About 1,500 graduates, Stockton’s largest class in history, participated in three ceremonies this spring, including the Doctoral and Master’s Commencement held on May 12, and morning and afternoon Baccalaureate Commencements on May 15.

The graduate commencement procession was led by Grand Marshal Jennifer Barr, professor of Business Studies, Marketing, and the baccalaureate procession was led by Grand Marshal G.T. Lenard, associate professor of Development Writing.

“Although our footprint has changed over the past 45 years, our guarantee to students has been steadfast. Stockton has always been a place where students can plant themselves and grow,” President Harvey Kesselman told the graduates. “Those familiar with Stockton’s history know this to be our first motto, an invitation to intellectual and personal growth, pointing to our rich, natural environment.

“We have asked a lot of you during your years at Stockton and you have risen to each level of challenge,” he continued. “I will make one more request of you - change your world! Do this by the way you build communities, raise families, support social justice and educate others, and by being kind and civil to one another.”

Elaine Bukowski, professor of Physical Therapy and a retired director of Stockton’s Physical Therapy program, was the keynote speaker at the Master’s and Doctoral commencement. Bukowski had taught at Stockton for the past 29 years, and was a founding faculty member and director of the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program, the University’s first doctoral program.

Bukowski was awarded Stockton’s Distinguished Service Award and professor emerita status by Trustee Raymond Ciccone during the ceremony. The award was “in recognition of Dr. Bukowski’s outstanding leadership as a founding member of Stockton’s Physical Therapy program and her enduring commitment to the health care industry,” Ciccone said.

Graduates heard remarks from several speakers including Brian Tyrrell, president of the Faculty Senate and associate professor of Hospitality & Tourism Management Studies; Interim Provost and Executive Vice President Susan Davenport; and Patti McGill Peterson, presidential advisor for Global Initiatives at the American Council on Education (ACE), who gave the keynote address at the Baccalaureate Commencements.
Stockton’s Largest Class Awarded Degrees in Spring Commencement

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Davenport told the history of hooding and presented the candidates to the president for conferral of their degrees. She also introduced Stockton’s First Lady Lynne Kesselman to the gathering.

Beverly Vaughn, professor of Music, played piano during the National Anthem, and Joseph Sramaty of the Office of Student Affairs, led the singing of the alma mater, “Ospreys on Parade.”

Stockton faculty members also awarded emeritus status this spring included: Shelby Broughton, associate professor of Chemistry; Michael Hozik, professor of Geology; Evonne Kruger, associate professor of Business Studies, Management; Carol Rittner, Distinguished Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Dr. Marsha Raticoff Grossman Professor of Holocaust Studies; and Francis C. Thomas, professor of Business Studies, Accounting.

The University awarded two posthumous degrees: one to the family of George Lees, who died in April before he could receive his Master of Science in Computational Science degree, and another to the family of Nikita Cross, who was killed tragically in April before she could receive her Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work.

The graduating class presented a student lounge in the I-Wing gallery as its parting gift. Several faculty and staff members received their degrees this spring.

Marine Field Station Commissions New Research Vessel Petrel

Stockton University commissioned its new research vessel, the R/V Petrel, on the Bass River in New Gretna, N.J. on May 11, with friends of the school and alumni of the Marine Science program.

The 36-foot vessel, which will operate out of Bass River and be run by the Marine Field Station staff from Port Republic, N.J., will serve the University’s expanding needs in the coastal sciences, including hydrographic surveying, remotely operated vehicle (ROV) operations, oceanographic instrumentation deployment, current profiling and scientific diving.

The Petrel joins Stockton’s fleet of five other research boats: the Osprey, Gannet, Scoter, Skimmer and Willet, all named after local seabirds.

“The acquisition of a vessel of this design and capability represents a significant advancement in Stockton’s Marine Science teaching and research programs,” said Steve Evert, manager of the Marine Field Station. “Nearshore oceanography and marine technology represent increasingly important sectors of the marine science industry, with many of today’s jobs tied to marine survey, bio-physical oceanography and other interdisciplinary studies.”

The R/V Petrel and its associated systems totaled $543,000 and was one of several major scientific instruments funded by the $6.4 million Education Leasing Funds Grant awarded to Stockton in 2012 from the New Jersey Educational Facilities Authority. The vessel will be supported by revenue through external research funding and will provide a floating laboratory for Stockton students. The R/V Petrel is expected to serve state and university research programs for over 20 years.
Donnetrice Allison Publishes Piece Inspired by Death of Prince

Donnetrice Allison, associate professor of Communication Studies and Africana Studies, recently published a reflection piece about the late singer-songwriter Prince. In her article, “For Colored Girls Who Love Prince,” Allison discusses her childhood perspective of the artist, and the contrast in the aesthetic of women with whom Prince surrounded himself and her own look as a “brown girl.” It was published on For Harriet, a blog celebrating black womanhood.

Throughout her career, much of Allison’s research has been on hip hop culture and media portrayals of African Americans. Coupling Allison’s educational background, Prince’s extravagance and amorphousness in race, gender and sexuality, his death left the academic reflective on her adolescent perceptions of the star.

“I definitely turned inward in my adulthood and I would credit my education, particularly my time at Howard University. That is where I developed a much more critical perspective on media and its impact. I wrote a couple of different pieces about Prince after his death,” she said.

Allison, who saw Prince perform live in 2000, submitted similar pieces to the Press of Atlantic City and Huffington Post - Black Voices. The For Harriet piece sparked a debate, with more than 200 shares and 150 comments. “Many of the comments made claims about several black women (brown skin women) he was ‘rumored’ to have dated, but the reality is he was rarely ever seen with any of them,” Allison said.

Despite Prince’s image, the scholar noted the overall impact of his greatness, his love for black women, and his commitment to the black community. “My article is meant to view the artist’s public persona from a more critical lens, something that I was ill-equipped to do as a teen.

“If I were 14 in today’s climate, I can’t imagine [I would feel] the same, because there is no mystery today,” she continued. “I paid very close attention to the lyrics in his music. That was my only window in. I couldn’t access his videos any time I wanted. There was no YouTube. I had to wait, and memorize and imagine. I created videos in my mind of the songs that he didn’t make videos for. It was all about mystery and imagination. There is none of that today.”

Mavreen Hering, Cristina Maurizi Named NJAC Coaches of the Year

Head Softball Coach Mavreen Hering and Head Women’s Lacrosse Coach Cristina Maurizi were both named the New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) Coach of the Year in their respective sports. Hering and Maurizi, both first time head coaches at the collegiate level, joined Stockton Athletics in September 2015.

Under Hering, the Stockton softball team (32-13) reached the 30-win mark for just the second time in school history. Throughout the year, they cracked the NCAA regional rankings for the first time ever, reaching as high as fourth in the East Region. The team also finished second in the NJACs, its highest finish ever.

Maurizi’s women’s lacrosse team (13-6) played in the postseason for the first time and recorded the highest win total in the program’s three seasons of intercollegiate play. The Ospreys reached the NJAC playoffs and Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) tournament for the first time, ending their season in the ECAC championship final.

“I would like to thank my players for putting in all the time and effort to accomplish the amazing record we had this year,” said Maurizi. “We set our goals high and achieved them by making NJACs and ECACs. Now that we have a taste of how good that feels, we’ll only want more year after year.”
Gwathney Presents Awards to Jackson, Grites and Gregory

Jim Gwathney, coordinator of Intramurals and Recreation, and Kenny Jones, student president of Stockton’s Intramural Recreational Council, recently presented awards to three distinctive Stockton staff members.

Each year, Gwathney presents the awards to Stockton employees who “go above and beyond in the Stockton way.”

Gwathney presented the Shannon Newberry Award to Tom Grites, (pictured top), assistant provost for academic support services, for his commitment to students and student athletes.

“Tom is an active supporter of students and student athletes. He is very knowledgeable academically about what students need or don’t need to fulfill requirements, and he supports student activities,” Gwathney said.

The Shannon Newberry award is named for a former intramural student officer and Physical Therapy major who passed away in a car accident her senior year at Stockton, Gwathney explained.

Melvin Gregory (pictured center), assistant director of Admissions, received the G. Larry James Award.

“Mel has been a part of the Stockton community for a long time. This award is long overdue,” Gwathney said. “He is a hard worker and is always willing to point you in the right direction. Mel is a person who has enjoyed his profession and always steps up to the plate to help others.”

The award is named for the late G. Larry James, a longtime administrator at Stockton and an Olympic gold and silver medalist.

Gwathney presented Brian Jackson (pictured bottom), chief of staff, with the Dr. Vera King Farris award, named for the former president of Stockton, who was also Jackson’s mentor.

“Brian has worked under three different presidents, has always been a hard worker, and has always been active in the community,” Gwathney said. “I’m sure Dr. Farris would have loved to know that Brian is a recipient of the award named in her honor.”

Send Us Your News!

We want to know about things going on in the Stockton community. Do you have an unusual hobby? Did one of your co-workers win an award or perform outstanding public service?

Births, weddings, graduations and the like are all good things to submit to The Stockton Times. Contact the editor at 609-626-5521 (ext. 5521) or via email at StocktonTimes@stockton.edu.

News about distinguished students can now be found at Distinctive Stockton Students. To contribute a news item for the blog, contact the editor by emailing distinctive@stockton.edu.