

Makaya Lynn Robinson, Winner of the Kathryn Thomasson Undergraduate Award for Excellence in Chemistry by a First-Generation Student
By Sarbjeet Kaur, Director of Student Awards



The Kathryn Thomasson Award is for excellence in chemistry by a student who is in the first generation of her family to attend college. The nominee shall be a senior female or non-binary chemistry student in an accredited college or university that grants a four-year degree. The 2024 winner is Makaya Lynn Robinson of Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN. Makaya was nominated by Professor Jennifer Fishovitz, PhD. Makaya is a first-generation college student graduating from Saint Mary's College with a B.S. degree in chemistry with a concentration in biochemistry. After graduation, her academic journey is set to continue at Indiana University in Bloomington, where she will pursue a PhD in organic chemistry. Her goal is to innovate within the pharmaceutical industry, focusing on developing new methods for synthesizing medications. During her undergraduate studies, Makaya engaged in

several noteworthy research projects. At Saint Mary's, she contributed to the development of a methodology for trifluoromethylation of alcohols and amines, aiming to aid the synthesis of pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals. Her research also extended beyond her home institution through an REU program at Florida State University, where she assisted in synthesizing non-symmetrical pyrenes for organic electronic devices. These experiences have equipped her with valuable skills that will support her success in graduate school and her future career in the pharmaceutical industry.