



News Release

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Washington Adventist University Kicks Off Local Graduation Season with May 4 Commencement

Washington Adventist University (WAU) kicks off the local graduation season on May 4, with a commencement ceremony from 10 a.m. to noon at The Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro. A total of 359 students will be receiving their diplomas at commencement. The degrees that will be awarded include 106 master's degrees, 244 bachelor's degrees, and 11 associate's degrees. Two students will receive dual degrees.

The graduation procession will include students from 35 different nations, carrying the flags of their countries. They include Barbados, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Columbia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, U.S. Virgin Islands, Vietnam, and Zambia.

The commencement speaker will be His Excellency the Most Honourable Sir Patrick Linton Allen, ON, GCMG, CD, Governor-General of Jamaica, who will be presented with the university's prestigious Adrian T. Westney Award for Excellence in Community Service. The award is named for former pastor, educator, and 1962 WAU graduate Adrian T. Westney (1927-2009), who demonstrated "unparalleled dedication, unmatched performance, and inspirational service."

Senior Class President Kaiya Kretschmar, who is scheduled to provide words of encouragement to her fellow graduates, is a nursing program student who was recently "pinned" at the university's traditional "pinning" ceremony for the 53 students who are about to embark on professional nursing careers.

The diverse graduating class includes Shawn Fordham, a federal worker who will be receiving his master's degree in public administration. He has been an assistant district manager for the Social Security Administration in the Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia, Pa. area for the past seven years; but previously worked for Philadelphia Mayor John F. Street, serving as his campaign manager and senior advisor. Fordham also served on the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority.

Samr Binsaif will be awarded her master's degree in psychology counseling, which she plans to use as a counselor for women when she returns to her native Saudi Arabia this summer. Binsaif traveled to the U.S. with her husband and children in 2005, learned English as a second language

at Columbia University in New York City, and earned her bachelor's degree at Columbia College in Columbia, Mo. Upon graduation, she was attracted to the Washington Adventist University master's program in psychology counseling because the one-year program and one-year practical enabled her to complete her degree in a shorter time frame.

Also included in the graduating class is Timothy Hatfield, a lieutenant with the Prince George's County Police Department who will receive his bachelor's degree in organizational management. He plans to remain in public service, with a goal of possibly becoming a federal prosecutor, and has already been accepted to the George Washington University Law School fall class.

The breakdown of the 106 master's degrees awarded at this commencement is: 23 in counseling psychology; 20 in health care administration; 17 in nursing education; 15 in business administration; 12 in professional counseling psychology; nine in nursing and business leadership; eight in public administration; and two in religion.

The 244 baccalaureate degrees that will be awarded include: 207 Bachelor of Science degrees; 36 Bachelor of Arts degrees and 1 Bachelor of Music degree. In addition, nine Associate of Applied Science and two Associate of Science degrees will also be awarded.

Prior to the commencement ceremony, WAU will host two events at the Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church, located at 7700 Carroll Ave., Takoma Park, adjacent to campus. A Consecration Service will be held on Friday, May 2 at 8 p.m.; and a Baccalaureate Service will be held on Saturday, May 3 at 11:15 a.m.

The commencement ceremony can be viewed via live streaming video at <http://www.youtube.com/embed/h91OTsWIXig?rel=0>. For more information about Washington Adventist University and its academic programs, go to <http://www.wau.edu>.

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Washington Adventist University is Montgomery County's only four-year private college. Part of the Seventh-day Adventist system of higher education, Washington Adventist University has been educating college students since 1904 on a 19-acre campus in suburban Takoma Park, close to the nation's capital. A total of 1,050 students of all faiths participate in the university's eight graduate and 32 undergraduate programs. The 2013 edition of U.S. News & World Report ranked Washington Adventist University among the best regional colleges in the north.

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