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SPSU Summer Grads Set Record

Marcus E. Howard

Marietta Daily Journal

August 2008

MARIETTA - Southern Polytechnic State University conducted its summer commencement Saturday, graduating its largest summer class ever.

University President Dr. Lisa Rossabacher said the 205 students who received degrees from the technology institution reflected a cross-section of its student body.

"We have over 200 students receiving degrees today. The graduates range in age from 21 to 61 years old, and the graduates represent 24 different countries and nine different states," Rossabacher said. "So that really speaks to the diversity we have here."

Undergraduates made up 70 percent of those who graduated and 41 percent of all graduates majoring in engineering-related fields, according to the university.

Construction law attorney Nicholas Papeleacos of the Atlanta-based firm, Chamberlain, Hrdlicka, White, Williams & Martin, was the commencement speaker.

He is the immediate past-chair of the Southern Polytechnic State University Foundation, which raises private funds for the university. He also serves as a part-time instructor in Southern Poly's Construction Management Department.

Papeleacos spoke to graduates about the importance and need of serving others after they graduated.

"Technology will always change and will always improve," Papeleacos said.

"But, there will always be people who do evil. There will be people who are not interested in the general betterment of our society. I think this calls for all of us to consider - not just the graduates - more service to our fellow man."

He urged the graduates to become involved with people and organizations that serve a need in their communities.

"The challenge for a lot of people who don't have appropriate services or appropriate housing falls on all of us to look within ourselves to see that we have talents and the ability. And to make the promise to go out and help people."

SPSU Summer Grads Set Record, *Continued*

The university's President's Distinguished Scholar Award went to John T. Ingram, who was unable to attend yesterday's ceremony. The honor is given to the undergraduate with the highest grade point average. Ingram majored in Civil Engineering Technology and earned a 3.94 GPA.

Willis Potts, a regent of the University System of Georgia who oversees the Congressional District the university is in, praised Southern Poly's impact on Cobb and the state of Georgia.

He said the school is responsible for 1,139 jobs and contributing \$135 million to the economy.

Yesterday also marked Rossabacher's 10th anniversary as Southern Poly's president. She is the second president to lead the 60-year-old university.

"I figure this (commencement) is probably No. 33 for me at Southern Poly, and every one of them is special," she said.

