

NEW BEGINNINGS

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Rivier awards 705 degrees at first Commencement as a University



Photos by Jodie Andruskevich

Rivier University celebrated its 78th Commencement on Saturday, May 11 at the Tsongas Center in Lowell, Mass.—its first Commencement since officially becoming a University on July 1 of last year. The University awarded 705 degrees to doctoral, masters, bachelors, and associate degree graduates.

True to its core mission of ‘transforming hearts and minds to serve the world,’ Rivier highlighted both its global connections and its home in Nashua, N.H.

During the ceremony, honorary degrees were presented to three individuals—distinguished international scholar

Dr. Philip Altbach, director of the Center for International Higher Education in the Lynch School of Education at

Boston College; the Honorable Donnalee Lozeau, Mayor of the city of Nashua—home of Rivier University; and Dr. Jamison Hoff, recently retired chair of the Rivier Board of Trustees.

Dr. Altbach delivered the Commencement address, celebrating the importance of global engagement as the

University recognized the far-reaching influence of his scholarship and service.

“The great universities of the 21st century will be those that have a global vision,” Altbach said. “The challenge for us as graduates and citizens is to understand the globalized world and to engage with it...we need, in a democracy, to have informed citizens.”

Since the transition to Rivier University, the institution’s core mission has been sharpened by initiatives in global engagement and outreach to international students. In addition, academic programs in global studies and transnational security studies enhance the ability of the University’s students and faculty to connect to the world in the classroom and beyond. “Our transition to Rivier University provides the opportunity to reintroduce ourselves to the world with a renewed focus on academic distinction, global engagement, and student leadership,” says Sister Paula. “Nashua is our home, and the world is our classroom.”

In recognition of the importance of local community and its home in Nashua, Rivier presented an honorary degree to Mayor Donnalee Lozeau.

The University also recognized the legacy of leadership and service of Dr. Jamison Hoff, who recently concluded a 10 year term as chair of Rivier's Board of Trustees.

Christopher M. Rochon, of Hudson, N.H., who received a bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in chemistry, spoke on behalf of Rivier's undergraduate programs, tying Rivier's focus on global engagement into his remarks.

"Together, we are here today to rejoice in something that is both an end and a beginning," Rochon said. "Together, we are here to celebrate Rivier's first Commencement ceremony as a University. And together, we recognize the hard work of seven hundred and five students that got them to this point, here, in front of all of you, ready to graduate. This is just the beginning for Rivier University leaving its footprint on the global community, and although this may be the end of our time at Riv, it is just the start of our chance to serve its greater purpose."

Student speaker for Rivier's graduate programs, Deborah L. Jarvis, M.Ed., of Salem, N.H., touched on the importance of continually setting goals for oneself.

"Like many of my fellow graduates, this degree means the completion of several years of hard work and sacrifice," Jarvis said. "I would like to leave you with one final thought, and this is something that has stood me in good stead over the years," she concluded at the end of her remarks. "Always follow your dreams. Always look inside yourself and find the strength to say 'I can'. Today, I am completing one dream, and looking forward to finding the next."

Sister Paula welcomed the graduates to "a community of scholars, to a community of lifelong learners, and most importantly to a community of more than 15,000 Rivier alumni in this New England region and beyond."

Members of the classes of 1953 and 1963 received a special invitation to Commencement from Sister Paula.

Clair Pied-Hailu of Gaithersburg, Md. and Sister Helen Provost of Pawtucket, R.I.—members of the Class of 1963—attended Commencement and walked in the Presidential Procession. Members of the Class of 1963 will be inducted in to the Golden Society as they celebrate the milestone 50th anniversary of their Rivier graduation at Alumni Reunion Weekend this fall.

Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Regina Shearer closed the Commencement ceremony in popular tradition with a performance of an original song, "You're a Rivier Graduate," sung to the tune of "Firework" by Katy Perry. Each year, Shearer chooses a popular song and writes Rivier-themed lyrics for the graduating class. "You're a Rivier graduate, the best degree you'll ever get," Shearer sang. "So go out now and fight, fight, fight, to make the world around you right, right, right... Associate, bachelor, masters degrees, even C.A.G.S., were taught by faculty with excellence, so in this world you'll have a fighting chance. So go out, transform hearts and minds, to make a difference in these changing times. You're a Rivier graduate!" ■

