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UNH Inducts 80 Into Phi Beta Kappa

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DURHAM, N.H. -- On Saturday, May 6, 2006, 10 juniors and 70 seniors from the University of New Hampshire's Durham and Manchester campuses became members of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious liberal arts honors society. The initiation ceremony, held in Durham, also included the awarding of five prizes for outstanding academic achievement.

Phi Beta Kappa was founded on December 5, 1776, at the College of William and Mary. Since then, Phi Beta Kappa has become the nation's leading advocate for the liberal arts and sciences at the undergraduate level and membership in Phi Beta Kappa has come to be widely regarded as a hallmark of academic excellence. The UNH Beta chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was founded in 1952.

The ceremony began with the awarding of five prizes. The Phi Beta Kappa General Education essay contest prize for first- and second-year students was awarded to Michelle Leblanc for her essay "Deities and Devices: Gods and Narrators in the Ancient Greek Novel." First prize in the Humanities Program essay contest for junior- and senior-level students went to Roger Eichorn for his essay on "Human, All too Human? Aristotle and Nietzsche on Human Nature." Nolan Bonvouloir won second prize in that contest for his essay on "The Husband or the Lover," a study of a 17th-century French play. Nichole Guenard won the Edmund G. Miller Phi Beta Kappa Award for the junior initiate with the highest grade point average. Anna Kathleen Kelly was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa key as the senior initiate with the highest grade point average. Kristin Harris received the Phi Beta Kappa prize for excellence in undergraduate research for her project "Financing the Evolutionary Machine: Capitalist Ideology and Social Darwinism in Zola's The Ladies Paradise and Dreiser's Sister Carrie."

The initiation ceremony, conducted by chapter president, professor Barbara Cooper; vice president, professor Linda Johnson; and secretary-treasurer, professor Barbara Lerch, then proceeded with a brief history of the philosophical ideals that led to the creation of Phi Beta Kappa. New members were asked to pledge themselves to furthering the society's belief in the value of a liberal education and intellectual inquiry and signed the chapter's membership book.