



# **SIUE Fall Commencement bestows degrees on graduates**

December 16 2017 7:50 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Chancellor Randy Pembroke, PhD, oversaw the 2017 Fall Commencement exercises Saturday, Dec. 16, in morning and afternoon ceremonies for the 1,257 eligible graduates in the Vadalabene Center on campus.

McKenzie Ferguson, PharmD, associate professor in the School of Pharmacy and SIUE's 2017 Teaching Excellence Award winner addressed the morning ceremony, which featured the Graduate School, and the Schools of Business, Nursing, and Education, Health and Human Behavior.

"This day, that degree, your experience is one stop on your course of life. You are now prepared to seek or build upon opportunities that align your education with your career," Ferguson said. "In the end, seek what you love, own what you do and give back to others. This love, accountability and generosity will keep you on the right course in life."

Megan Gilbert was the morning student speaker. She earned a master's in college student personnel administration. She began by quoting Albert Einstein, "I have no special talent, I am only passionately curious."

"Throughout my undergraduate experience I was introduced to many students, faculty, administrators, and staff members who continually encouraged me to keep setting goals and moving forward," Gilbert said. "That positivity, encouragement and the supportive environment SIUE offered - made me never want to leave."

"My graduate experience here at SIUE has been one of the best of my life. I have gained an incredible amount of knowledge and confidence. I have been connected to some of the most influential and inspiring individuals, and I am forever grateful for their guidance and support. The education and experiences I gained have made me the person I am, and have shown me the value of education and individuality."

Special guest speaker Col. Marc Packler, commander, 375th Communications Group, Scott Air Force Base (SAFB), addressed the afternoon exercise, which featured the Graduate School, College of Arts and Sciences, and School of Engineering. Packler was appearing in honor of SAFB's 100th anniversary and delivered a motivational speech on leadership.

Jack Glassman, PhD, associate professor and chair of the Department of Physics in College of Arts and Sciences, is the 2017 Great Teacher Award recipient as selected by the SIUE Alumni Association. He provided the commencement address during the afternoon ceremony and focused upon one of history's most famous teachers, the Greek philosopher Socrates. Glassman thinks every teacher has looked to Socrates as a source of inspiration at some point.

"We have, I hope, cultivated in you a sense of inquisitiveness and an intellectual restlessness," Glassman said. "We have, I hope, developed with you a love of learning and of reason. You will, I hope, take those skills and build on them and use them to build your world."

Alex Myers was the afternoon student speaker. He earned a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from the School of Engineering. Myers spoke of attaining grit as one of his positive collegiate experiences.

“Our character has been strengthened, and we’ve developed endurance, courage and mental toughness,” Myers said. “Grit is defined as perseverance and passion for long-term goals. This quality is not based on GPA, standardized tests, or raw talent, but it can be one of the best indicators of success in school and in your professional life. Grit is not settling for ordinary, it is working on developing yourself into extraordinary, day-in and day-out.”

Myers closed by quoting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who once told a commencement audience, “If you can’t fly, run; if you can’t run, walk; if you can’t walk, crawl; but by all means, keep moving.”

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River’s rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of nearly 14,000.