



Local graduates receive degrees from Quincy University

June 1 2017 1:21 PM

QUINCY - Quincy University hosted its 154th Commencement ceremony on Sunday, May 14th at 10:30 am in Quincy University's Pepsi Arena. The 2017 graduating class is comprised of 243 undergraduates with an additional 41 receiving graduate degrees.

The procession was led by University marshal, Robert Mejer (distinguished professor of art) and assistant marshals, Dr. David Kirchhofer and Dr. Scott Luaders (professors of physics and chemistry, respectively). Dr. Ann Behrens, vice president for academic affairs, convened the ceremony and the director of campus ministry, Raymond Heilmann, delivered the invocation. Senior choir members Tom Argana, Jesseca Leggett, Morgan McGinnis, Katherine Rathgeber and Clark Zellerman performed the National Anthem and the Quincy University Alma Mater.

Graduates elected senior representative Tayler Ruppel to deliver the program's welcome address and reflection. Ruppel is a biological sciences major with a minor in psychology. She is the daughter of Rodney and Debbie Ruppel of Ashland, Ill. Ruppel is a QU Honors student and a QU Connect Mentor. She has been involved in many campus organizations during her four years at QU including Student Government Association, Pre-Professional Science Club, and Chemistry Club. After graduation, she plans on applying to physical therapy schools. In the meantime she will be working as a rehabilitation aide/restorative aide at Vibra Hospital in Springfield, Ill.

Honorable Michael F. McClain delivered this year's commencement address. McClain, now retired, was an attorney at Awkerkamp & McClain law firm in Quincy. A Quincy native, McClain taught civics at Quincy Junior High before enrolling in Saint Louis University Law School. In 1972, he was appointed to fill the unexpired term of his father, state Rep. Elmo "Mac" McClain and earned his law degree in 1975. McClain served five terms in the Illinois House, including a term as assistant Democratic leader. He was the first person to be named to a leadership position in the House from Adams County since the Civil War. While serving in the House, he made strong contributions

to reform within the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services after the tragic death of Alan Madden. He also led the creation of the Illinois Department of Nuclear Safety and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and served as a strong advocate for education funding reform. He sponsored the bill that funded the Quincy East By-pass, which became the anchor for the Central Illinois Expressway and the Chicago-Kansas City Expressway. In 1978, his own colleagues voted him one of 22 best legislators of 236. In 1982 he returned to the full-time practice of law with an emphasis on lobbying in the Illinois Legislature, serving numerous clients.

He assisted in obtaining state funds for the Oakley-Lindsay Civic Center and for the Quincy Senior and Family Resource Center at Seventh and York. He serves as a trustee at Quincy University and is an appointed member of the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission. He has served on the boards of Quincy Notre Dame High School, Great River Economic Development Foundation, the Quincy Society of Fine Arts and the City of Quincy Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. He has been a fundraiser for Quincy University, Adams County United Way, Quincy YMCA, Arthritis Foundation and the Boy Scouts. He chaired the Lincoln Douglas Re-Enactment Committee in 1994 and Quincy Riverfest in 1996 and has worked on numerous issues for Quincy Public Schools and for QPS board member elections.

William James Harte was awarded the degree Honorary Doctor of Economic Development during the ceremony. Harte is a highly acclaimed trial lawyer with strong ties to Quincy University. A Chicago native, Harte began his educational career at Quincy College graduating with a degree in History in 1954. During his time at Quincy College, Mr. Harte played basketball and was part of the university's first football team in 1953. He is a past recipient of the Quincy University John Evans Award for support of the political science program. In 1968 Mr. Harte was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Quincy University.

Throughout his 58-year law career, Mr. Harte served as counsel in over 1,000 cases. One case of particular importance to Quincy University is the 1967 Quincy College v. Burlington Northern case, through which Mr. Harte led an extensive public effort to prevent the discontinuance of train service from Chicago to Quincy. With nearly a quarter of Quincy's student population commuting from Chicago, this railroad was of critical importance to the success of the University.

William James Harte continued his service to QU by serving the university's Board of Trustees from 1984 to 1990 and 1991 to 2000. He served as an emeritus member of the Board from 2000 to 2012. In addition, Mr. Harte was instrumental in encouraging many relatives and friends to consider a Quincy University education.

Founded in 1860 by Franciscan friars, Quincy University (www.quincy.edu) is a Catholic, co-educational, residential university offering undergraduate, graduate, and adult education programs that integrate liberal arts, active learning, practical experience, and Franciscan values. Quincy University's intercollegiate sports are members of the NCAA Division II Great Lakes Valley Conference for men and women. For more information, please contact the Quincy University Office of Community Relations by calling (217) 228-5275.

The following students graduated in spring of 2017 from Quincy University:

Alton, IL

Carey McDermott, BS, Forensic Psychology

Edwardsville, IL

Morgan McGinnis, BS, Health Services

John Schmidtke, BS, Marketing

Robert Tays, BS, Exercise Science-Pre Phys Therapy

South Roxana, IL

Daniel Larue, BSN, Nursing