

## Media Relations

April 20, 2016

### UNH Announces 2016 Granite State Award and Honorary Degree Recipients

DURHAM, N.H. – A Harriet Tubman scholar, a female Air Force commander and two Granite State icons will be recognized for their contributions at the University of New Hampshire’s commencement ceremony Saturday, May 21, 2016.

John Harrigan and Jameson French will receive the Granite State Award in recognition of their outstanding contributions to the state. Harrigan owned and published three weekly newspapers in northern New Hampshire and is known as the voice of the North Country. French is a longtime Portsmouth resident who has served as chair of many boards related to the forest industry. He also served on the NH Charitable Foundation board for 17 years and led the campaign to restore the North Church steeple in Market Square.

Also being recognized are Kate Clifford Larson ‘03G, Col. Colleen Ryan ‘82 and commencement speaker Richard Haass, all of whom will receive honorary degrees.

Harrigan is an award-winning journalist who at one time owned both the Coos County Democrat and The News and Sentinel in Colebrook. He was first finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in breaking news reporting in 1998. He wrote an outdoor column that ran in the New Hampshire Sunday News for 36 years. In 2010 he received the Profile Award for his work on the conservation and preservation of the state’s natural resources, serving as a volunteer on the Northern Forest Lands Council and the Connecticut Lakes Partnership Task Force.

French, president and CEO of Northland Forest Products, is the immediate past president of The Hardwood Foundation and has served as chairman of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. He is currently the vice chair of the Land Trust Alliance and a trustee of New Hampshire’s chapter of The Nature Conservancy. A longtime Portsmouth resident, he has chaired the boards for Strawberry Banke Museum and is an ex officio member of the board of trustees for The Music Hall. In 2012 he received the Eileen Foley Award, which recognized New Hampshire residents who dedicate themselves to making the world a better place.

Larson is an historian, author and leading Harriet Tubman scholar. Her most recent book, “Rosemary: The Hidden Kennedy Daughter,” spent five weeks on The New York Times bestseller list and was voted one of People magazine’s top 10 books in 2015. From 2002 to 2006 she was the consulting historian for the National Parks Service’s Harriet Tubman Special Resource Study, which led to several years of ongoing legislation to establish two national parks in Tubman’s honor.

Ryan took command of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in 2006, becoming the first female commander in the base’s 58-year history. She is a master navigator with more than 3,400 hours and was part of the advance teams for Air Force One during the administrations of Presidents George

H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Ryan entered the Air Force in 1982 after receiving her commission through UNH's ROTC program.

Haass will also receive an honorary degree. The president of the Council on Foreign Relations, will deliver the 2016 University of New Hampshire commencement address.

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 13,000 undergraduate and 2,500 graduate students.

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