5-1-2000

Commencement : 2000 : Spring : Program

University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

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University of South Florida
Commencement Convocation 1956
University of South Florida
Dear Graduates,

Today is a very proud moment for you, your family and friends, and for the University of South Florida. Congratulations on achieving your dream.

We fully appreciate just how hard you worked to reach this milestone. You faced high standards when you entered USF, you have changed in many ways — some obvious, others subtle and nuanced. You have refined your skills in the arts of listening, researching and thinking. You have learned the confidence to challenge ideas, and developed the communications skills necessary to preserve relationships while engaging in dialogue with others.

May your life’s journey never take you far from these principles, and may it bring you frequently back to USF.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Peck
Interim President
University of South Florida
University of South Florida
Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota, Lakeland

Founded in 1956 as the first U.S. university to be created wholly in the 20th century, the University of South Florida is now the largest metropolitan university in the Southeastern United States, with a student body of nearly 35,500 spread across four campuses.

But USF is much more than just a large, state-assisted institution. Its growing reputation as a dynamic research university is spreading around the country, attracting more and more of the nation’s best and brightest scholars to the Tampa Bay Area.

In the most recently completed fiscal year, USF faculty researchers undertook sponsored-research projects totaling more than $161 million, the second-largest grants-and-contracts budget at any of Florida’s 10 public universities. That record sum is further evidence of the scientific strength of the university, which was designated a “Research I” institution by the Florida Board of Regents in 1998. And that research is taking place across an astonishing array of disciplines, from Marine Sciences to Teacher Education to the Neurology. The beneficiaries are not only the master’s, specialist and doctoral programs, including the M.D. Those students have access to 206 undergraduate, masters, specialist and doctoral programs, including the M.D. USF’s entering freshmen this year boasted an average grade-point average of nearly 3.5 and an SAT score of roughly 1,100. And USF’s overall student body is increasingly diverse: More than 26 percent of the student population is now African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American or of foreign nationality.

The rich, multicultural atmosphere of the university is evident not only on the main Tampa campus, but at its branches in St. Petersburg, Sarasota/Manatee and Lakeland, as well as its bustling new centers in downtown Tampa, New Port Richey and North Pinellas County.

One of the largest employers in the Tampa Bay Area with more than 9,000 full- and part-time staff members, USF has an operating budget approaching $850 million and an economic impact on the area well in excess of $2 billion annually. The USF service area includes roughly one-third of Florida’s 15 million residents.

The above information only scratches the surface of the USF story. For more on USF, its campuses, its programs and its community, please visit our World Wide Web site at www.usf.edu.

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The University of South Florida is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award degrees at the baccalaureate, master’s, specialist and doctoral levels, including the Doctor of Medicine. Events, activities, programs and facilities of the University of South Florida are available to all without regard to race, color, marital status, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, Vietnam or disabled veteran status as provided by law and in accordance with the University’s respect for personal dignity.
The Symbols of Learning

Modern academic regalia evolved from the kinds of apparel worn by monks and students in the 11th and 12th centuries to keep warm in the medieval castles and halls in which they studied. Academic life as we know it today began in the Middle Ages—first in the church, then in the guilds. The teaching guild was the Guild of the Master of Arts, and the Bachelor was the apprentice of the Master. Their dress was the outward sign of stature and responsibility. Academic regalia was thus a visible manifestation—in color, pattern and design—that unified those of common discipline and like purpose. In later centuries, to preserve the regalia's dignity and meaning, universities set rules of academic dress. American universities agreed on a definite system in 1895, establishing a code of approved attire. In 1932, the American Council on Education revised this code, which, for the most part, governs the style of academic dress today. The principal features of academic dress are three: the gown, the cap and the hood.

THE GOWN — The gown has become symbolic of the democracy of scholarship, for it completely covers any dress of rank or social standing. The sleeves of the gown indicate the level of the degree held by the wearer. A long, pointed sleeve indicates the bachelor's degree. The master's gown has an oblong sleeve cut in an arc, with a slit at either the upper arm or wrist. The doctor's gown has bell-shaped sleeves and may also have velvet facing and sleeve bars or chevrons. The trimming may be black, or it may match the degree color on the gown edging.

THE CAP — The freed slave in ancient Rome won the privilege of wearing a cap, and so the academic cap is a sign of the freedom of scholarship and the responsibility and dignity with which scholarship endows the wearer. Old poetry records the cap of scholarship as a square symbolizing the book, although other authorities claim that it is a mortar board—the symbol of the masons, a privileged guild. The color of the tassel on the cap denotes the discipline. The tassels on the caps (mortar boards) worn by the faculty may be black or a color indicating the degree. Those who hold a doctoral degree may wear a gold tassel. It is traditional for degree candidates to wear their tassels on the right and for those holding degrees to wear them on the left. Graduates transfer their tassels to the left after conferring of the degrees by the President.

THE MACE — The Academic Ceremonial Mace, which is closely related to maces used by ecclesiastical and civil authorities, dates back to at least the 14th century and is derived from the original battle mace that was designed to protect a king and was carried by the royal bodyguard. This symbolism of authority and power has been conveyed to the Academic Mace and signifies the authority of the Chief Executive Officer of the university. The size, shape and design of academic maces vary tremendously. The most common design has a major shaft that is topped with a head and an ornament, with the lower end of the shaft having a terminal finial.

THE MEDALLION — The medallions worn by candidates for the bachelor's degree identify those graduating with honors. The black hood of a bachelor's candidate indicates a student who has completed graduation requirements for the University-wide Honors Program.

THE SASH — The golden-colored sash is made available to students who are members of university honors societies. The sash is embroidered with the university seal and the student's honors society.

THE HOOD — The hoods are lined with the official colors of the institution conferring the degree. They are edged and bound with velvet of the color appropriate for the degree. At USF, the lining of the hood is green with a gold chevron, representing the university's colors. Among the trimming colors of hoods worn by our faculty today are:

- Apricot — Nursing
- Blue (Dark) — Philosophy
- Blue (Light) — Education
- Blue (Peacock) — Public Administration
- Brown — Fine Arts
- Citron — Social Work/Criminology/Rehab. Counseling
- Crimson — Journalism/Communication
- Drab — Business
- Golden Yellow — Science
- Green — Medicine
- Lemon Yellow — Library Science
- Orange — Engineering
- Pink — Music
- Salmon — Public Health
- Scarlet — Theology
- Violet — Architecture
- White — Arts and Letters
ST. PETERSBURG CAMPUS ORDER OF EXERCISES

Richard E. Peck, Presiding

PRELUDE CONCERT
Pomp and Circumstance
The Romanski Brass Quintet
Elgar (please stand)

PROCESSIONAL
Suresh Khator
Commencement Marshal

NATIONAL ANTHEM
Ann Poonkasem
USF Student

GREETINGS
H. William Heller
Acting Vice President, USF St. Petersburg

REMARKS
President Peck

RECOGNITION AND AWARDS
Anete Vasquez
Pinellas County Teacher of the Year
Palm Harbor University High School

RETIING FACULTY
Charlene Long
College of Nursing

STUDENT REFLECTIONS
Kristin Badger
Student Body Representative

OUTSTANDING SENIORS
Acting Vice President Heller

OUTSTANDING GRADUATE
Ken Griffin
Pinellas County Alumni Chapter

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
Judge Raymond O. Gross
Sixth Judicial Circuit
President, USF Alumni Association

CONFERRING OF GRADUATE DEGREES
President Peck

CONFERRING OF BACCALAUREATE DEGREES
President Peck

CLOSING REMARKS
Acting Vice President Heller

ALMA MATER
Ms. Poonkasem

RECESSINAL
Trumpet Tune
The Romanski Brass Quintet

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Judge Raymond O. Gross

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

Judge Raymond O. Gross is a native Floridian. Born and raised in Orlando, a product of the public schools, Judge Gross received his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of South Florida in 1969. Immediately upon graduation, he worked for the Florida Probation and Parole Commission in Hillsborough County. He then attended and graduated from Florida State University College of Law in 1972 and became a member of the Florida Bar that same year. Prior to being appointed as a Circuit Court Judge in 1995 by the late Gov. Lawton Chiles, Judge Gross was engaged in an active trial practice in Pinellas County. During his career, he has devoted his primary efforts to the areas of law and education.

As an attorney, Judge Gross served as President of the Clearwater Bar Association, Florida Bar Grievance Committee and the Sixth Circuit Judicial Nominating Committee. He continues to serve as a member of several Supreme Court Rules Committees, as well as the Statewide Dependency Court Improvement Committee and the Family Court Steering Committee.

Gross has been involved in education at all levels. He previously served as chairman of Oak Grove Middle School's SAC Committee, and was on USF's National Alumni Board of Directors. Judge Gross also served as president of FSU's College of Law Alumni Association and was on the Foundation Board of Directors for both USF and FSU. He now is President of USF's Alumni Association.

Judge Gross currently is assigned as the only Judge presiding over dependency cases in Pinellas County. As the dependency Judge, he is responsible for deciding cases which deal with children at risk. In this capacity, Judge Gross oversees all dependency trials, as well as termination of parental rights cases and adoptions in Pinellas County. He is married to Paulette Szabo Gross, who graduated from USF in 1968 with a bachelor's degree in sociology. The couple has two children.

Anete Vasquez

PINELLAS COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Anete Vasquez, an English teacher at Palm Harbor University High School, is Pinellas County's Teacher of the Year, as well as one of four finalists for Florida's Teacher of the Year. She teaches ninth and eleventh graders enrolled in the International Baccalaureate program, one of the top levels of academic placement in high schools. Palm Harbor University High School is ranked 14th in the nation when it comes to challenging students.

Vasquez' engaging teaching style and love of the classroom earned her the award. She encourages strong participation from her students to create lesson plans, and her students respond well to her methods as they immerse themselves in learning.

She set her sights on teaching at an early age, deciding by the eighth grade to follow in her family's footsteps no fewer than five of her close relatives are educators. Vasquez graduated from the University of Florida with a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in education.

She furthered her training by earning her National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification in 1999, one of the highest honors in the teaching profession. The certification involves a lengthy, rigorous process that tests teachers' mettle, knowledge and job performance.