundation – devoted to supporting achievement of community goals and addressing global inequalities through caring intercultural relationships in Ecuador and Mali. This thesis epitomizes Skidmore's commitment to the liberal arts and creating by hand and mind." This program has enriched our community and we are grateful for the contributions of all participants over the last three decades.

I would like now to submit the resolution:

RESOLVED, that the Faculty of Skidmore College recommend to the Trustees the granting of the Master of Arts degree to one student.

Anna Noel Taft