

Icons, Writers, Founders and Firsts

Exceptional achievers to be honored at commencement

Friday, May 13, 2016



THE CELEBRATION IS ABOUT TO BEGIN: COMMENCEMENT 2016 WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, MAY 21.

An international peacemaker. A New York Times bestselling author. The first woman to command the Air Force's largest air base wing. An icon of the North Country. A citizen of the year from the Seacoast.

Meet the five exceptional individuals who will be honored along with the Class of 2016 at Commencement on Saturday, May 21.

Commencement speaker

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and honorary degree recipient **Richard Haass** has been praised in the U.S. and abroad for his commitment to resolving conflict.



COURTESY PHOTO OF RICHARD HAASS

In 2013 he received the Tipperary International Peace Award and has also been honored with the State Department's Distinguished Honor Award and the Presidential Citizens Medal.

Now in his 13th year as president of the Council on Foreign Relations, Haass has previously served as the director of policy planning for the U.S. Department of State and holds the rank of ambassador.

Honorary Degrees

Kate Clifford Larson '03G published her acclaimed book "Bound For the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero" less than one year after receiving her doctorate in history from UNH.

She hasn't stopped since.

Larson's most recent work, "Rosemary: The Hidden Kennedy Daughter," has spent many weeks on The New York Times bestseller list and was voted one of People Magazine's top 10 books in 2015.

As the consulting historian for the National Park Service's Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study, she helped prompt legislation to establish two national parks in Tubman's honor and was among those [applauding](#) the recent decision by the U.S. Treasury to feature Harriet Tubman on the \$20 bill.

Col. Colleen Ryan '82 entered the Air Force the same year she graduated from UNH, after receiving her commission through UNH's ROTC program.

Prior to retiring in 2008, she served as the first female commander in Wright-Patterson Air Force Base's 58-year history, commanding the largest air base wing in the Air Force.

That, however, was just one piece of her career.

Ryan was responsible for worldwide attack warning, space defense, surveillance and control at Cheyenne Mountain Air Station. She also served as chief of the Commander's Action Group, Headquarters United States Air Forces in Europe and as commander of the 89th Operations Support Squadron at Andrews Air Force Base, just to name a few of her assignments.

Granite State Awards

Jameson French, the president and CEO of Northland Forest Products, has chaired three of his industry's national trade associations and served on many boards related to conservation, land protection and forestry issues.

French is currently the vice chair of the Land Trust Alliance, a trustee of New Hampshire's chapter of the Nature Conservancy and a Davis Conservation Fund trustee.

His commitment to volunteering extends to other areas as well.

French serves on the board of Friends Forever and the National Wildlife Federation Action Fund and was a founder of the Friends of the Music Hall in Portsmouth. A past Portsmouth Citizen of the Year, his other volunteer endeavors have included the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Prescott Park Arts Festival, Strawberry Banke and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.

John Harrigan has been described as “an icon of New Hampshire’s North Country.”

Harrigan began his newspaper career in 1968 and went on to own the Coos County Democrat and The News and Sentinel in Colebrook and to become a First Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Reporting.

For 36 years, his column "Woods, Water and Wildlife" was featured in the New Hampshire Sunday News, and his "North Country Notebook" continues to run in 13 weekly newspapers in New Hampshire.

Harrigan’s love for New Hampshire also extends beyond his writing.

His volunteer activities include the Northern Forest Lands Council and the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Task Force, and in 2010, he received the Profile Award for his work on the conservation and preservation of New Hampshire’s natural resources.

For all the details on Commencement 2016, visit the website for the Durham campus [here](#), UNH Law [here](#) and Manchester [here](#).

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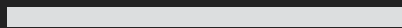
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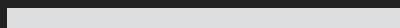
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The stories are written by the staff of **UNH Communications and Public Affairs**.

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