DSU Holds its First-Ever December Commencement

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DSU President Harry L. Williams presents the Presidential Academic Excellence Award to Megan Reno, who earned a BS in Elementary Education.

As evidence of its ongoing enrollment growth, Delaware State University held its first-ever December Commencement ceremony as approximately 200 students celebrated the completion of their academic studies.

DSU President Harry L. Williams and Provost Alton Thompson were joined by U.S. Sen. Christopher Coons in congratulating the graduates during the indoor ceremony held in the Memorial Hall Gymnasium.

During the Dec. 15 ceremony, Dr. Williams presented the Presidential Academic Excellence Award to Megan Reno, a Summa Cum Laude 4.0 GPA elementary education bachelor's degree graduate.

Rev. Ellis B. Louden, the pastor of Mt. Zion AME Church of Dover, was the December Commencement keynote speaker. He used the biblical story of Cain and Abel to illustrate the challenges that are ahead.

DSU President Harry L. Williams was joined at the December Commencement by Rev. Ellis Louden, keynote speaker, and U.S. Sen. Chris Coons.

Rev. Louden noted that everyone has a bit of both biblical brothers in them. He pointed out the graduates on Commencement day were akin to Abel, in that they were celebrating success. But out in the profession world, like Cain, there will be some form of rejection.

"When you set out in this world and face social crisis,' there are times you are going to feel like you are rejected," Rev. Louden said. "Always know there is hope. You will be able to get yourself up, brush yourself off and be inspired to do all that you can to uplift the quality of life."

A posthumous degree was also presented in memory of Lionel Barnes of Rehoboth Beach, Del., who died suddenly on Aug. 28. Mr. Barnes attended DSU's Sussex County site in Georgetown, Del., where he was pursuing a Bachelor of Social Work Degree. Dr. Delores Finger Wright, DSU associate professor of social work, accepted the degree on behalf of the family.

The University's administrators decided to establish a December Commencement as a result of feedback from students who complete their studies during the summer sessions or fall semester. With record enrollment for three consecutive – including this fall semester's record 4.425 students – the December Commencement in addition to the tradition May Commencement will help DSU manage the growing number of participants in future graduation ceremonies.

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