

Alfred University to recognize top graduates at Saturday's commencement

5/12/17

Alfred University will recognize five students for top academic honors during the 181st commencement exercises that begin at 10 a.m. Saturday in the Galanis Family Arena, McLane Center, on the Alfred University campus.

To be honored as the top graduate in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is Luke Perry, a physics major from Ira, VT, who earned a 3.96 grade-point average on a 4.0 scale. Perry is a son of Wayne and Laurie Bruce of West Rutford, VT, and is a graduate of Mill River Union High School.

Two women tied for top honors in the School of Art and Design. Audrey Y. An, who is from Columbia, MO, and Ava Helen Carney of Chicago, IL, both achieved 3.87 grade-point averages. An is a daughter of Soon Cheol An and Mira Ko of the Republic of Korea, and Carney is a daughter of Kevin Carney and Mary Lou Zelazny, both of Chicago. Carney is a graduate of Northside College Preparatory High School.

Lindsey Piraino, a biomaterials engineering major, is the top graduate in the Kazuo Inamori School of Engineering, with a 3.98 grade-point average. She is a graduate of Keshequa High School and is a daughter of Peter and Susan Piraino of Nunda, NY.

Matthew Zahn, an athletic training major, is the top student in the College of Professional Studies with a GPA of 3.94. He is a graduate of North Tonawanda High School and is a son of Dieter and Cindy Zahn of North Tonawanda.

The University will award four honorary degrees Saturday. One will go to Warren Sutton, an African-American student who was forced out of Alfred University in 1959 after his relationship with a first-year blue-eyed, blonde-haired blonde nursing student came to the attention of her parents; her father was the treasurer of the University at the time, and exerted pressure through other administrators to have Warren leave school mid-way through his junior year. Awarding an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree to Sutton makes amends for an injustice inflicted upon him nearly 60 years ago, said Alfred University President Mark Zupan.

George Beall, a renowned researcher at Corning Incorporated, will receive an honorary Doctor of Science degree. Beall is the most prolific producer of patents for Corning. Alfred University and Corning Incorporated have a long-standing relationship. There are more graduates of Alfred University working for Corning than from any other college or university.

Victoria and Richard MacKenzie-Childs, both of whom received Master of Fine Arts degrees from Alfred University's top-ranked ceramic art program, will receive honorary Doctor of Arts degrees and deliver the commencement address, believed to be the first time in University history a couple has shared the honor. MacKenzie-Childs founded a firm that offered luxury home goods in 1983. Even though they stepped away from the firm after more than 20 years, the brand remains and is one of the most enduring brands in that market niche.

Students who completed their course work in August and December 2016, as well as this week, will walk across the McLane Center stage to receive their degrees Saturday.

The University will award 10 doctoral degrees, 100 master's degrees and 412 baccalaureate degrees. A separate ceremony will be held June 2 in Brooklyn, NY, for the 122 students who completed their master's degree programs in the University's New York City program.