

MCC graduates urged to continue learning

By David Huck

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MANCHESTER — More 800 students received associate's degrees and certificates from Manchester Community College during its 48th commencement ceremony Thursday.

The 949 degrees and certificates were awarded to 809 students in more than 70 fields, ranging from the culinary arts, lean manufacturing, business administration, criminal justice, engineering, and the fine arts.

Seven Board of Regents Medallion Awards were given to students who completed their studies with a perfect 4.0 grade point average.

MCC President Gena Glickman told students to make a difference, no matter how small or big, in the world. She urged students to keep pursuing their interests and education once they leave the college.

"Learning is a journey," she told the graduates. "But it's a journey that doesn't have an end."

During the ceremony at the Manchester Bicentennial Band Shell, Glickman had a variety of graduates stand to honor their accomplishments. Veterans, student mentors, honor society inductees, and those graduates who are the first in their family to attend college all received roaring applause.

The graduation address was given by Hartford resident and retired lawyer Lewis J. Robinson Jr., the chairman of the Board of Regents for Higher Education, which oversees the state's 17 public colleges and universities.

Robinson told the story of his grandfather, who was born in Virginia at the turn of the 19th century and who lived a fulfilling life with only a second-grade education.

Despite prevalent racism and meager earnings, Robinson's grandfather was known throughout

Appalachia as a skilled and respectable blacksmith and horse farrier who was content with providing for his family.

Robinson looked up to his grandfather and told the graduates to live their lives with integrity, as they might be role models themselves one day.

"Display your diploma in a place so that other people can see it and be inspired," he said. "Remember that you are a role model. You are a role model to people that will come after you."

The essential attributes to success, Robinson said, are planning, hard work, respect, education, and responsibility.

"I hope that you will always love learning and that you will always go on to learn more," he said. "I hope that you always treat others with kindness and respect."

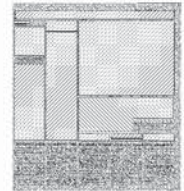
Kevin MacVane, a Manchester resident, was honored as the salutatorian. In 1996, after graduating from Howell Cheney Technical High School, MacVane quickly took a job working for a utility company.

Two years ago after being laid off, MacVane came to MCC to begin his studies with the goal of becoming a history teacher. In the fall, he is transferring to Eastern Connecticut State University to finish his studies.

The valedictorian, Daniel Bates, wasn't present at the ceremony, as he had finished his studies — 98 credits with all As — months ago and has been traveling the globe. A speech that he sent from Kazakhstan, where he was rock climbing, was read by Dean of Academic Affairs Joanne Russell.

He told the graduates to be open-minded, patient, and accepting throughout life. Bates said an education is important, as having broad knowledge will help them to connect with information and people to find solutions to problems.

Bates urged the students to pursue their dreams with creativity and passion, as well as to be smart with their money.





Krystine Ray of Manchester, above, gestures to her family Thursday during the 48th commencement at Manchester Community College. At left, Meghan Sutkaitis of East Hampton, left, hugs Morgan Poulin of East Hampton before the ceremonies.

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