



Related Links

[Commencement](#)

UNH Honors Two New Hampshire Residents At 2005 Commencement

Contact: [Denise Hart](#)
603-862-1426
UNH Media Relations

May 9, 2005

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire will honor two New Hampshire residents for outstanding community service with Granite State Awards that will be presented Saturday, May 21, 2005, at Commencement.

David M. Krempels, president of The Krempels Brain Injury Foundation, and the Honorable Katherine Wells Wheeler, former New Hampshire State Senator, are the recipients of the annual awards.

Krempels graduated from UNH in 1973 and went on to become a successful carpenter and businessman as part-owner of a Seacoast contracting business. In his early forties, on the second day of his honeymoon in 1992, a tractor-trailer crashed into their car while traveling on the Maine Turnpike, killing his wife Ettamae and leaving Krempels comatose with injuries. He survived and over the next two years began to reclaim his life—learning how to walk, eat and perform tasks of daily living as he healed from traumatic brain injury and slowly regaining his independence.

Ten years ago, Krempels founded the Krempels Brain Injury Foundation with the help of four friends, establishing a nonprofit organization that has touched the lives of hundreds of New Hampshire residents living with brain injury from trauma, tumor or stroke. The foundation has awarded nearly 600 grants totaling more than \$850,000, providing a bridge of essential financial assistance at a critical time, and offers the Steppingstones, a community-based post-rehabilitative program in Portsmouth, where participants have access to life-skills training, support groups, social and recreational activities to help them rebuild their lives.

The Honorable Katherine Wells Wheeler is a former New Hampshire state senator and founding member as well as past president of the New Hampshire Public Health Association. She currently serves with the NARAL Pro-Choice NH Foundation.

Wheeler's distinguished public service career began with advocacy for New Hampshire Public Television, chairing the station's first fund-raising auction, serving as vice-president of the NHPTV Broadcasting Council and founding member of the NHPTV Board of Governors. Her work on behalf of NHPTV resulted in the New Hampshire Union Leader naming her "Woman of the Year" in 1984.

Following her election to the New Hampshire House of Representatives in 1988, she focused her

attention on improving access to health care, services to seniors, children, people with disabilities and low-income families, and safeguarding reproductive rights. She served four terms in the House before being elected to the Senate for three terms, where she represented residents of Dover, Durham, Lee, Madbury and Rollinsford. Among the bills she sponsored were a bill offering protection to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking and legislation that banned the practice of hazing on all school and university campuses. Her contributions to the well-being of New Hampshire residents have brought her recognition from many community groups including the New Hampshire Citizens Alliance, the New Hampshire Family Planning Council, Homemakers of Strafford County, the New Hampshire Nurses' Association and the New Hampshire Pediatric Society among many others.

Commencement begins at 10 a.m. at Cowell Stadium Field, rain or shine, on UNH's Durham campus.