

Alfred University confers degrees during annual Commencement exercises

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Alfred University officials conferred 13 doctoral degrees, 104 master's degrees (M.F.A., M.S., M.A. and M.B.A.), 454 undergraduate degrees, and 34 certificates of advanced study during Commencement exercises Saturday, May 12, in the McLane Center on campus. Dr. Charles M. Edmondson, Alfred University president, presided over the ceremony. One graduate in the class of 2007 distinguished herself by earning a perfect 4.0 (out of a possible 4.0) grade point average for four years of study at Alfred University. Mari Kristiina Markkula, an environmental studies major from Rising Sun, MD, leads her class academically. She is a daughter of Paul and Arja Markkula and a graduate of the Tome School. Joining her in earning top honors in their respective schools/colleges are: Kimberly Ann Gemmell of New Paltz, bachelor of science degree in ceramic engineering, Kazuao Inamori School of Engineering, 3.93; George Bland Hoke III of Wilson, WY, bachelor of fine arts degree, School of Art & Design, 3.79; Jessica Rami Webster of Rochester, bachelor of science degree in finance, College of Business, 3.84. Gemmell is a daughter of Robert Gemmell of LaGrangeville, NY, and Marybelle Gemmel of New Paltz, and a graduate of New Paltz Central High School. Hoke is a son of George and Elizabeth Hoke of Wilson, WY, and a graduate of Jackson Hole (WY) High School. Webster is a daughter of Jefferson and Sheelarani Webster and a graduate of Brighton High School. Dr. Madeline A. Dalton, AU class of 1983, associate professor in pediatrics, Dartmouth Medical School, and director of the Hood Center for Children and Families, delivered the commencement address, "Lessons of an Alfred Graduate." She also received an honorary doctor of science degree. Robert R. McComsey, class of 1966 and chairman emeritus of the AU Board of Trustees, was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree. McComsey, who has served on the Board since 1980, is a retired general partner and founding shareholder of NeubergerBerman, now Lehman Brothers LLC. Taking a look back at her college days and her fulfilling professional life, Dalton told the graduates and the gathered family, friends, and faculty members, "What I value most is not what I've accomplished, but what I've learned." In her 24 years since leaving Alfred University, she says she has learned not only that she needs to be willing to try new things, but "I also have to be prepared to make mistakes." the value of working as a team. Our research at Dartmouth is state-of-the-art, not because of any one of us but because of all of us - working together, challenging each other, and being willing to listen to each other's ideas." achieving a balance is more important than succeeding in any one area. As a professional mom, it is a constant challenge for me to ensure that I have enough time with my family. There have been instances in which I've chosen to put family or my own interests before work. This may not have been the best thing for my career, but, ultimately, I'm a happier person because of it." to be true to myself Sometimes this has been difficult, especially early in my career, but I've found that even if people don't agree with me, they respect me for being true to my values." never to take anything for granted. When our twin boys were born 2 months early, I realized life can take a 180-degree turn in a matter of seconds and there is no way to turn back the clock." one's mark on life depends not on one's profession, but on one's integrity," noting she learned from her mother "that the best measures of success in life are honesty, respect, and responsibility." "Through its commitment to diversity, creativity and integrity, Alfred University has prepared you to bring a fresh and honest perspective to whatever you do," she reminded the graduates. She set them off on their careers with her "best advice" "be prepared to make mistakes, strive to achieve the right balance and work as a team. Be proud of who you are and true to yourself. Do what you know, in your heart, is the right thing. Make the most of every minute because life is much more fleeting than you may realize. The opportunities are endless and it's up to you to embrace them."