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August 6, 2012

Ceremonies Also Broadcast Online Via Live Stream at gardner-webb.edu/graduation-2012

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Hundreds of supporters gathered at the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center today to celebrate the accomplishments of over 400 students during two commencement ceremonies. One central theme resonated among graduates and attendees alike: “family.”

For these graduates, the common tie that binds them together is Gardner-Webb University. “Gardner-Webb is not an institution, a campus, or a degree,” said Emmabeth Wingate (Gastonia, N.C.) in her commencement address. “Gardner-Webb is a family.”

The Gardner-Webb family suffered a blow in March with the passing of longtime professor, dean, and associate provost Dr. Gayle Bolt Price. In each of the commencement ceremonies, University President Dr. Frank Bonner shared a bittersweet tribute and read a resolution from the Board of Trustees in memory and recognition of Dr. Price and her many contributions to the University. “Be it resolved,” Bonner read, “that from this day forth, the graduate school at Gardner-Webb University will be known as the Gayle Bolt Price School of Graduate Studies.”

Provost and Executive Vice President Dr. Ben Leslie worked closely with Price, and he believes she accomplished more in her 21-year career than most professionals do in a lifetime. “Her contributions represent an amazing legacy,” Leslie said. “Academic quality and institutional integrity, life-long learning, and a workplace characterized by joy and laughter as well as hard work and productivity are all elements of that legacy. Her accomplishments are going to continue to transform this place in many positive ways for years to come.”

Morning Traditional and GOAL Undergraduate Ceremony

The morning ceremony for 167 undergraduates featured spouses Todd and Emily Houser (Dallas, N.C.), two GOAL graduates who earned Bachelor of Science degrees while working full-time and raising their young son. During her commencement address, Emily reminded her class of the importance of never giving up, no matter how difficult the circumstances.

“Trust in God and know if He brought you to it, He will bring you through it,” Houser shared. “Live your lives now and in the future leading by example and always know that you are a person of influence to someone even if you cannot see it.”

Two students were honored for academic excellence during the ceremony. Timothy Dustin “Dusty” Quattlebaum (Shelby, N.C.) received the Senior Scholastic Achievement Award. Kay Thompson Welland (Rutherford College, N.C.) was awarded the GOAL Senior Scholastic Achievement Award. The award recognizes the graduating senior with the highest cumulative scholastic average.

[Click here to view photos of the morning commencement ceremony](#)

Afternoon Graduate Ceremony

The afternoon graduate programs ceremony, in which the university awarded 235 master’s degrees and 19 doctorate degrees, featured commencement addresses from three students: Donna DeVoe Baker of Bluffton, S.C., who received a Master of Divinity and a Master of Business Administration; Jason Randall Whisnant of Valdese, N.C., who earned a Master of Arts/Education Specialist Mental Health Counseling; and Emmabeth Hambright Wingate of Gastonia, N.C., who was awarded a Master of Arts in Elementary Education. The Darlene J. Gravett Citizen Scholar Award was given to Jennifer Cox Spencer of Gaffney, S.C., who received her Doctor of Education degree.

Students earned a combined 254 degrees, and the GWU School of Education awarded its 3,000th graduate degree.

“My professors brought a very real, Christian perspective into the classroom while respecting the multi-cultural and multi-faceted world we live in,” Whisnant stated in his speech. “Great Professors make a great university.”

Baker, who simultaneously worked on the Master of Business Administration and the Master of Divinity curriculum, echoed that sentiment during her address. “I am as determined as Moses and as zealous as Paul to complete the task before me,” Baker shared. “I am equipped by the greatest school in the world to lead persons to Christ while educating and protecting the church with an administrative eye and a spirit-filled ear.”

Nineteen students received the Master of Science in Nursing degree, including Dolly Wilson. Wilson has two adult sons who serve in the U. S. Air Force; one is stationed in Alaska, the other in Arizona. Both recently returned from tours in Afghanistan and Iraq and both attended their mom’s graduation to surprise her. She raised four children as a single mom and adopted her fifth child, Makayla.

“My mom sacrificed for us and we never went without,” said oldest son Joshua Wilson, 36. “She is an amazing woman, an amazing mother, and today, she accomplishes one more thing, her Master of Science in Nursing. There’s none greater.”

[Click here to view photos of the evening commencement ceremony](#)