

Davidson College

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

CLINT WARD SMITH III '10

Educator. Writer. Scholar. Activist. Dr. Clint Smith's storied career began at Davidson and exemplifies how a liberal arts education powerfully combines eloquence and ethics. His influence, however, has reached far beyond our campus. As a writer and poet, his voice has captivated a global audience. Clint's intellectual curiosity and commitment to social justice have been instrumental in effecting positive change. He has established himself as a force for unity in a world that often feels divided.

Born and raised in New Orleans, Clint chose Davidson as his college home. He played on the Men's Soccer Team, earning four varsity letters, and was a leader in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. An English major, he developed a passion for spoken word poetry and began participating in slam poetry competitions. Clint left his legacy at Davidson as founder and president of the FreeWord Poetry Group, creating a space for future Wildcats to explore and share their voices.

Clint's involvement in Davidson's literary community helped shape his voice as a storyteller. After graduation, he established himself as a poet and performer on a national scale, and his spoken word pieces earned wide praise. In 2014, he became a National Poetry Slam winner. Two award-winning poetry collections followed, *Counting Descent* and *Above Ground*, and his book *How the World Is Passed* was a *New York Times* bestseller among other esteemed honors. His essays, poems and scholarly works have been printed in numerous prominent publications. Amid his success as a poet and writer, Clint also earned a Ph.D. in Education from Harvard. He is currently a staff writer at *The Atlantic*.

A quick online search reveals Clint's success story. Over the past 15 years, he has earned an extensive collection of accolades and awards, but the power of his work is truly immeasurable. His writing invites us to reckon with the past and offers an opportunity for reflection and healing. An unwavering advocate for social justice and equity, his deep commitment to truth, vulnerability and compassion has captivated a national audience eager for words of hope.

Classmates and many other Davidsonians are inspired by Clint's body of work, saying he has transformed countless hearts and minds around ideas of justice and equity in the U.S. and throughout the world. He is a force for good, whose work is a celebration of the human spirit. We need his words now more than ever.

Clint Smith, for your gift of storytelling, for your inspirational leadership, for your tireless pursuit of social justice and for your courage to examine hard truths, the Davidson College Alumni Association recognizes you with the Distinguished Alumni Award on the occasion of your 15th Reunion, June 2025.