

Bowdoin College's 2021 Honorary Degree Recipients

For the Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters

DeRay Mckesson '07, LHD

DeRay Mckesson, of the Class of 2007, is a civil rights activist, a leading voice in the Black Lives Matter movement, and a cofounder of Campaign Zero, a nonprofit devoted to promoting legislative and policy solutions against police violence and mass incarceration. Mckesson is also the host of the award-winning weekly podcast "Pod Save the People," which combines an analysis of current news with deep conversations about social, political, and cultural issues with experts, influencers, and diverse local and national leaders. After Bowdoin, Mckesson began working as an educator, first via Teach for America in New York City and then as a district leader in Baltimore and Minneapolis. After the murder of Mike Brown and the subsequent protests in Ferguson, Missouri, and beyond in the summer of 2014, Mckesson began to devote himself full-time to activism. In 2018, Mckesson published the book *On the Other Side of Freedom*, which relates his experiences as an activist, organizer, and educator and offers a framework for all Americans to dismantle the legacy of racism. Mckesson frequently appears on national media outlets, including NPR, MSNBC, and CNN, and has been featured in publications including *The Advocate*, *Vogue*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Baltimore Sun*. In 2015, Mckesson and fellow organizer Johnetta Elzie were awarded the Howard Zinn Freedom to Write Award from PEN New England for their work during the Ferguson protests and their reporting on events through social media and uniting protesters' voices in their newsletter, "This Is the Movement." Also in 2015, Mckesson and Elzie were recognized on *Fortune* magazine's list of The World's 50 Greatest Leaders and one of the 30 Most Influential People on the Internet in 2016.