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Approximately 4,200 Degrees Conferred During Georgia Southern's 2023 Spring Commencement Ceremonies

May 16, 2023



Last week, approximately 4,200 graduates from Georgia Southern University's Statesboro, Armstrong and Liberty campuses received associate, baccalaureate, masters, specialist and doctoral degrees in five Spring 2023 Commencement ceremonies.

Georgia Southern President Kyle Marrero welcomed the graduates and their guests to the ceremonies, held at the Allen E. Paulson Stadium in Statesboro on May 9, 10 and 11, and at the EnMarket Arena on May 13.

"Graduates, I don't need to tell you about your unique college journey, which has been challenging," said Marrero at the opening ceremony. "I am very proud of how, together, we have persevered allowing us to have a successful semester and today, our commencement ceremony. This graduation is a momentous occasion for Georgia Southern University, as well as for all of you. Today, you are part of history at Georgia Southern."

Before degrees were conferred, Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts degrees were presented to Fred Gretsch and Dinah Gretsch, namesakes of the University's nationally recognized school of music, who have contributed considerable time, resources and opportunities for Georgia Southern students and faculty.

Speakers included:

Kathryn Lanier, Ph.D. ('12), science education leader and master communicator currently serving as the director of STEM Education Outreach at Southern Research in Birmingham, Alabama

H.E. Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ireland's 19th Ambassador to the United States

Brandon Butler ('04), seasoned marketing and creative leader, currently serving as the CEO of Butter.ATL

Honorable Van R. Johnson II, 67th mayor of the City of Savannah

Rebecca King ('15, '17), state lobbyist for the American College of Surgeons

“This is a turning point in your life and what a privilege it is to share this hopeful morning with you,” Ambassador Byrne Nason told the graduates in Wednesday’s ceremony. “As you look back on what has brought you here, and importantly, look forward to the boundless possibilities ahead of you, this moment, the day of your graduation, is a day when past and future combine in a spectacular present.

“At this moment in time, you find yourselves on the cusp of opportunity unparalleled in all of human history,” she continued. “Our time is now. Your time is now to seize the opportunity to embrace fearlessness and to set your eyes on far, maybe distant horizons.”

Reciting an Irish suffrage poetry line, “Our future will become the past of other women,” Byrne Nason asked, “What do you do with your life? Starting out here today will be your legacy to others you may never know, but whose lives you will touch in unfathomable ways. We are all links in a human chain with a duty to transmit hope, mutual respect, service to others along that chain, and help to build the future that we can all enjoy together.”

The ambassador also commended Georgia Southern for being the first U.S. public university to have a brick-and-mortar campus in Ireland.

During the Saturday morning ceremony in Savannah, Mayor Johnson addressed the crowd with spirited wisdom.

“As you sit here with your front view mirror wide open, where are you going?” he implored. “As you fly high and as you fly far, it is easy to get misdirected by the clouds of life and the weather of circumstance.

“My first piece of advice for you is to always remember your North Star. Remember the values that define you and the principles that guide you.”

He also encouraged the graduates to remember today, the struggle it took to complete a degree, and why they began their educational journey.

“And when you remember your why, you will always remember your way,” he told them.

Expand your vocabulary, and find ways to be intentionally inclusive and deliberately equitable, he continued, noting the importance of creating seats at the table for people and voices that have been absent. Speak up in defense of others and be that conscience in the room that does the right thing. Find ways to build bridges and not build barriers. Your network is your net worth, he said, and life is about relationships and connections. Remember to take care of yourself, and protect your mental health and your peace because life can be hard.

In closing, he encouraged the graduates to hold dear to what they’ve earned as they move forward.

“Remember the sacredness, this supportive nest,” he said. “This productive and protective nest. Remember this nurturing nest called Georgia Southern University.

“Today is your day. But tomorrow is your day, too. Fly high. Fly far. Fly strong. Fly intentional. Fly powerful. Fly awesome. Congratulations and may God bless you on your journey.”

The crowd roared as he signed off and the conferral of degrees began.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution founded in 1906, offers approximately 140 different degree programs serving nearly 26,000 students through 10 colleges on three campuses in Statesboro, Savannah, Hinesville and online instruction. A leader in higher education in southeast Georgia, the University provides a diverse student population with expert faculty, world-class scholarship and hands-on learning opportunities. Georgia Southern creates lifelong learners who serve as responsible scholars, leaders and stewards in their communities. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.

For videos of Spring 2023 Commencement ceremonies in Statesboro [click here](#).

For videos of Spring 2023 Commencement ceremonies in Savannah [click here](#).

For photos of the Spring 2023 Commencement ceremonies in Statesboro, [click here](#).

For photos of the Spring 2023 Commencement ceremonies in Savannah, [click here](#).

Credit: Courtesy of Georgia Southern University.