

## **ENERGIZED TO “SET THE WORLD ON FIRE”** Rivier conferred 670 degrees at 77<sup>th</sup> Commencement 2012 (From *Rivier Today*, Summer 2012)

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**R**ivier celebrated its seventy-seventh commencement on Saturday, May 12, 2012 at the Tsongas Center in Lowell, Mass. A total of 670 students participated, including Rivier’s first doctoral graduate, **Audrey Green Rogers**, who has earned her doctorate degree in Learning and Leadership; 257 students received master’s degrees or graduate certificates, 280 students received bachelor’s degrees and 132 students earned associate degrees.

In the week leading up to commencement, Rivier celebrated the nursing pinning ceremony and two hooding ceremonies—undergraduate and graduate. The Division of Nursing holds a pinning ceremony, a symbolic welcoming of newly-graduated nurses into the nursing profession, every year during commencement week. During the ceremony, the new nurses are presented with nursing pins by the nursing faculty.

**Stephanie Gagne**, associate nursing class of 2012, shared her experiences. “We have been transformed in heart and in mind by our incredible instructors, variety of patients and new friends,” said Gagne. She also shared a story of a 28 year old patient with cerebral palsy and mental retardation whom she will never forget. “He was unable to walk, eat and speak among other things,” she said. “He gave me experience in caring for a tracheotomy, gastrostomy tube and orthotics, but most importantly, he has taught me the importance of caring for the soul of a person. . . My heart has been forever changed by this man and I’ll be sure to carry his lessons with me throughout my nursing career.” She plans to take her boards this summer and return to Rivier in the fall to complete her bachelor’s degree and eventually hopes to become a traveling nurse.



Photos by Jodie Andruskevich

During the commencement ceremony which marked Rivier’s last as a college and the first for **Sister Paula Marie Buley, IHM**, as President, an honorary degree was presented to the 48<sup>th</sup> President of Georgetown University, **Dr. John J. DeGioia**. Dr. DeGioia offered a welcome from America’s oldest

Catholic University to Rivier as it's soon to be newest American Catholic University—officially on July 1, 2012.



Dr. John DeGioia is hooded by Rivier Trustees, the Hon. Joseph Laplante and Dr. Jamison G. Hoff, chair.

In his remarks, Dr. DeGioia concluded, “We need you. You are prepared with one of the greatest gifts—an undergraduate or graduate education from a wonderful academic community. You bring with you another incomparable gift—a tradition that will serve as your touchstone for the rest of your lives. And you have each other—forever connected by the experiences you have shared together here. Go set the world on fire.”

Dr. DeGioia, a graduate of Georgetown, earned both a bachelor’s degree in English and his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University. Upon his appointment as President on July 2, 2001, he set a path to ensure that Georgetown would expand and deepen its engagement with both the local and global communities. Beyond the Georgetown hilltop, Dr. DeGioia is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and serves as chair of the Board of Directors of the Forum for the Future of Higher Education, the Consortium on Financing Higher Education and the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metro Area. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

**Kala Rae Boudreau**, undergraduate speaker and summa cum laude graduate with a 3.97 GPA, spoke about the close supportive community of Rivier and the dedication this community has to its transformative mission. “So whether you are a nurse, an educator, or a biology, psychology, criminal justice or business professional, wherever your career path may lead you, always remember what Rivier has taught us—love and welcome everyone into your community, and in turn their hearts and minds will be forever changed because of you.”

**Lisa A. de Haan**, graduate speaker with a 4.0 GPA, shared the impact earning her degree had on both her and others she will work with in the future. “Earning this degree has forever changed my life by allowing me to enable others to change theirs,” said de Haan, who earned a master’s degree in counseling.

Sister Paula invited the graduates to stand up to honor those who had stood by them and supported them, including their families and the faculty and staff of the Rivier community. “I invite you to stand to honor those who have stood by you, with you and for you. Now is your chance to show your appreciation for this celebration.”

In what has become an annual tradition, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs **Regina Shearer** performed “Rivier Graduate” sung to the tune of “Rolling in the Deep” by Adele and concluded with a beautiful rendition of “Amazing Grace.” The words of “Rivier Graduate” were entirely Rivier-centered and were met with tremendous applause. “You’re going to have it all with your Rivier degree. I’ll transform hearts and minds and change the world. Cuz I’ve made it, I’ve made it and I’ll succeed!” ■

### **COMMENCEMENT VIDEO & PHOTOS:**

- To view Dr. DeGioia’s commencement speech and other videos, visit the Rivier video gallery at <http://www.rivier.edu/video/>.
- This year’s photo gallery includes images of the pinning and hooding ceremonies as well as the commencement photos. Visit <http://www.rivier.edu/photogallery/> to view all of the photos.
- Like and follow Rivier University on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.