

**GWU COMMENCEMENT**

# Gardner-Webb Recognizes 2022 Summer and Fall Graduates

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## Graduates Honored at Commencement Ceremony and Recognition Services on Dec. 10

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Nearly 300 graduates participated in the 2022 Fall Commencement Ceremony on Dec. 10 at Gardner-Webb's Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center. After the 9 a.m. program, each of the four Colleges and the School of Divinity held separate recognition services, where graduates walked across the stage and received individual recognition and congratulations.

The day of celebration commemorated the achievements of students in traditional undergraduate, degree completion, and graduate programs of study for the 2022 Summer and Fall Semesters.



Gardner-Webb President Dr. William Downs welcomed friends and family and offered his challenge to the graduates. "I charge each of you to apply the knowledge and skills that you have developed here to help improve the lives of others, to lift up the communities in which you live, and to advance the causes of peace and understanding in all that you do," he urged. "Be unapologetic in sharing the values that

you hold dear. Be bold in your humility. Be brave in your defense of what is good, what is right, and what is noble in this world. Do these things and you will successfully carry out the mission you have been blessed to receive.”

Downs introduced the commencement speaker, Dr. A. Hope Williams, who is in her 30th year as president of North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU), the statewide office of 36 private, nonprofit colleges and universities in North Carolina. She works closely with the State of North Carolina and the federal government, and with North Carolina public K-12 and higher education sectors to address education and related public policy and funding issues.

Remarking on Gardner-Webb’s deep roots in North Carolina dating back 117 years, Williams began, “This is the only college or university in the state to be named after a North Carolina Governor, the Honorable O. Max Gardner, and First Lady, Fay Webb Gardner.”

She continued, “Throughout this long history, the work of the University has been intertwined with Cleveland County and the State of North Carolina. Now, the University includes students, many graduating today, from 91 of North Carolina’s 100 counties, 44 states and 45 countries. Given this broad national and international representation, what an extraordinary opportunity you have had as students to get to know more about people and countries and cultures around the world—here in North Carolina.”

Williams ended by sharing her congratulations and noting, “Your hard work and experiences at Gardner-Webb have prepared you well. You have new opportunities ahead and the degree you are about to receive will provide a foundation for critical thinking and thoughtful analysis in decision making in the years ahead.”

After Williams’ speech, Dr. Elizabeth Pack, dean of Adult Distance Education and Dr. Karen Aubrey, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs, presented the student awards. Pack recognized the recipients of the Degree Completion Program (DCP) Scholastic Award, which is awarded to students with the highest cumulative grade point average. The 2022 winners are Madeline Christine Rogers, of Belmont, N.C., and Jon Michael Volovski, of Mooresville, N.C.

Aubrey announced the recipients of the Senior Scholastic Award, given to the members of the 2022 graduating class who earned the highest grade point average during their terms of university study. She also recognized two winners: Jenissa Lynn Schleifenheimer, of Birdsboro, Pa., and Delaney Jaye Willette, of Conyers, Ga.

The 9 a.m. ceremony may be viewed below or on The University’s [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/gardnerwebb/live_videos/).  
([https://www.facebook.com/gardnerwebb/live\\_videos/](https://www.facebook.com/gardnerwebb/live_videos/)).

*Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina’s recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to nine colleges and schools, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre*

*campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at [Gardner-Webb.edu](https://gardner-webb.edu/) (<https://gardner-webb.edu/>).*