

Commencement 2003

It certainly is my distinct pleasure to introduce the Indiana University South Bend graduating class of 2003, especially since this commencement is my first as Chancellor of this campus. This year has been exciting for all of us, but this evening belongs to our graduating students. Let me share with you some statistics and information about the 1,137 individuals whose degrees will be conferred this evening.

- 272 have earned master's degrees
- 651 have earned bachelor's degrees
- 214 have earned associate degrees

This impressive list includes 36 bachelor's and associate degrees from Purdue University School of Technology. The degrees consist of more than 100 majors, within 11 schools and colleges.

The Class of 2003 is the largest class in the 37 years that degrees have been awarded at Indiana University South Bend. Since our first commencement in June of 1967—a graduating class of just 29 students—more than 24,000 alumni have earned degrees from our campus, and they now reside and work in all 50 states and 29 foreign countries. The vast majority of our graduates, more than 67 percent, continue to live in the State of Indiana and the greater Michiana area.

Sixty-three percent of the members of this commencement class are the traditional college age of 25 or younger, while 37 percent are the non-traditional age of 26 or older. The youngest graduate is 19 and the oldest is 59.

Multiple members from the same family are included in this fine commencement class. These include, for example, sisters Nigel Clark and Martha Smith, who are both graduating with General Studies degrees. Nigel, mother of four, has earned a perfect 4.0 GPA; Martha, who has reared seven children, achieved the second highest score on the GED in the State of Indiana when she took that exam, resulting in a scholarship to IU South Bend. Also Bonnie and Tori Smith, a mother and daughter are graduating this evening with bachelor's degrees from General Studies; Tori also earned an associate degree in Dental Hygiene in 2002.

For members of the class who have earned bachelor's degrees, the majority, 92 percent, completed their work in six years or less. The remaining eight percent worked at a more leisurely pace, seven to 21 years.

Many of the graduates are employed either part-time or full-time while pursuing their degrees; many are married with family responsibilities.

Members of this class are not only employed and received excellent grades; they are also active in service and research. A few examples of their excellence are as follows:

Mark Royer came to IU South Bend as an Alumni Association scholar, and has completed the rigorous Honors Program. He has the distinction of being the only chemistry major in the history of IU South Bend to ever graduate with a perfect 4.0 GPA. An early admit to IU Medical School, Mark also conducted chemical research, published and presented academic papers, volunteered in the Goshen General Hospital emergency room, tutored disabled, non-traditional, and international students, played the guitar in his church, and participated in numerous extracurricular activities while attending IU South Bend.

Cam Collins, from the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, is another example. Cam won the literature prize at the 26th Annual Student Paper Day sponsored by the St. Joseph Valley Section of the American Chemical Society, competing with students from IU South Bend, Notre Dame, and Saint Mary's.

Anne Farinella, a non-traditional student who is a single parent, has also excelled in writing; she published her non-fiction novel in IU South Bend's *Analecta* literary magazine.

Katherine Brook, who is graduating from General Studies, demonstrated excellence by starting a tutoring program for inner-city children at Grace Community Center, where she personally spent hundreds of hours volunteering.

Mary Satkowski, a special education major, received the Peyser study abroad scholarship for the summer program in Mexico; she will bring her enthusiasm for that language and culture to her students.

Tracie Meert received the Elizabeth Grossman Award from the IU School of Nursing for the highest GPA (3.991) of any graduating BSN student from all the IU campuses throughout the state. She received the clinical and academic excellence

award from our nursing faculty for outstanding performance and leadership. Tracie did all this while attending school full time, working part time, tutoring fellow students, and caring for her three young daughters and husband.

Virginia "Queen" Coburn is graduating from the Ernestine M. Raclin School of the Arts, majoring in Theatre. In 1998, she directed and cast her first play, "Home Ain't Nothin' But a Word," at IU South Bend. She also played the leading role. Claudia Leyva is graduating from the School of Business, majoring in Accounting. A mother of two, she worked her way through college and served as treasurer of the Latino Student Union.

Justin Moody, who is graduating from the School of Public and Environment Affairs, majoring in Criminal Justice, was the very active president of the Black Student Union. He has already secured employment at the YMCA in Charleston, South Carolina.

International student graduates Antony Raj and Rosa Navarette, president and vice-president respectively of the International Student Organization, organized the International Food Fest and used the proceeds to institute a scholarship for international students.

I will close with a quote from an e-mail Brett Elms sent to me. Brett is receiving his degree this evening in secondary education. His remarks reveal that an IU South Bend education involves much more than facts and figures; the benefits go beyond knowledge: "Live today like it might be your last. Laugh at yourself because it is never as bad as it seems. Be eternally grateful for frustration, because it builds perseverance and character. Be thankful for those around you who have high expectations. Be honest enough to say the things that need to be said. Never sell yourself short. Take immense pride in who you are. Take responsibility for your actions or lack thereof. And last, live life to its fullest, as you focus on your faith and your family."

Mr. President, I have presented a brief profile of the Indiana University South Bend commencement class of 2003. Through their successful campus and academic performance, these graduates have met the Indiana University expectations. I present them to you with pride. Congratulations and best wishes to all our 2003 graduates.

President Bepko will now deliver his charge to the Class of 2003.