Rivier bids college tag, grads adieu
By Marie Donovan, Sun Correspondent Lowell Sun

May 13, 2012


LOWELL -- Georgetown University, founded in 1789 by Jesuit Bishop John Carroll, is the oldest Catholic university in the U.S.

So it was only fitting that on Saturday, current Georgetown President John J. DeGioia watched Audrey Green Rogers receive the first doctoral degree conferred in the history of Rivier College, ushering the Nashua school in as the nation's newest Catholic university.

"The tradition that has supported your formation here can be a source of sustenance as you move forward. It can provide you with courage and confidence as each of you become the person you are called to be and make the impact you are called to make in the world," said DeGioia, who was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters.

In July, Sister Paula Marie Buley will end the first year of her tenure as president of Rivier College by officially ushering the 77-year-old school into a new era as Rivier University. Green Rogers, of Merrimack, N.H., whose doctoral degree was in the field of education, joined close to 300 candidates each for master's and bachelor's degrees, as well as more than 130 associate's degree candidates receiving degrees at the ceremony at the Tsongas Center at UMass Lowell.

Christine McCarthy of Chelmsford graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in business administration. "We're very proud of her," said McCarthy's aunt, Sandra Rivera of Lowell, noting that her niece will continue on to get her MBA at the school next year. "She's just worked so hard; she put everything into it," added McCarthy's mother, Pam Marshall of Lowell.

"Rivier was the only school I wanted to attend," said Lisa de Haan of Milford, N.H., in giving one of three student speeches at commencement. De Haan, who graduated with a 4.0 GPA, told classmates that all the weekend nights spent home with the cat or guzzling coffee at the campus library, instead of out socializing with friends, were worth it. Even if it didn't feel that way at the time.

"We've all worked very hard to be here today. Overcoming the technological barriers seemed unbearable at times, but standing here receiving our degrees makes it all seem worth it. Earning this degree has forever changed my life by allowing me to enable others to change theirs," said de Haan, who earned a master's degree in counseling.
"We chose Rivier College because of the academics, but being at "Riv" has created a family among us," said Kala Rae Boudreau, another student speaker from Vermont.

That family relationship extended from the cafeteria ladies who make sandwiches and the "best omelettes," to professors and administrators, said Boudreau, who earned a bachelor's degree in special education and graduated with a 3.976 GPA. She recounted the first time she ran into her academic adviser hustling across campus between classes. "She didn't just smile. She stopped, greeted me by name and asked how my Western Civilization class was going," Boudreau said.

Student Government Association President Lauren Hall of Pelham announced the Class of 2012 gift to the school was a $20.12 check from each graduating student to the annual fund. "We expect further donations to go to the college once we all get jobs," Hall said.