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Office of University
Communications

May 25, 2017

Three Separate Ceremonies Honor 600 GWU Graduates

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner-Webb University hosted Spring Commencement on Friday, May 12 and Saturday, May 13 in the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center. Six hundred graduates were honored during three separate ceremonies. The exercises also marked the 75th anniversary of the naming of Gardner-Webb in 1942.

Friday Evening Graduate Programs Ceremony (May 12; 7 p.m.)

The Friday evening ceremony featured the conferring of nearly 250 degrees from the University's graduate programs. Tammi Hicks (Zebulon, N.C.), who earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, offered the invocation. Mother-and-daughter Connie Marie Davis Banks and Erin Banks Davis of Boiling Springs, S.C., who each earned Doctor of Education degrees, provided the reading of scriptures. Dr. Danny West, GWU School of Divinity Professor of Preaching and Pastoral Studies, offered the commencement message, titled "The Gift of a Good Name." He encouraged graduates to remember the benefits of a good name.

"We have no choice in the name we are given at birth," West shared, "but the Scriptures remind us that we are given boundless choices in the name we leave behind. We can do so by the decisions we make, the character we possess, and by the Christian identity we choose to embrace."

Saturday Morning Traditional Undergraduate Program Ceremony (May 13; 10 a.m.)

The Saturday morning ceremony featured more than 225 graduates of Gardner-Webb's traditional undergraduate program. Ariel

Connor Bos

Connor Bos

Starr Tate (Gastonia, N.C.), who earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree, offered the invocation. Jesse Anne Rogers (Williamston, N.C.), who celebrated earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, provided the Old Testament reading. Connor James Bos (Holland, Mich.) who received a Bachelor of Science in Economics/Finance, provided the New Testament Reading.

Several morning graduates were honored for outstanding leadership, citizenship, and academic excellence. The Most Outstanding Male Graduate medal was presented to Bos. Marissa Mae Richardson, an American Sign Language major from Anderson, S.C., was awarded the Most Outstanding Female Graduate medal. Bos, Matthew Richard Autrey (Wake Forest, N.C.), Chase Benton Heafner (Lincolnton, N.C.), and Madison Maria McMahon (Troutman, N.C.) each received the Senior Scholastic Award. These four students completed their academic careers with a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Saturday Afternoon Degree Completion Program Ceremony (May 13; 3 p.m.)

The Saturday afternoon ceremony featured nearly 125 graduates of Gardner-Webb's Degree Completion Program. Elisa Hope

GWU graduate and family

Bryant (Jonesville, N.C.), who earned a Bachelor of Science in Human Services and Criminal Justice, offered the invocation and reading of scripture. The Degree Completion Program Senior Scholastic Award was presented to Angela Bristow Svette of Mt. Gilead, N.C., and Kristi Elizabeth Key of Mooresville, N.C. Both Svette and Key completed their respective programs with a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Dr. Paula Qualls, GWU Professor of Religion, provided a commencement address for Saturday morning and afternoon ceremonies titled "A Gestalt Shift: Taking the Road Less Traveled." She discussed the importance of acknowledging the shift in one's life perspective as individuals face crossroads of decisions.

"This is the message of the gospel," she offered. "There is one way to experience life, and then the unexpected breaks through and all of reality takes on new meaning. This is a time to celebrate your achievements. This is a time to embark on the dreams you have for your future. This is it. And we rejoice with you."

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.

