

REFLECTION ON COMMENCEMENT 2010

(Rivier's 75th Commencement, May 15, 2010)

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Rivier's 75th Commencement ceremony celebrated accomplishment, perseverance, interdependence, and strong leadership.



(PHOTOS BY JODIE ANDRUSKEVICH)

In May 2010, Rivier students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends and families gathered at the Tsongas Arena in Lowell, MA to celebrate the College's 75th annual commencement and wish the new graduates well.

Two former trustees received honorary degrees. Chair of the Board of Trustees Dr. Jamison Hoff read a citation recognizing Dr. John Kreick, who retired from the Board after 17 years, for his dedicated service. His leadership and contributions as part of the Board's finance committee helped the College grow the endowment significantly even in a tumultuous economy, ensuring a solid position for the future.

President Farrell read a citation recognizing Sr. Sheila Megley for her contributions to Catholic education and higher education. Her service includes work as president of Regis College; a variety of positions at Saint Xavier University in Chicago, the University of Nebraska, and Salve Regina University; and volunteer efforts as a board member for the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, the Commission on Higher Education for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and various other organizations.



Sr. Sheila Megley delivered the commencement address, telling the audience that gratitude is the memory of the heart. “Now each of you, with help from some fellow students, faculty members, friends, and family, has brought to completion something they hoped you would complete. Perhaps they saw something you didn’t see in yourself,” she said. “Reach back into your memory—recall who you were when you began your experience at Rivier and who you have become with care, and value, and accomplishment.”



Student speakers addressed the audience next. Representing students in the undergraduate day program, Bethanie Lynn Gentile discussed the ways Rivier redefined dreams for many graduates as they learned about themselves and gave them a greater sense of their place in the world. “Instead of independence, we’ve been introduced to interdependence—individuals relying on and supporting one another. We’ve learned to reach beyond ourselves and into our community to effect change in the world. We know that through cooperation and collaboration we can accomplish so much more than we could have ever hoped to do on our own.”



Evening program speaker Heather Marie Robinson described the challenges facing nontraditional students struggling to balance full-time jobs with school, often while caring for children or parents. “Our lives are crazy busy and fraught with chaos,” she said. Nevertheless, members of the class of 2010 persevered. “There is a difference between the words would, could, and did,” she said. “Perseverance is our credo.”



Michael Carty Gallagher, graduate program speaker, spoke about the ways Rivier has prepared graduates to become ethical leaders. “In a world rocked by scandals, recalls, and bailouts it’s comforting to know that programs focusing on ethics, leadership and continuous process improvement still exist... The MBA program at Rivier College teaches us that businesses can be profitable while still doing the right thing. I’m certain that those of us graduating today know how to make the tough decisions that make a business successful without sacrificing our morals,” he said.

Dr. John Kreick accepts his honorary degree.



Sr. Sheila Megley addresses the graduates.

Vice President for Academic Affairs Sr. Therese Larochelle, p.m. recognized the faculty, then Dr. Farrell presented each graduate with his or her diploma. The College awarded a posthumous bachelor’s degree in marketing to Jonathan Wolf, who passed away during his sophomore year at Rivier. Jon was well-known and liked on campus, where he was involved with multiple student groups, including the Multicultural Student Organization and the Business Student Association. The College also remembered Jon at the Undergraduate Hooding and Baccalaureate Mass earlier in the week, placing a cap and hood in the sacristy at St. Joseph the Worker Church during the ceremony. Jon’s parents, Pat and Tom Wolf of Tewksbury, MA, and sister, Lexie Garland, accepted the degree in his honor.

“You’ve been blessed with dreams come true and hopes fulfilled... Now it’s up to you to show the people who love and respect you that it was well worth their efforts and sacrifices.” — Agnes Grace ‘59, Alumni Council Chair



Dr. Farrell presents Jonathan Wolf’s posthumous bachelor’s degree to Jon’s parents, Tom and Pat Wolf and sister, Lexie Garland.

After the graduates received their degrees, Alumni Council Chair Agnes Grace ‘59 congratulated the Class of 2010 on the beginning of their new journey. “You’ve been blessed with dreams come true and hopes fulfilled,” she said. “Now it’s up to you to show the people who love and respect you that it was well worth their efforts and sacrifices.” She welcomed the new graduates into the Alumni Association.

The Class of 2010 gave Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Regina Shearer a standing ovation for her rendition of Josh Groban’s “You Raised Me Up” with lyrics altered to recognize the graduates’ accomplishments.

Sr. Sue Bourret, p.m. offered a closing prayer, asking God to bless the new graduates. “Hold in your loving hands the hearts and minds of this graduating class,” she prayed. She encouraged the graduates to use their knowledge as a compassionate presence in a fractured world and to bring hope to the vulnerable. The ceremony concluded with a performance of the College song by Professor of History Dr. Martin Menke, Professor of English Dr. Paul Lizotte, and Associate Professor of Art Cliff Davis. The Class of 2010 left the auditorium—and the College—ready to celebrate their achievements and pursue new goals. ■

