

## COMMENCEMENT 2019 CELEBRATES GRADUATES AND HIGHLIGHTS DIVERSITY AND OPPORTUNITY

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The University celebrated its 84th Commencement on May 11, 2019 awarding 594 degrees to doctoral, post-master's, master's, bachelor's, and associate degree graduates. The ceremony highlighted the importance of diversity and opportunity as fuel for individual achievement and community impact.

In recognition of his dedication to the University, his devotion to the pursuit of human and spiritual connection through community building, and his service to others, an honorary doctorate was conferred upon **Brother Paul Demers, S.C.**, posthumously. Brother Paul served as Associate Professor of Religious Studies and the University Chaplain for 30 years.



The University also honored **Rebekah Splaine Salwasser** with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Ms. Salwasser is the Executive Director of the Red Sox Foundation, and a former NCAA Division I and professional soccer player with the Boston Breakers. A fierce advocate for education and for sport as the means through which youth can realize their greater potential, Ms. Salwasser's experience highlights the integration of academic and athletic success, which shapes her distinguished career and life of service.

Ms. Salwasser's Commencement speech addressed the value of diversity in all aspects of life and the positive aspects of sport on academic and professional achievement. "I loved to play because sport is a neutralizer," said Salwasser. "When you're in the middle of a game, there's no popular or rich kids, there's no cliques or teacher's pets ... in the moment of play, none of that matters."

It's about the output of each participant, regardless of size, color and wealth. The values and competencies I learned on the field directly correlate with my success in my career.”

On behalf of the undergraduate class, student speaker **Rebeca Cruz** spoke on the opportunity of education and the importance of community. **Chunhua Chi**, representing graduate students, commented on the transformative power of diversity and inclusivity in the educational experience.



**Regina Shearer's** song for the Class of 2019, a Commencement tradition, concluded the celebration. Graduates and guests cheered at her adaptation of the song *High Horse* by Kacey Musgrave. ■

To view photos and video, visit [rivier.edu/commencement2019](http://rivier.edu/commencement2019).

