

NWACC sets commencement, graduation activities

BENTONVILLE – NorthWest Arkansas Community College’s annual Commencement will be held 7 p.m. Friday, May 11, in the John Q. Hammons Convention Center. Arkansas Gov. Mike Beebe will deliver the Commencement Address.

NWACC has 425 candidates for graduation; about 290 are expected to attend the ceremony.

NWACC will award an honorary degree and will recognize an outstanding alumna and distinguished graduate.

Two other activities are scheduled for Saturday, May 12 – Nursing Pinning and Adult Education Graduation. NWACC Corporate and Continuing Education Division has ceremonies planned, as well. Details are presented below.

MAY 10 – MARKETING ANALYST PROGRAM

The NWACC Corporate and Continuing Education Retail Programs will hold a Marketing Analyst Graduation ceremony 6 p.m. Thursday, May 10, at the Wal-Mart Auditorium in the Shewmaker Center for Workforce Technology. This will be an open house, meet and greet format reception for all graduates from the last three semesters. Refreshments will be served.

ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

NWACC will award an Honorary Associate Degree of Educational Service to Steve Galen, who has been president since 2000 of the NWACC Retail Programs Advisory Committee.

Galen enjoyed a successful career in sales at Mobil Oil from 1986-1990. He then worked for the 3M Company in sales management positions, moving his family to NW Arkansas in 1996 to manage the Wal-Mart business, which grew over 40 percent under his leadership.

In 1999, he became the Wal-Mart team leader for Del Monte Foods. During his seven years at Del Monte, he grew that business by over \$100 million. In 2005, he started a Wal-Mart team for Timex Corporation as team leader. Through his leadership, Timex’s business has grown 30 percent in two years.

He serves on the Wal-Mart Retail Link Steering Committee (2005-present); is president-elect of the Mercy Hospital Foundation Board (2003-2007); president of the Bentonville Library Foundation Board (2004-2007); and co-chairman of the Charity Challenge of Champions (1999 – Present).

He and his wife Susie have been married for 14 years, and they have two children, Stephanie, 11, and Sam, 6.

The Dick Trammel Outstanding Alumni Award will be presented to Deb Moore, RN, the Division Chair of Nursing and Allied Health at Northwest Technical Institute (NTI) in Springdale.

In 2003 and 2006, the NTI nursing department was awarded a “Certificate of Excellence” for having a 100 percent pass rate on the PN-NCLEX licensing exam.

She graduated magna cum laude from NWACC in May 1994 with an Associate Degree in Nursing.

In addition to her career at NTI, Moore serves as an executive member and treasurer for the non-profit community organization the Northwest Arkansas Nursing Education Consortium, where she has been actively involved over the past seven years with scholarship fundraising, centralized clinical scheduling, facilities and curriculum planning, and the bilingual nursing scholar initiative.

The NWACC Distinguished Graduate is Audie Weatherford, who graduates Magna Cum Laude with both an Associate of Arts and an Associate of Science.

She quit school at the age of 16, received her GED at 18, and spent the next 20 years working at low paying jobs. She went through a period of being a single mother, working as a waitress and just making ends meet. Audie returned to school in 2005 at the age of 38, a wife and a mother of three, with the full support of her husband Gerry, an employee of the college.

Audie is now planning on continuing her education at Missouri Southern State University where she is working toward a degree in Sociology. Audie's intent is to work with teens and young adults who have drug and alcohol abuse problems.

Audie is the President of both the Student Ambassador and Activity Board and Phi Theta Kappa. She is also a member of Sigma Kappa Delta and recently was named to the USA All Academic First Team as well as being named The New Century Scholar for the State of Arkansas.

NURSING PINNING CEREMONY

The NWACC Nursing Pinning Ceremony is 2 p.m. Saturday, May 12, in the John Q. Hammons Convention Center.

Several students will be honored, including the "Florence Nightingale Award", conferred upon the nursing graduate who best exemplifies the spirit of nursing.

Catherine Lyon, RN and a 2006 NWACC nursing graduate will be the featured speaker. This marks the first time in the history of the program when a former grad delivers the pinning address.

The Nursing Pinning Ceremony is a celebration of the completion of one of the most rigorous programs the college has to offer. Families, friends, administration and faculty all come together in one place to see their "future registered nurse" be pinned, signifying their launch into the profession of nursing.

ADULT EDUCATION

The NWACC Adult Education Commencement will be held 6 p.m. Saturday, May 12, in the John Q. Hammons Convention Center. NWACC has 197 candidates for graduation.

Dr. Philip Less will deliver the Commencement Address.

He became the state's first ESL Program Advisor for the Adult Education Section of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education in February 2001.

In the Adult Education Section, he coordinates the federal English Literacy and Civics Education grant in Arkansas, and he is the chair of the Adult Education ESL Task Force, which has recently developed ESL curriculum guidelines for statewide instruction.

He also supervises the professional development for adult ESL teachers and organizes the Summer ESL Institute, a week-long intensive teacher training workshop.

He began teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) with newly arrived adult immigrants in Miami, Florida in 1979. He moved to Colorado to pursue a graduate degree in ESL from Colorado State University in Fort Collins. In 1984, after he received his Master's Degree, he moved to Little Rock, Arkansas to teach in the Intensive ESL Program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR).

During the next 16 years, Dr. Less was an ESL teacher, Academic Coordinator, and Interim Director of the UALR program. In 2000, he was asked to work on a special research project for Governor Mike Huckabee, examining the language needs of adult Hispanic immigrants in the state of Arkansas. For eight months he traveled across Arkansas interviewing state and local administrators, teachers, and students. He wrote three reports for the Governor with recommendations for improvements in the adult education delivery system.

Dr. Less received his Doctor of Education degree in Higher Education from UALR. His dissertation was a qualitative research study that examined the academic and nonacademic skills needed for success by international students at UALR. Dr. Less has lived and worked in the Netherlands, Israel, and the former Yugoslavia, where he was a Fulbright Lecturer of English at the University of Zagreb in Croatia.

MAY 25 – ELECTRICAL APPRENTICE GRADUATION

The NWACC Electrical Apprentice Graduation is 6 p.m. Friday, May 25, at the Wal-Mart Auditorium in the Shewmaker Center for Workforce Technology.

MAY 3 – HONORS CONVOCATION

Students were recognized Thursday, May 3, at an honors convocation for their academic and service achievements for the 2006-2007 school year.

Among the awardees were the Board of Trustees' Golden Eagle Scholarship recipient, honor society officers, outstanding graduates in various fields, excellence in nursing, Honors Program graduates, and others.

Cookies, coffee, and punch were served after the event for the awardees, their families, and their friends.