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# Georgia Southern University Celebrates Spring Commencement

*MAY 9, 2009*



More than 20,000 family and friends were in attendance as Georgia Southern University presented degrees to one of its largest-ever graduating classes today at Spring Commencement at Allen E. Paulson Stadium.

More than 2,500 graduates earned their degrees this spring with over 2,100 participating in the formal commencement ceremony.

The spring 2009 graduating class included 80 doctoral degree recipients, 399 master's degree recipients and 2,060 bachelor's degree recipients. Also, 271 students graduated with honors and 72 students were awarded online degrees, the most ever presented in one ceremony at Georgia Southern University.

The participants in today's graduation represented seven colleges and one academic program:

- College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, 569
- College of Business Administration, 557
- College of Health and Human Sciences, 389
- College of Education, 303
- College of Science and Technology, 254
- College of Information Technology, 45
- Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, 20
- Interdisciplinary degrees, 29 (graduate students only)

The graduating class represented 42 countries and 32 states; however, 90 percent of the graduates are native Georgians. The youngest undergraduate this spring is 20 years old and the oldest graduate is 61. The average age for the graduating class is 26.

U.S. District Court Judge B. Avant Edenfield served as the commencement speaker. He congratulated the graduates and told them their happiness will be determined by the values with

which they go through life. 'Let me remind you that [graduation] is not the end of your pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. Keep those tools sharp,'" Edenfield said.

The more than 2,500 graduates included several students who were actually making their first trip to the Georgia Southern campus. Daniela Lidia Gugu, an accountant from Atlanta and a native of Romania, made her first visit to campus to receive her Master's Degree in Business Administration. 'I wanted to earn my MBA online and I knew that Georgia Southern University was a great school,'" she said. 'Between January and April, I worked 60 hours per week and my professors were very understanding and accommodated my busy work schedule. Some even gave me their home phone numbers in case I had any questions about my classes.'

In what has become one of the most popular traditions at Georgia Southern University, an American bald eagle flies over the graduates during the playing of the alma mater to conclude the ceremony. This year, Freedom, Georgia Southern University's mascot, made his first graduation flight.

#### ABOUT THE SPRING 2009

#### GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

- Total number of graduates is 2,580
- 42 countries and 32 states represented
- 90% of graduates are native Georgians
- Youngest undergraduate is 20
- Oldest graduate this year is 61
- Average age for the graduating class is 26
- 2,060 students were awarded bachelor's degrees
- 39 students were awarded an education specialist degree
- 399 students were awarded master's degrees
- 80 students were awarded doctoral degrees
- 72 students were awarded online degrees

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University, offers 115 degree programs serving nearly 18,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelors, masters and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. The University, one of Georgia's largest, is a top choice of Georgia's HOPE scholars and is recognized for its student-centered approach to education. Visit: [www.georgiasouthern.edu](http://www.georgiasouthern.edu).