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Office of University
Communications

December 15, 2018

Traditional Undergraduate, Degree Completion, and Graduate Programs Students Honored



BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner–Webb University hosted Fall Commencement on Saturday, Dec. 15, in the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center. More than 200 graduates were honored during the ceremony.

The ceremony featured graduates of Gardner-Webb’s traditional undergraduate program, as well as from GOAL — The Degree Completion Program (DCP), and graduate programs. Zachary Tyler Emory (Forest City, N.C.), who earned a Master of Divinity/Master of Arts in pastoral ministries, offered the invocation. Sydney Grace Davis (Granite Falls, N.C.), who earned a Bachelor of Science in mathematics, and Julia Katelyn Deserio (Pacolet, S.C.), who received a Bachelor of Music, provided the scripture readings.

Gardner-Webb’s president, Dr. Frank Bonner, presided over his final graduation ceremony before retiring in 2019 and gave the commencement message. He has served the University for more than three decades in total and as president for 13 years.

In his address, Bonner reflected on his time at Gardner-Webb, quoted portions of his 2006 inaugural speech and described how he was experiencing similar feelings as the graduates on their monumental day. “You and I are concluding an important phase in our lives, while anticipating the very important next phase,” Bonner said. “I have been where you are, so I know what it is like to reflect on the college experience—both undergraduate and graduate—and furthermore in a real sense I am accountable for the quality of your experience.”

He encouraged the graduates to follow what New York Times columnist and Yale professor, David Brooks, calls “The Road to Character.”



“Brooks quotes Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: ‘the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either—but right through every human heart,’” Bonner shared. “At Gardner-Webb you have been exposed regularly

to a sacred purpose and given innumerable opportunities to express it in action and I hope it has taken hold.”

Bonner continued, “That sacred purpose is found on this seal in front of you, and so that it will stay in front of you, the seal is also found on your well-earned diploma. For God and Humanity. *Pro Deo et Humanitate*. Serving God by serving humanity. A sacred purpose indeed.”

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.