

GWU COMMENCEMENT

Gardner-Webb Commencement Programs on May 4-5 will Recognize Over 500 Graduates

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Former N.C. Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker is Speaker for All University Program on Thursday, May 4 College and School Recognition Events Held on Friday, May 5

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University academic officials are pleased to announce over 500 students will receive degrees during spring commencement exercises held on May 4 and 5. Students will earn associate, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from a variety of university programs.

The All University Commencement on May 4 will be held at 7 p.m. in Spangler Stadium. The program will include speeches from Gardner-Webb University President Dr. William M. Downs and President of the Student Government Association, Blake Elizalde. Greetings will be offered by Board of Trustees Chair Gary Smith.



▲ Sharon Decker

The commencement speaker is former N.C. Secretary of Commerce, Sharon Decker, who now serves as the president of Carolina Operations at Tryon Equestrian Partners in Mill Spring, N.C. She started her career at Duke Energy Corp. in 1979, and during her 17 years there, Decker made history by becoming the company's youngest and first female vice president. Decker came to Tryon in 2015 as chief operating officer and vice president and was named president in 2020. Prior to Tryon, Decker was appointed Secretary of Commerce by Gov. Pat McCrory and served in that capacity for two years.

Decker and her husband, Bob, have a long history with Gardner-Webb. He is a 1975 alumnus, and she has studied in the School of Divinity. Her father-in-law, the late Robert Decker, was recognized as a GWU professor emeritus of music.

During the ceremony, awards will be presented to recognize students' achievements: the Gardner-Webb Online Scholastic Award, Senior Scholastic Achievement Award, and the Most Outstanding Graduate Awards. Doctoral graduates will receive their hoods. After the program, the celebration will continue with a fireworks display.

On May 5, College and School Recognition events will be held at various locations around campus. Closed Captioning will be provided for every ceremony.

The schedule follows:

- College of Business – 9 a.m., Spangler Stadium.*
- College of Health Sciences – 9 a.m., Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center.
- School of Divinity – 10 a.m., Dover Chapel
- College of Arts & Sciences – 10:30 a.m., Spangler Stadium.*
- College of Education – 10:30 a.m., Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center.

*rain plan location – Tucker Student Center.

The University encourages attendees to use the hashtag “#GWUGrad23” for social media posts including photos, tweets, and Facebook status updates. The commencement ceremonies will be live streamed on The University Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/gardnerwebb/>) and YouTube channel. (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGP4wUtKfrvrbjicSFyGnNw>).

In the event of inclement weather for Thursday night’s event, the ceremony will move to the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center. Watch official university social channels for any updates.

Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 10 working days prior to the event. Please call 704-406-4270 or email disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu with your request.

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina’s recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, 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.