

## Media Relations

# UNH Announces 2012 Granite State Award And Honorary Degree Recipients

March 28, 2012

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DURHAM, N.H. - A political activist and a historic preservationist are this year's recipients of the University of New Hampshire's Granite State Award, given in recognition of outstanding contributions to the state.

Maxine Morse, former chairwoman of the New Hampshire Commission on Laws Affecting Mental Health, and Valerie Cunningham, who is credited with being the inspiration behind the creation of Portsmouth's Black Heritage Trail, will receive the awards during UNH's 142th commencement Saturday, May 19, 2012.

Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, Holocaust survivor and artist Samuel Bak, and commencement speaker Ronald Noble, head of the international policing organization INTERPOL, will receive honorary degrees.

Morse and the commission worked tirelessly on legislative efforts to help the mentally ill and those with other disabilities, seeing 15 proposals enacted into law. Among them was the abolishment of the law that permitted the state to involuntarily sterilize residents at county and state facilities. Under Morse's leadership, the commission was instrumental in reforming state law that had placed the burden of proof on rape victims. Prior to the statute change, a woman who was raped could be required to testify in court about her prior sexual experience.

Morse has served on numerous boards such as the Greater Manchester Mental Health Center, Odyssey House, New Horizons, the New Hampshire Social Welfare Council, the Lakes Region Mental Health Center, and the Friends of New Hampshire Music Festival. She is involved in several cultural and political initiatives, including Portsmouth's Music Hall and Canterbury Shaker Village and is an avid fan of UNH men's and women's hockey, and a supporter of the UNH departments of theatre and dance and music.

Cunningham is a past recipient of the Sen. Edward M. Kennedy Social Justice Award. In 2008 she was named a Restore America Hero by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and HGTV Restore America. In 2005, she was appointed by Gov. John Lynch to serve on the N.H. Commission on the Status of Women.

She is the founding member of several civic organizations, including the Seacoast African American Cultural Center, the Blues Bank Collective, the New Hampshire Circle of Friends, and the Portsmouth-Greater Accra Sister City Connection. From 2001 to 2004 she was curator of the New Hampshire Library of Traditional Jazz, housed in Special Collections at the UNH Dimond Library. She served as an administrative assistant and office manager at the UNH Counseling Center from 1985 to 1987.

Sen, professor of economics and philosophy at Harvard University, was awarded the 1998 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his contributions to welfare economics and social choice theory, and for his interest in the problems of society's poorest members. He is best known for his work on the economic and political cases of famines, and for his contributions to the problems of evaluation and measurement of poverty, inequality, unemployment, and human development.

Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, from 1998 to 2004, Sen is currently the Thomas W. Lamont University Professor at Harvard. He is a former president of the American Economic Association, the International Economic Association, and the Econometric Society. His books have been translated into more than 30 languages. His most recent book is "The Idea of Justice."

Bak had his first art exhibit in the Vilna Ghetto (then part of Nazi-occupied Poland, now the capital of [Lithuania](#)) in 1942 when he was 9 years old. He and his mother were the only family members to

 
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survive the war. He has established himself as one of the most important artists to address the subject of the Holocaust.

Bak's work has been shown in museums and galleries across Europe, the United States, and Israel. The Holocaust scholar Lawrence Langer has argued that Bak ranks with Felix Nussbaum as among the most important Holocaust artists. Yad Vashem, the memorial site in Jerusalem, staged a major retrospective of Bak's work in its museum.

Recently a collection of Bak's work was donated to Facing History and Ourselves, a Boston-based organization dedicated to providing educational materials regarding the Holocaust, intolerance, and genocide. These paintings now constitute a traveling exhibition.

Noble '79 is a tenured professor at the [New York University School of Law](#), on leave of absence while serving at the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). Under his leadership, INTERPOL developed the first global communications network allowing all 190 INTERPOL member countries to communicate in real-time and to access INTERPOL's police tools and services.

Recognizing a critical gap in border security efforts, Noble spearheaded the creation of the only global database of stolen and lost travel documents and the technical tools that put this vital resource directly into the hands of frontline officers at key locations, including border control points.

**Photo links can be downloaded here:**

[http://unh.edu/news/cj\\_nr/2012/mar/jr26awards\\_morse.png](http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2012/mar/jr26awards_morse.png)

Caption: Maxine Morse, former chairwoman of the New Hampshire Commission on Laws Affecting Mental Health, is a recipient of the 2012 University of New Hampshire's Granite State Award.

[http://unh.edu/news/cj\\_nr/2012/mar/jr26awards\\_cunningham.jpg](http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2012/mar/jr26awards_cunningham.jpg)

Caption: Valerie Cunningham, the inspiration behind the creation of Portsmouth's Black Heritage Trail, is a recipient of the 2012 University of New Hampshire's Granite State Award.

[http://unh.edu/news/cj\\_nr/2012/mar/jr26awards\\_sen.jpg](http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2012/mar/jr26awards_sen.jpg)

Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen will receive an honorary degree at UNH's 142th commencement Saturday, May 19, 2012.

[http://unh.edu/news/cj\\_nr/2012/mar/jr26awards\\_bak.png](http://unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2012/mar/jr26awards_bak.png)

Holocaust survivor and artist Samuel Bak will receive an honorary degree at UNH's 142th commencement.

<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/Noble.jpg>

UNH commencement speaker Ronald Noble.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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