

Stockton Valedictorians, Student Speaker Have Stories to Tell at 3 Graduations

Valedictorians, Salutatorians Set Impressive Records in Class of 2013

***For Immediate Release; with photos and link to list of
graduates at end***

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Galloway, NJ – Each newly minted graduate of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey has a story to tell about the journey culminating at Friday and Saturday's 2013 Spring Commencement ceremonies. For Valedictorians Lynn Abrahamsen and Linwood Donelson and Johana Rosas Delgado, the student speaker at the master's and doctoral commencement, the stories are particularly distinctive.

Rosas Delgado, who will speak at the 4 p.m. ceremony on Friday, May 10, was born and raised in Lima, Peru, and moved to the United States at the age of 12 after losing her mother, Silvana Delgado, to breast cancer. Her older sister, Jessica Licalzi, of Brick in Ocean County, raised her, supporting her and encouraging her to follow her professional dreams. Her transition was very difficult at first, because Spanish was Johana's only spoken language, but she soon learned English so well that she was placed in English, History and Physics Honors courses in high school.

Stockton was Johana's first choice of colleges because of Stockton's accelerated and competitive dual-degree program in Criminal Justice.

"I would like to work for a federal agency," Rosas Delgado said. She hopes someday to work for the FBI or Drug Enforcement Agency but to get experience, she is "looking into police departments, prosecutor's offices or crime scene units."

Rosas Delgado was named Student Senator of the Year in 2010-11. She led the Multicultural Connection Club to win Club of the Year and has been on Dean's List from 2009-2013.

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“Throughout the years, I have built strong friendships not only with other students, but with the faculty and staff as well,” she said. “I have taken advantage of every opportunity available to get involved, making my stay here unforgettable. I’m thankful for all of the support and guidance I have received, for everyone at this institution has made an impact in my life.”

The valedictorian at Saturday morning’s Baccalaureate commencement, Lynn Abrahamsen, graduated at the top of her class at Jackson Liberty High School in Jackson, Ocean County. Abrahamsen graduates with a Bachelor of Science degree in Speech-Language Pathology and a minor in Spanish and will be attending Kean University for a Master’s in Speech-Language Pathology.

“Attending Stockton has enabled me to become a more deliberate writer, thinker and citizen of the world,” Abrahamsen said. “I am extremely grateful for the opportunities provided by the Stockton community and I hope to utilize my education to help others as a speech-language pathologist.”

The daughter of Bill and Ruth Abrahamsen, she is the recipient of several Stockton Foundation Scholarships, was a member of the Alpha Eta Honor Society and was selected to Who’s Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities. Active in the Stockton Honors Program, the Speech and Hearing Club and Stockton Circle K, she plans to pursue her Speech-Language field at the graduate level.

She thanked her professors in Speech-Pathology and Spanish and singled out her faculty preceptor Dr. Amy Hadley as being particularly helpful throughout her years as a Stockton undergrad.

Linwood Donelson, the valedictorian at the Saturday afternoon Baccalaureate ceremony, is a sixth-generation resident of Lower Alloways Creek Township in Salem County. He came to Stockton as a Political Science major following his 2009 graduation from Salem County Vocational and Technical High School. He will be attending Rutgers School of Law in Camden in September as he pursues what has been his goal since fourth grade. He currently serves on the school board at that very same elementary school he attended. Active in community service, Donelson received the *Justicia Reperio Justicia* Academic Scholarship Award at Rutgers-Camden and served as an intern to U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo, R-2nd, in Washington, D.C.

“Stockton has provided a wonderful opportunity to learn, where the relationships and the interactions established with faculty and staff created a very rare and special environment.” Donelson said.

Salutatorians for Saturday’s Commencement are Kathryn Baker in the morning ceremony and John Alexander in the afternoon.

Baker, of Stokesdale, N.C., majored in French with minors in International Studies and Political Science. She will be teaching English in China with the Ameson Foundation’s Ameson Year in China program later this year.

“Not many undergraduate students get to research one-on-one with professors on topics that interest them, or have the opportunity to broaden their horizons by studying abroad or getting real work experience,” Baker said. “However, at Stockton, I was able to study abroad in France

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for a year, intern in Washington D.C. for a semester and publish an anthology of works by the homeless. Stockton provided me the resources to do everything that I had ever wanted to do during my undergrad, while still challenging me academically. I am so thankful for the experiences and opportunities I have been granted."

Alexander, of Franklinville, NJ, graduates with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry with minors in Biology and Holocaust and Genocide Studies. He will be attending UMDNJ/Rutgers for his Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies. John has received multiple academic honors including the Bernard I. Friedenbergscholarship, the Adele and Joseph Dancyger Memorial Scholarship, and the Provost's Scholarship. In his spare time, John volunteers for a local hospice organization and Elmer Hospital.

"I attribute the major strides I've made personally and professionally to my years at Stockton College," Alexander said. "My experiences, both academic and social, will surely be beneficial to me in my future endeavors."

Stockton President Herman Saatkamp will preside over all three commencements, where some 1313 graduates of the Class of 2013 will receive Baccalaureate degrees and 140 will receive Master's and Doctoral degrees at the Stockton Sports Center on the college's Galloway campus.

The keynote speakers at the college's three graduation ceremonies are:

- John G. Emge, executive director of the Atlantic and Cape May Counties United Way of Greater Philadelphia and South Jersey, who will speak at the Doctoral and Master's Commencement program on Friday, May 10 at 4 p.m.
- Kristen Grimm, president and founder of Spitfire Strategies, a leading national public relations firm that helps foundations and nonprofits create positive social change, who will speak at Saturday's 10 a.m. Baccalaureate ceremony.
- Civil right icon and U.S. Rep. John Lewis, who represents Georgia's 5th district, will give the address at Saturday's 2 p.m. Baccalaureate Commencement.

Photos: Valedictorians [Lynn Abrahamsen](#) and [Linwood Donelson](#); Salutatorians [Kathryn Baker](#) and [John Alexander](#); Friday's student speaker [Johana Rosas Delgado](#)

List of Graduates: [Click here](#) for Excel file

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