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What's News At Rhode Island College

Rhode Island College

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2005 commencements –
RIC graduation ceremonies honor and celebrate academic achievement

"Long road, positive end."
- Dina Cappalli
2005 graduate

Commencement days – undergraduate and graduate – arrived last month for approximately 1,400 RIC students who crossed the stage for a college degree and instantly entered the next stage in their lives, one that now includes the promise of stimulating careers and callings – and the academic standing to help them get there.

Undergraduate Commencement
May 21

Warm atmosphere trumps gloomy skies and chilly temps

A strong wind – cold and constant – surged through the RIC esplanade on commencement day as a chain of rain clouds settled darkly over the campus. But the colorful regalia, the palette of vivid flowers, and row upon row of incandescent faces made it seem like a warm, sunny day... which, of course, it was for over 1,100 newly degreeed grads and their families and friends.

The members of the Class of 2005 had endured many years (four? six? more?) of endless assignments, tough exams and the inevitable doubts about ever finishing. So they certainly weren't about to let a little bad weather sink their spirits.

"I'm excited it's done, because it took so long to get here," said new grad Heather Black, an education major from Newport News, Va. "It's also a nice time to get together with friends and classmates you haven't seen in a while," she added.

Don Carrara of North Providence, a secondary education English major said, "It's rewarding for all of us in the education dept. It's been a hard journey."

Dina Cappalli, also of North Providence, a double major in elementary education and history, is a 36-year-old who first attended RIC 2005

2005 commencements –
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Clockwise from upper left Lucky Rattanabandith, Quzette P. Nembhard receiving her degree from RIC President Nazarian, Rosa Brito, and Kathi Bacon, cheering before receiving her degree.
A long overdue graduation for Olive Plep ‘68

by Jane Fusco
What's News Editor

It took 37 years but Olive Donahue Plep finally walked in the graduation procession in May to get her diploma.

Olive, now 60, earned her degree in education in 1968. She had married Herbert Plep, a Naval officer who was stationed in Newport, a month before graduation. The couple left for Herbert’s duty station in Georgia right after they were married, so she couldn’t attend the commencement exercises.

It was something she has regretted ever since.

“When you start asking yourself about the things you wish you had done, I wanted to graduate," Plep said. Seeing her two children graduate over the last few years made her realize what she had missed on that important day in 1968. At her son David’s urging, she contacted Ellie O’Neill, director of RIC’s Alumni Affairs, and asked if she could attend this year’s ceremony.

In her email to O’Neill, Plep wrote: "...my kids tell me to ‘go for it, mom!’ - so, I am." “I think we should do all that we can to make this happen," said RIC President John Nazarian when informed of the request.

Plep and her family were surprised that the College accepted her back so willingly. “This proves I can always come back home," Plep said.

Like many RIC students, Plep was the first in her family to attend and graduate from college. The oldest child of a struggling, single-parent family, Plep and her siblings were taught the value of an education by their mother who repeatedly told them that, "no one can ever take it (education) away from you.”

Plep taught history in many schools as her husband's assignments took them all over the country. "I was so well prepared for wherever I went to teach," she said. Other teachers often asked Plep for assistance in organizing their lessons when they saw how well prepared she was. "I would tell everyone that RIC was my foundation," she said.

Plep was glad to come back to RIC with her husband and family. It was the first time Plep had been back to the College since 1968. She also took a new graduation photo. Herbert carried Olive's RIC yearbook photo with him while stationed off the coast of Vietnam. The photo became damaged by the salt air and sea elements.

Most importantly for Plep is that, “My college remembered me. If I had graduated from a big, mega university, they wouldn’t remember me.” It is tradition in Plep’s family to give a bouquet of roses to the graduate. After the ceremony, Plep brought her bouquet to her mother’s grave. “She would be proud,” she said.

Future grads?

Children from the RIC Cooperative Preschool present a check for $125 to Peg Brown, vice president for development and college relations, for the Deborah Griffin Scholarship Fund. The money was raised through a bake sale.

Annual RIC Foundation Golf Day set for June 20

The Rhode Island College Foundation will hold its 16th annual Golf Day at the Metacomet Country Club in East Providence on Monday, June 20. Proceeds will go to the undergraduate scholarship program. Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m. followed by a shotgun start at 1 p.m. (Each player will play his own ball.) Dinner will be at 6:30 p.m. Cost of golf with lunch and dinner is $175. Sponsorships are available from $850 to $5,000. Call 401-456-9625 for more information.
Michael Iannone brings extraordinary lessons to his students

by Jane Fusco
What's News Editor

At first glance, it is obvious that Michael Iannone is a survivor. Spend a few minutes with him and it is even more obvious that he is an inspiration.

Iannone graduated from the College on May 21 despite doubts, even his own, that he ever would. He is now ready to teach science to middle and high school students through life lessons that few people will ever know.

Iannone was seriously injured in the Station nightclub fire on Feb. 20, 2003, the deadliest fire in the state's history, killing 100 people. He was comatose for seven-and-a-half weeks after the fire, lost an ear and a hand, sustained burns over much of his face and upper body, underwent more than 40 surgeries, followed by countless doctor visits and grueling physical therapy that put his education on hold.

But not for long.

Between surgeries, Iannone audited classes to catch up on what he missed. By the following January, less than a year after the fire, he instantly impressed his students full time, and more determined than ever to earn his degree.

"Most people had doubts that I could come back so soon, but I wouldn't give them the satisfaction," he said.

Returning to school wasn't easy for Iannone. He said he felt isolated at times.

"So many things had changed, the way I had to do things, the way I looked at things, the way people looked at me," he said. The staff at Mass. General Hospital, where he was taken immediately after the fire, taught him that he wasn't "a freak."

That's when the scientist in him took hold and he rationalized his future. He wanted to become a science teacher and that took precedence over all else.

"If you're going to be upset, be upset for the first half hour and go on with your day," became his credo.

He set to the exhausting task of learning to use his one hand to do everything. It was particularly difficult in lab classes and working on a computer. Even more frustrating was trying to assemble an electronic portfolio for lesson plans.

Still, he endured.

Iannone said that it was Daniel Snowman and Peter Meyer of the physical sciences department, and his advisor, Paul Tiskus, who encouraged him, giving him extra time and help when he needed it, never giving up on him.

"They believed in me. Anything I needed, they did for me," he said.

Meyer had Iannone in classes before and after the fire. He said Iannone was one of his best students.

"The amazing thing is that after the fire, there was no change in him. He maintains the same level of enthusiasm. He never feels like he has a disability," Meyer said.

Iannone knew he would face even greater challenges as a student teacher. "The kids are nervous enough adjusting to a new teacher," he said, but he was more concerned about their reaction to his appearance.

His first assignment was at Barrington Middle School. There he began his first class by pulling off his prosthetic hand and explaining its functionality. His students were instantly impressed with his direct approach and gave him their full attention in every class.

"The kids don't away to be prepared for anything," he said.

"The amazing thing is that they have a teacher totally committed to their learning, and one who will test himself right along with them."

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"The kids don't..."
Big Sisters’ director helped ’05 grad step up to a better future

by Jane Fusco
What’s News Editor

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50 years later, the Class of '55 remains closely connected to RIC

On a VERY crisp commencement morning, representatives of the Class of 1955 assembled in the Student Union Ballroom to prepare to march in the graduation procession, carrying the banner that proclaimed their moment as the 50th reunion class. Amid sur-

The Class of 1955 were part of the undergraduate commencement procession May 21.

GOLDEN CLASS: Members of the Class of 1955 were part of the undergraduate commencement procession May 21.

members that have nurtured and taught me everything I need to make a true difference in my life and the lives of others.

Thank you to all of my professors, staff members, administrators, and to my fellow RIC classmates and friends who I’ve worked with along the way. It has been an unforgettable four years and it has truly been an honor to represent the Class of 2005.

Everything I know, everything I am, and everything I will be… I owe to this College. — Suzy Alba, President, Class of 2005.

I find it difficult to sum up my four years here since no words could ever describe the feeling I get when I talk about being a member of the RIC community, and now a graduate.

Graduation day meant even more than I ever expected.

I find it silly that I had thought about what that day would be like for so long. I wondered what the weather would bring, who our honorary degree recipients would be, and how I’d feel after walking across the stage. I had hoped that my farewell remarks would be well embraced and I’d make it through without mistakes or tears in my eyes.

Well, there were lots of tears that day.

I can never explain the emotions I felt as I marched by professors and staff members with whom I had formed such strong personal and professional relationships over the last four years.

Nor can I explain what I felt as I walked across the quad to Pomp and Circumstance with my fellow classmates knowing this would be the last time we would all be together on campus.

I never thought I’d feel so proud when looking up at President Nazarian from my seat knowing full well that it was much colder out than he had expected, nor did I know that the ceremony would be over in the blink of an eye and I’d wish I could have been out there in the cold just a little longer.

Graduation day has come and gone, and so has my undergraduate career at Rhode Island College. I know, however, that this really is only the beginning.

I leave here grateful to have received this degree and know that I am responsible to work even harder than I ever have during my undergraduate years to help ensure others have the opportunity that I have been given. I leave here knowing that true success lies in giving something back.

I may be leaving this campus, but I will forever be a part of the Rhode Island College community: a community that is closely connected to RIC.

Coming into this institution four, five or in some cases, more years ago, this event seemed like it was just a dream.

Who really knows what the future has in store. However, because of this institution, we are equipped with the knowledge and the skills to succeed. Now it is up to us to use these talents to make a difference in the world.

We may have had classes with the scientist who will cure cancer, a foreign diplomat who will help foster world peace, or the social worker or educator that will make the difference in the life of a child each and every day.

The sky is the limit. I encourage you to find that cause or belief that you are passionate about. Find that career that you can wake up every morning and say, I can’t wait to go to work and leave my imprint on the world!

I leave here knowing that an honor to represent the Class of 2005.

Thank you to all of my professors, staff members, administrators, and to my fellow RIC classmates and friends who I’ve worked with along the way. It has been an unforgettable four years and it has truly been an honor to represent the Class of 2005.

Everything I know, everything I am, and everything I will be… I owe to this College. — Suzy Alba, President, Class of 2005.

The Class of 1955 chose to raise funds in memory of classmates Bob Coelho, Dave McCarthy, and Shirley Szarko Hewitt, all class presidents who had died early in their lives.

To date, over $40,400 has been pledged or given to support the Class Fund. This is the second largest amount ever raised by a 50th reunion class, the current record having been set by the Class of 1954. Prior to these most recent two years, the class record for reunion giving was held by the Class of 1940 - a class that set the precedent for extraordinary giving during a 50th reunion year.

Members of the class who have pledged or given $1,000 or more to the fund include:

Patricia Berlam
Ennis Bisbano
Roland Blais
Mary Connole
Wileen Coyne
John Hagan
Jane and Raymond Hart
Barbara Kielty
Carol Louison Berge
Barbara Michelton
Ruth Morse
Lillian Mottola
Patricia Patnaude
Claire Renasco
Beverly Rossi
Ronald St. Onge
Mary Terry

Class members may continue to give to their fund either through outright gifts or gifts made through their estate plans. The class will be working on a fund statement that will establish the criteria for making an annual scholarship award in honor of their deceased class leaders. All gifts should be made to the RIC Foundation, Class of 1955 50th Anniversary Fund.

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The sky is the limit. I encourage you to find that cause or belief that you are passionate about. Find that career that you can wake up every morning and say, I can’t wait to go to work and leave my imprint on the world!

I leave here knowing that
Preparing for commencement: a race to the finish line

by Lauren Mesale ‘06
Staff Writer

Each May, undergraduate and graduate commencement takes place at Rhode Island College. The lawns are lush and green, the flowerbeds neatly groomed. Students cross the stage to accept their diplomas, wearing their regalia and breathing a bittersweet sigh of relief as their college days come to a close.

Little do they know that it takes over 1,000 man-hours of prework and assistants’ work to get everything ready during the week leading up to commencement. The regalia, diplomas, invitations, and personnel do not magically appear. And the campus does not give itself a makeover for this special occasion. A look behind the scenes reveals how it all happens.

The path to a perfect graduation day is treacherous to countless members of faculty and staff, as every department contributes to the big day. Many departments offer volunteers and students or volunteers to help organize and prepare for commencement. Many graduates return as commencement marshals.

So no sooner do classes begin, than does the race — and it deserves to be called a race — to prepare for commencement day. In February, the Campus Store sends lists to students and faculty to obtain their degrees, notifying them of the deadline for forms who has ordered their cap and gown orders. Michelle Mare, of the Campus Store staff, then passes the orders with Waldorf Cap and Gown Supply.

All the while, the Campus Store is inundated with calls from students. The number one question: “Which color tassel and hood represents my school of education at RIC and find that so many of our most talented actors are RIC grads or undergrads,” said David Payton ‘77, executive director of Kaleidoscope Theatre.

RIC grads find success with Kaleidoscope Theatre

Two 2005 graduates of Rhode Island College’s theatre program are taking their show on the road. Tommy Iafrate and Rob Ferland have officially become assistant artistic director and technical director, respectively, at Kaleidoscope Theatre. Both have worked part time for Kaleidoscope for several years, Iafrate has acted and directed, while Ferland created a state-of-the-art sound system. Their individual talents have come together to help the theatre troupe perform at many venues throughout New England.

At the College, Ferland was the first student to design the lighting for a Mainstage musical with the 2005 performance of The Pirates of Penzance. Ferland has also worked for five years as a technical assistant for the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical The Who’s Tommy.

For more information on Kaleidoscope Theatre, call 401-942-3637.
Civic engagement theme of Cap and Gown Convocation

It wasn’t graduation day, but caps, gowns and the sounds of Pomp and Circumstance filled Roberts Hall Auditorium in a May 4 ceremony honoring the Class of 2005. The Cap and Gown Convocation celebrated personal achievement and the commencement season with academic awards, the announcement of the class gift and the traditional capping of the underclass. Civic involvement emerged as a theme of the event, brought out in messages from student and faculty speakers, and RIC President John Nazarian.

Nazarian said of the Class of 2005, “I believe that (its) enduring hallmark will be the renewal of a sense of civic responsibility and community engagement.”

He pointed out that this year’s Cap and Gown day was the anniversary of Rhode Island becoming the first colony to declare independence from Britain. “Today, 229 years later, the need for educated and public-spirited leaders remains as crucial as ever,” said Nazarian. “Our communities will remain strong and vibrant as long as citizens take on the responsibilities of civic involvement. I have seen the class of 2005 take a special interest in these responsibilities.”

Nazarian said he hoped that the College would remember the class for its “leadership, scholarship and generosity.”

Those attributes were recognized by Dan King, vice president for academic affairs, who announced departmental awards for over 50 soon-to-be grads (see list below).

Ainsley Morisseau, a magna cum laude graduate, received three honors: the Eleanor M. McMahon Award for work in the College Honors Program, the Communications Achievement Award in public and professional concentration, and the Bertha Christina Andrews Emin Award for Outstanding Achievement.

Morisseau completed an honors project that studied the state of women in contemporary American politics and suggested ways that women could access positions of power at the highest levels. She is a co-founder of the Reading Across the Curriculum project and a leader in the Rhode Island High School Civic Engagement Project, the 2004 Debate Watch Program, the Urban Debate League of Rhode Island, and the Alcohol Task Force.

Angel M. Desmarais was the recipient of the James Houston Award in anthropology. Desmarais, who also has interests in biology, anatomy and forensics, has been working since last year as the first and only anthropological intern in the State Medical Examiner’s Office.

Babacar Gueye, a native of Senegal who came to the U.S. in 1995, said of the Class of 2005, “I believe that students that they are less likely to vote than other demographics, giving them “virtually no voice as a political constituency.”

Endress, however, said that education for citizenship has long been “in the bones” of the College, and cited many examples of civically engaged students at RIC. (The full address appears on next page.)

The student speech was given by David Cranshaw, who said that RIC “prepared us not only to be professionals in our chosen field but active members in the community as well.”

Class officers Suzy Alba (president), April Arnold (vice president), Rachel Sokoll (secretary), and David Cranshaw (treasurer) presented Nazarian with a facsimile of an electronic message board to represent the class’s gift to the College, which is mounted on a wall in the Student Union lobby.

The national anthem was sung by Nadezhda Maryanov and Lucky Rattanabandith, who also received the Cantor Jacob Hohenwarter Award in music. The RIC Wind Ensemble closed the event by performing the College’s Alma Mater song, composed by Grace Electa Bird, professor of educational psychology at the College from 1914 to 1942.

A reception for students and their families followed the ceremony in the McCarthy-Calvin Courtyard.

Recipients of special departmental awards

Cap and Gown Day - 2005 recipients of special departmental awards

Angel M. Desmarais, James Houston Award in Anthropology
Stephanie M. Farrar, Art History Award
Jeremy D. Swain, Studio Art Award
Stephanie J. Pinto, wires. Christina Carlson Award for Excellence in Biology
Zacharie J. Lacourse, Theodore Lemeshka Award in Biology
Ainsley E. Morisseau, Eleanor M. McMahon Award in the College Honors Program
Ainsley E. Morisseau, Communications Achievement Award in Public and Professional Communications
Michael Iannone, Educational Studies Award
Kathryn J. Lucas, Educational Studies Award
Lisa R. Bucci, Katherine Murray Prize in Educational Studies
Emily K. Nuri, Katherine Murray Prize in Educational Studies
Katherine S. Bellows, Elementary Education Award
Jennifer A. Puniello, Jean Garrigue Award in English
Matthew S. Ruggiero, Mark W. Estes Film Studies Award
Tyla J. Perry, Rose Butler Browne Award
Ainsley E. Morisseau, Bertha Christina Andrews Emin Award for Outstanding Achievement
Molly E. DeMarco, Bertha Christina Andrews Emin Award for Scholarly Excellence
Pamela Haczynski-Storme, Health and Physical Education Award
Elizabeth K. Parrish, Clasborne deB. Pell Award in History
Michael P. Riley, John E. Hetherman Award in Intercollegiate Athletics
Katherine E. McCalligett, Helen M. Murphy Award in Interdisciplinary Studies
Kathleen E. Sweeney, John Silva Memorial Scholastic Award in the School of Management
Thomas J. Hara, Outstanding Student Award in Accounting
Daniel S. Triggs, Outstanding Student Award in Marketing
Richard L. Barios, Wall Street Journal Award in Economics or Finance
Sara A. Czyzewicz, Richard A. Howland Computer Award
Yvette M. Mongeon, Christopher R. Mitchell Award in Mathematics
Cynthia Navarro, Nelson A. Guernier Memorial Award in Spanish
Bryan A. Evans, Tegu Polyglot Award in Modern Languages
Matthew R. Furtado, Peter Jeffrey Archambault Memorial Award in Theatre
Lucky Rattanabandith, Cantor Jacob Hohenwarter Award in Music
Sarah N. Hodosh, Alice K. Pellegrino Music Education Award
Melissa M. Sparks, Rhode Island College Theatre Award
Kate E. Jasmin, Yetta Rouch Mceler Dance Award
Jo-anne R. Sine-Calise, Nursing Award in Service Excellence
Elizabeth A. Jenkins-Donahue, Nursing Award for Undergraduate Recipient
Molly E. DeMarco, Thomas J. Howell Award in Philosophy
Ryan D. Tassone, Thomas J. Howell Award in Philosophy
Barbajide O. Okandeji, American Institute of Chemists Award
Thomas J. Laffrette, Ronald J. Bokar Award in Physical Science
Megan A. Almond, Departmental Physics Award
Alison J. Lambert, North Providence League of Women Voters Award
Monique T. Renzi, Herbert R. Winter Award for Academic Excellence in Political Science
Erin L. Carr, Victoria Ledeburg Psychology Award
Ashley R. Folgo, Victoria Ledeburg Psychology Award
Danielle M. Cardi, Bachelor of Social Work Community Services Award
Jessica L. Clark, Anthony E. Ricci Social Work Practice Award
Sarah M. Moreau, Mary Ann Hawkes Award in Justice Studies
Pamela T. Bliss, Lauris B. Whitman Award in Social Work
Plinio E. German, Elsa E. Bonaventura Award in Special Education
Amanda Frazer, Josephine A. Stillings Award in Special Education
Carolyn J. Taylor, Josephine A. Stillings Award in Special Education
Cap and Gown Convocation address, May 4, 2005 by Valerie Endress, assistant professor of communications

President Nazarian, members of the administration, platform guests and honorees, faculty and staff colleagues, family and friends of our students, and most especially to the officers and members of the class of 2005, I am honored to have the opportunity to offer a few words today at the event that marks the beginning of our commencement festivities.

The class officers requested that I focus my remarks on the topic of civic engagement. And for the last few months, I have been concerned about how best to approach this speech. Everyone, it would seem, has something to say about the health of our democracy and civic life. It is and has been for a very long time the favored topic for speeches during the commencement season. For that reason, it’s difficult to discuss civic engagement without resorting to the clichés. Or, at least, I find it difficult.

According to the rules of the genre, I should tell the class of 2005 that, as the leaders of tomorrow, you possess both the capability and the mandate to do so. I should go on to say that the very word democracy itself is a centrifugal force and it pulls many different constituencies into the center of a civically-engaged college. The center matters; that we are a nation dominated by civitas. Still, it’s clear that education for citizenship is a key part of the blueprint for how you will lead.

To be sure, we have far too many students without the commitment and experience. Yet, inside this academic institution we have recognized that we need to help them.

Perhaps that sounds too much like an assessment of your parents’ lifestyle to be compelling. So let’s lessen the generational gap and talk about this issue in ways the Class of 2005 might readily identify: You are still less likely to vote than any other demographic. And, as a consequence, your voting record exacerbates a vicious cycle, whereas candidates don’t engage young people because they don’t vote, and young people don’t vote because candidates and politicians don’t address those issues that are important to them. Thus, you have virtually no voice as a political constituency. If the majority of you voted, do you believe that Congress would be talking about the reduction of crime or education? Or other means for financing a college education? One has to wonder whether first-time home buying might not be a priority on the political agenda if you cast your ballot in greater numbers.

Beyond the issue of formal politics, let’s move into the ideas that are closer to Putnam’s notion of community. Despite the positive relationship that exists between campus and community involvement and career success, students across the nation are for less likely to view themselves primarily as members of a ‘community of learners.’ We know, for example, that many of our graduates today holds part-time or full-time jobs while they attend school.

A near majority of undergraduates are commuters. And, most national surveys say that you are consumers who wish to get your training and credentials as quickly, cheaply, and as easily as possible. Hence, your generation’s need to complete professional training with as few distractions as possible makes it difficult to insist that you view yourself in the broader goals of intellectual and personal development. This is the challenge that presents itself to admin- istrator, faculty, and students alike who understand the vital need and essential civic value of civic engagement.

Many students of the Class of 2005 may agree that the demographics are a close fit, but that several of the attendant attitudes are not. Sometimes it is difficult for us to see that. Perhaps it is because the center of a civically-engaged college is not always visible, because it comes from within — it is a centrifugal force and it pulls many different constituencies into its core activities — a collaborative curricular, and community curriculum.

To be sure, we have far too many students without the commitment and experience. Yet, inside this academic institution we have recognized that we need to help them. And here’s why: Much of the research on affluence, social isolation, and alienation threatens educational performance, safe neighborhoods…every-day honesty, and even our health and happiness.

CAPS ON: Two students enjoy the capping ceremony at the 2005 Cap and Gown Convocation.

At the beginning of your professional careers, no one expects you to provide the blueprint for how you will lead, or that you will accomplish lives or use your talents in a cause greater than your self-interest. These choices reveal themselves over time, and seldom arrive just once, or are resolved at one time, or permanently secure the course of your life.

Some of you will blaze like stars as soon as you graduate, while others will go quietly about their business and come to know the powers of civic engagement as well. But it is obvious you are ready to do so. But if you do, we will be forever proud and grateful.

To the Class of 2005, my congratulations to each of you, and my best wishes for your journeys ahead.
Commencement

Continued from page 1

CCRI and spent the last three years at RIC. “I didn’t think this day was ever going to come,” she said. “Long road, positive end.”

Gov. Donald L. Carcieri congratulated the class, and stressed the importance of people living in harmony, beginning in the home, which can then extend into the community, nation and world. “I would challenge you to aspire to above all else, be good people,” he said.

Judge Frank Caprio, chair of the Board of Governors for Higher Education, told the students that the “challenges are so much more complex” today, but “one basic thing that will never change is human decency.” Added Caprio: “During the course of your life, never forget who lent out a helping hand to you.”

RIC President John Nazarian, who wanted to ensure that his commencement message was “fresh and original,” called in two “consultants” – a ten-year-old boy and a seven-year-old girl. The boy’s advice for the graduates was to get a good job, work hard, don’t do anything that you’ll regret later and do something in life that you want to do. The girl cautioned against talking to strangers and stealing money, while always being careful, helpful and nice. (Nazarian’s two advisors were Bryan and Christina, children of Michael Smith, assistant to the president.) Nancy McIntosh Bordeleau and Vincent Cullen, both of the Class of 1955, presented the College with their class’s golden anniversary gift, a $50,000 scholarship fund that currently stands at over $40,000. The gift was given in recognition of the three Class of 1955 presidents, Bob Coelho, Dave McCarthy and Shirley Szarko Hewitt, all of whom have passed away. Bordeleau exhorted the grads to “make your influence felt for positive outcomes in every way you can. That will be your legacy.”

Honorary doctorate degrees were awarded to retired RIC educator Billie Ann Burrill (fine arts), architect Friedrich St.Florian (fine arts), and Harvard University professor William Julius Wilson (humanities).

In his address, Wilson discussed the Welfare reform legislation of 1996, about which he is currently conducting a study. Wilson wants congress and the country to be aware of the Welfare reform’s limitations. He said that thus far, many of the mothers who left the Welfare rolls netted only modest gains because they lost some benefits such as health insurance. He also noted that former Welfare recipients at the lower end of the economic spectrum need to be given extra attention.

Suzy Alba, president of the Class of 2005, told her classmates “success doesn’t just mean promotions and paychecks.” She exhorted the grads to “acknowledge and address the needs of our community.”

Nazarian announced that plaques will be created as a new way to honor graduating classes that make “exceptional contributions to the College.” The plaques will be placed on fences by the main entrances to the campus. The first to be displayed will recognize the Class of 2005, which donated an electronic message board for its class gift.

Marianne Needham ’59, president of the RIC Alumni Association, urged the newest alumni to “support and advance our College…politically, financially, emotionally, and in spirit.”

By the numbers

Graduate degrees awarded: 314
Undergraduate degrees awarded: 1,139
2005 Undergrad commencement day high temperature: 57
2004 Undergrad commencement day high temperature: 87
Years John Nazarian has presided at commencement: 17
Years Kathy Sasso has coordinated commencement: 26
Number of 2005 commencement marshals: 71
Anthony Maione graduated from RIC in 1975 - but he never would have arrived on campus had others not seen his potential and spurred him to fulfill it.

In his address, Maione, president and CEO of United Way of Rhode Island, gave credit to some of the people who altered the arc of his life, hoping his example would encourage the grads to change the lives of others.

Maione also received an honorary doctor of humanities degree at The Murray Center graduate commencement, which recognized 314 January, May and August advanced degree recipients.

He told of how at age four, he lost his father, forcing his mother and older brother to support the family. Times were difficult financially. “When minimum wage went up, we got a raise,” said Maione.

His mother had a dream for him: someday he would go to college. Maione, however, settled for taking a business course of study in high school, and did not even consider higher education until one of his teachers challenged him with extra schoolwork, and steered him toward college prep classes.

His guidance counselor made him take the SATs and helped him secure a college grant. Maione also took advantage of Pell grants to pay his college tuition. After earning a bachelor’s degree from RIC, he went on to achieve a master of business administration degree from the University of Rhode Island.

Today, he said, 40,000 children in Rhode Island live below the poverty line. “I am out of patience with this,” he said. “It robs children of a vision, and how to get there.” He told the graduates, “You have to provide a vision for their future that they can’t see.”

Maione said, “Your reward could be to guide a kid who didn’t know how to dream.” He added, “It’s in your hands.”

Sherwin J. Kapstein, longtime educator, former executive director of the National Education Association in Rhode Island, and a former state representative, received an honorary doctor of education degree.

Michael F. Ryan ’74, vice chair of the Board of Governors for Higher Education, cited his former boss, the late U.S. Senator John Chafee, as a good example for the grads to follow.

Chafee had an enthusiasm for finding solutions to problems and a willingness to try to make life better for people, said Ryan.

Nazarian asked the graduates to remember faculty, family, friends, fellow students, and workplace colleagues who have contributed to getting the degree. “Their names will not be found on your diploma, but theirs will be found in your heart,” he said.

Monette J. Patrie, who received a master of professional accountancy, gave the student address.

The ceremony also included students who received doctorates of philosophy in education, a program offered jointly by RIC and the University of Rhode Island. Certificates of advanced graduate study, a program of 30 credits or more beyond the master’s level, were also awarded.
Rhode Island College marked the retirements of 31 employees at the College’s annual Commencement Gala, held May 20 in the Donovan Dining Center.

The retirees (of the past year through this month):
Brian R. Allen, director, Campus Center, 24 years
R. Carol Barnes, associate professor of anthropology, 38 years
George R. Bassett, campus police officer, 23 years
Barbara A. Blackwell, information services tech II, Network & Telecommunications, 17 years
Adrien J. Blanchette, campus police officer, 33 years
Charles W. Bohnsack, professor of biology, 30 years
Lawrence Budner, professor of communications, 32 years
Dolores Carney, cook’s helper, College Dining Services, 10 years
John F. Custer, executive director of Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts and professor of theatre, 36 years
Karon R. Dionne ’91, director of Outreach Programs, School of Management, 15 years
Natalie A. DiRissio, senior word processing typist, Dept. of English, 37 years
Robert W. Elam, professor of music, 31 years
Willard F. Enteman, professor of philosophy, 23 years
Ernest J. Heon, campus police officer, 15 years
Robert E. Hogan, professor of English and secondary education, 30 years
William Holland, professor of educational leadership, 17 years
Ellen, W. Hunt, clerk secretary, School of Social Work, 35 years
Janice M. Kelly, senior clerk stenographer, Dept. of Philosophy, 20 years
Patricia A. Keogh, clinical training specialist, Child Welfare Institute, 3 years
Alice M. Konis, cook’s helper, College Dining Services, 20 years
Rebecca G. Lassan, professor of nursing, 29 years
Peter R. Moore, professor of economics, 38 years
June A. Nutter, assistant professor of health and physical education, 16 years
Dennis M. O’Malley, director of Bannister Gallery, 22 years
Rene H. Perreault Jr., assistant director, Office Services, 34 years
Rosalie Petrone, cook’s helper, College Dining Services, 10 years
Mariano Rodrigues, professor of mathematics, 40 years
Pamela C. Rubovits, professor of psychology, 31 years
Elizabeth A. Ruggiero ’65, associate professor, Henry Barnard School, 32 years
Barry Schiller, professor of mathematics, 39 years
James W. Walker, counselor, Upward Bound, 26 years
David A. Wilson, director, Audiovisual Dept., 32 years

(Above) RETIRING FACULTY posing with the President at the May 20 Commencement Gala are (from left) Mariano “Rod” Rodrigues, Elizabeth Ruggiero, Barry Schiller, Carol Barnes, Peter Moore, RIC President John Nazarian, William Holland, Pam Rubovits, Willard Enteman and Bob Elam.

(At left) STAFF RETIREES posing with the president at the Commencement Gala May 20 are (from left) Karon Dionne, Rene Perreault, President John Nazarian, Ellen Hunt and John Custer.
John Custer’s decades-long run on RIC stage coming to a close

by Rob Martin
What's News Managing Editor

John Custer’s manner is very understated, owing perhaps to his upbringing in Pennsylvania Dutch country. When asked if he’s enjoyed his long career at RIC he said, “Usually it’s been too busy to get disgruntled about anything.” (You can take that answer as a yes.)

Custer is retiring from the College this month, 36 years after this one-time “theatre gypsy” came in from the cold for a permanent job that allowed him to provide a stable life for his family.

While at RIC, Custer has taught theatre production, set and lighting design, and technical theatre. He’s designed for the Performing Arts Series. In 2000, he has run the College’s acclaimed campus, and for the past 28 years, he was named executive director of the newly opened Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts.

Custer discovered his passion for theatre at age 14, when he began showing up at the local community playhouse to do what he called “scout work,” the little backstage tasks that every production requires.

After high school, he got a job as an intern at a professional company, the Allenberry Playhouse resort in Rolling Springs, Penn. The director there got him a job at another theatre, and he “bumbled around the country,” for many years working exclusively in the theatre in Washington state, Indiana, Texas and North Carolina. The only exception was a two-year stint in the Army during the Kennedy administration.

He worked in winter stock from September to May, then summer stock in June, July and August – always moving from theatre to theatre. These were the years: the 50s and 60s - before the rise of regional theatres such as Trinity Repertory Company gave artists an opportunity to settle in one place.

Along the way, he earned a BA from the University of Washington and an MFA from the University of Wisconsin. He arrived at RIC in 1969.

His time at the College has allowed him to fully satisfy his taste for show business. “The working environment and the people allowed me to do a little bit of the many things I enjoy doing,” said Custer.

As a professor of theatre, he has taught set and lighting design, and technical theatre, and has worked on over 100 productions at RIC. He has also been a lighting designer at Trinity Rep for over 100 shows from 1975-86. He has also been on the administrative side, in the role of facility manager overseeing bookings for all of RIC’s performance venues.

Custer is well known locally for being director of the Performing Arts Series, which brings professional talent to the College and offers students an intimate appreciation of the arts and artists. The series, originally run by the Committee on Fine Arts, was inaugurated in 1962 by then RIC president William: These were the years Custer was responsible in 1977, and has since evolved into an important provider of popular entertainment in Rhode Island.

Over the decades, hundreds of performers have made their way to RIC as part of the series. There are about a dozen performers Custer said he will most remember, a list that includes actors Estelle Parsons, Vincent Price and Julie Harris, musicians Joshua Bell and Yo-Yo Ma, mime Marcel Marceau, juggler Michael Moschen, puppeteer Philippe Genty, singer/actress Barbara Cook, singer Sandra Reaves-Phillips, the Paul Taylor Dance Company, and the Muir String Quartet.

As director of the series, he is responsible for the booking, marketing and “health and good will” of the artists.

“A lot of them needed a lot of coddling,” said Custer of the artists, who are always made to feel comfortable when they come to RIC. “I tell staff, ‘look at it like they’re visiting your home.’”

For the most part, his dealings with the artists and their agents have been positive.

“The truth is, I can count on one hand the number of performers I regret presenting,” said Custer. He has occasionally managed to book performers, such as cellist Ma, before their careers – and fees – began to soar. Ma, who played RIC in 1985, has more than quadrupled his cost since then, pricing himself out of playing the 900-seat Roberts Hall Auditorium.

As for the availability of talent, Custer notes that the College’s Providence location is helpful, since he can book acts “enroute” – those playing a weekend in New York City, then traveling to Boston the following weekend. Custer signs them to play at RIC on weekdays in between and can get large discounts on their fees.

Currently, the Performing Arts Series is comprised of the President’s Music Series featuring the Muir String Quartet and other chamber music; Jeffrey Siegel’s Keyboard Conversations; and the Poppouirí Series, which includes six to nine music, dance or theatre events each academic year.

The 2005-06 season will see the addition of the Adams Foundation Piano Recital Series featuring classical pianist Ruth Laredo as the first performer in the new series.

Custer said that one attribute he has brought to the College over the years is the desire to complete a job regardless of the time required. “I come from a very strong work ethic in my family,” he said.

Among his favorite College memories are being involved with the earliest productions of the RIC Summer Cabaret and bringing the first Muir String Quartet’s performance of the Beethoven Cycle to campus.

He’s also taken pleasure in “seeing many students succeed in their chosen fields,” and witnessing the opening of the Nazarian Center. He was grateful for the “tremendous support” he received from the College administration over the years, especially from RIC president John Nazarian and Gary Penfield, vice president for student affairs.

This Providence resident, who turns 68 in July, now has five grandchildren. Retirement from his RIC job will give him the opportunity to travel, with extensive forays into Asia and Europe as part of his future itinerary.

After so many years of being deeply involved in show business, Custer is not about to fully cast aside his life’s calling: he plans to be a consultant in theatre and performing arts administration after his retirement from the College.

So, quite possibly, the RIC community has not seen the last of John Custer.
The 2005 Convocation of Scholars held April 25 through May 4 highlighted the many facets of the campus and included faculty, students, and emeriti of the College. A diverse menu of lectures, presentations, and celebratory events enhanced the beginning of the commencement season.

Carol Bennett-Speight, dean of the School of Social Work, introduces this year’s Thorp Lecture presenter, Frederic (Rick) Reamer, professor of social work.

Kate Brewster, director of The Poverty Institute at RIC, addresses the audience celebrating Community Initiatives and Partnerships.

Above: Sharing old times are Raymond Picozzi, professor emeritus of theatre, and wife Alberta ’64, and (inset), Sidney Rollins (left), professor emeritus of education, and Chet Smolski, professor emeritus of geography, at the dinner during Emeriti Appreciation Evening in honor of all emeriti faculty and their contributions to the College.

Lisa Humphreys, professor of mathematics, stands between Mark Motte (left), professor of geography, and President John Nazarian, at the Promotion and Tenure reception held at the President’s residence.

Patricia Nolin ’84 (center), special assistant to the president, chats with Dean’s List students at a reception held in their honor.

Nursing students gather at Public Policy Presentations.

Kenneth Gloss of the Brattle Book Shop in Boston, appraises an historic book with Joan Dagle, professor of English, and Debra Thomson, library supervisor. A lecture by Gloss was sponsored by the Friends of Adams Library.
RIC’s Upward Bound program, which provides at-risk high school students with the skills needed to succeed in college, held commencement exercises for 32 students on May 31 in Gaige Hall Auditorium.

The nationwide program offers academic, counseling, career, tutorial and other services to students who attend weekly on-campus classes during the school year and stay for six weeks at the College during the summer.

Mariam Z. Boyajian, director of Upward Bound at RIC since 1986 and assistant director for five years before that, said that the College was one of the first in the country to host the program (1966), and has helped send more than 2,000 area disadvantaged students to some of the best higher education institutions nationwide.

Featured speaker at the ceremony was Aderito Dos Santos, a 1996 Upward Bound and Shea High School graduate. Service awards were given to James Walker, a counselor in the Upward Bound program who is retiring in June after 26 years, and John Denio, assistant dean of students/director of residential life at Bryant University and a former director of RIC’s Office of Residential Life and Housing.

2005 Upward Bound graduates:

- Dennis R. Boyd
- Arthur O. Cooper
- Jamie Delfin
- James K. Dorbor Jr.
- Luis Carlos Dos Santos
- Jennifer K. Evora
- Jose Rafael Frias Jr.
- Andrew Gutierrez
- Anjum Yusuf Hava
- Alexander Henao
- Joseph K. Josiah
- Nvias Marie Lindo
- Shelby Maldonado
- Jeffry C. Martins
- Hitesh U. Mistry
- Shani Navila Monteiro

U P W A R D  B O U N D  A L U M N I
SCHOLARSHIP recipients (above, from left) Elizabeth Tremblay, Hitesh Mistry and Jennifer Evora. At left, Upward Bound commencement speaker Aderito Dos Santos.

Upward Bound scholarship awards:

- Jennifer Evora, Shea High School (Brown University)
  1st place scholarship - $2,000
- Hitesh Mistry, Shea High School (Bentley College)
  2nd place scholarship - $1,000
- Elizabeth Tremblay, Hope High School (Lesley University)
  3rd place scholarship - $500

Target school district scholarship awards ($500 each):

- Jeffry Martins, Hope High School
- Jennifer Evora, Shea High School
- Patricia Paglia, East Providence High School
- Jelissa Suarez, Central Falls High School
RIC celebrated 75 years of athletic excellence in a gala event in Sapinsley Hall in the Nazarian Center on May 21. The ceremony included the induction of the All-75th Anniversary Teams in recognition of the milestone.
Rhode Island College

Salutes

75 years of intercollegiate athletics

"If you're looking for parity in college sports go look in Division III. You won't find it anywhere else." — Bill Reynolds, sports writer, Providence Journal, September 4, 1997

Athletics at Rhode Island College, the oldest public institution of higher learning in the state of Rhode Island, celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2005. Over the decades, the athletic program has grown and evolved, providing opportunities for student-athletes to compete, grow, and experience the team effort in preparation for life's lessons. With women's basketball as its first team sport in 1929, the program has seen incredible growth and success, setting the stage for continued excellence.

The Past...

Congratulations to the All-75th Anniversary Teams selected in recognition of this milestone.

The All-75th Anniversary Teams

Women's Sports

Women's Basketball
- Monica (Beaucage) Verske '95
- Jennifer (Cook) Spadoni '00
- Robin (Gobeille) Orticerio '93
- Cathy Lanni '88
- Jackie Hultquist '83
- Doreen Grasso '90
- Christine Donilon '85
- Claudia (Gallo) Hall '87
- Sharon (Ferns) Lyons '90
- Lori Botelho '90
- Women's Volleyball
- Keely Subin '01
- Maria (Teeman) Santopietro '93
- Kate McCalligett '05
- Jeanne (Berthasavage) Lucey '86
- Sharon (Hall) Galloway '87
- Chris (McDermott) DiPretoro '88
- Valerie (Verducci) Scarpone '87
- Women's Outdoor Track
- Marisa (Petrarca) White '85
- Cynthia Murray '02
- Meghan Mooney '05
- Sylvia (Petrarca) White '85
- Women's Cross Country
- Keely Subin '01
- Maria (Teeman) Santopietro '93
- Kate McCalligett '05
- Jeanne (Berthasavage) Lucey '86
- Sharon (Hall) Galloway '87
- Chris (McDermott) DiPretoro '88
- Valerie (Verducci) Scarpone '87
- Women's Basketball
- Karl Allaire
- John Alman
- Mike Butler '86
- Mike Cantone
- Mike Enos '89
- Dave Flanagan
- Eric Gibere '05
- Steve Long
- Mike Marcara '76
- Tim Brown '02
- Elfredo DeMeo '84
- Lionel Jean '74
- Jeff Lavigne '00
- Richard Reavis
- Jayson Neto '86
- Stephen Lynch '92
- Domenico Petracca '77
- Brian Sansom '72
- Kyle Timpe '06
- Jim Whittaker '68
- Dave Flanagan
- Mike Enos '89
- Mike Marcara '76
- Tim Brown '02
- Elfredo DeMeo '84
- Lionel Jean '74
- Jeff Lavigne '00
- Richard Reavis
- Jayson Neto '86
- Stephen Lynch '92
- Domenico Petracca '77
- Brian Sansom '72
- Kyle Timpe '06
- Jim Whittaker '68
- The Future...
- Men's Soccer, Conference Championship Runners-Up
- Men's Wrestling, Third Place New England Finish
- Men's Basketball, Regular Season Co-Champions/ECAC Runners-Up
- Women's Tennis, Regular Season Champions
- Women's Volleyball, Regular Season Champions
- Women's Softball, Regular Season Champions/ECAC Champions
- Ron Felber '61
- Ray Huebig '72
- Bill McCaughy '67
- Dick Rouleau '68
- Troy Smith '93
- Mike Van Loosen '65
- Charlie Wilkes '64
- Ricky Wiltan '72
- Men's Cross Country
- Jesus Berrio '89
- Jim Bowden
- Jim Dandeneau '91
- Ron Gilroy '92
- Kevin O'Neil '96
- Men's Soccer
- Joe Agular '84
- Orlando Andrade '76
- Tim Brown '02
- Eufaula DeMeo '83
- Lionel Jean '74
- Jeff Lavigne '00
- Joseph Luzzi '93
- Stephen Lynch '92
- Domenico Petracca '77
- Brian Sansom '72
- Kyle Timpe '06
- Jim Whittaker '68
- Women's Basketball
- Karl Augustin
- Alex Butler '88
- Mike Chapman '84
- Mike Cresson '70
- Kevin O'Neil '96
- Men's Soccer
- Joe Agular '84
- Orlando Andrade '76
- Tim Brown '02
- Eufaula DeMeo '83
- Lionel Jean '74
- Jeff Lavigne '00
- Joseph Luzzi '93
- Stephen Lynch '92
- Domenico Petracca '77
- Brian Sansom '72
- Kyle Timpe '06
- Jim Whittaker '68
- Women's Basketball
- Karl Augustin
- Alex Butler '88
- Mike Chapman '84
- Mike Cresson '70
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- Men's Soccer
- Joe Agular '84
- Orlando Andrade '76
- Tim Brown '02
- Eufaula DeMeo '83
- Lionel Jean '74
- Jeff Lavigne '00
- Joseph Luzzi '93
- Stephen Lynch '92
- Domenico Petracca '77
- Brian Sansom '72
- Kyle Timpe '06
- Jim Whittaker '68
- Men's Tennis
- Art Bentley '75
- Mari Dubois '91
- The First Paul Boucher '69 Award Winner - Dave Bouthillier
- Fostered the development of RIC's award-winning Student-Athlete Success Program. The award recognizes individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to the athletic program.

Pioneer Award Winners

Bob Brown - athletic director credited with building the RIC athletic program after WWII.
- G. Bill Davis '60 - an exemplary coach who excelled in women's intercollegiate athletics at the college.
- Dorothy Konwinski '42 - organized underground women's athletic teams as a student-athlete.
- Lois Testa Lynch '57 - RIC's only Olympian, competing in the 1956 Summer Games in Melbourne, Australia.
- Catherine T. Murray '34 - A member of RIC's first athletic team, along with her sister Mary '33. The Murray Center, RIC's intercollegiate athletic competition facility, is named in honor of The Murray sisters.
- Lee Yosinoff ‘40 - Played all sports as a student-athlete and was a member of the College's only football team.

The Present...

Today, as a highly competitive and successful Division III school, the college offers 19 varsity sports. Congratulations to our 330 student-athletes who excel both in the classroom and in the arena, and to a dedicated team of coaches and staff who led RIC to its most successful year in history including:

- Women's Soccer, Regular Season Champions/ECAC Champions
- Men's Basketball, Tournament Champions/NCAA Championship Participant
- Women's Volleyball, Regular Season Champions
- Women's Tennis, Regular Season Champions
- Men's Basketball, Regular Season Co-Champions/ECAC Runners-Up
- Men's Wrestling, Third Place New England Finish
- Men's Soccer, Conference Championship Runners-Up

The Future...

Through the generosity of our alumni, friends and benefactors, and with the support of the college community, we continue to lay the groundwork for continued success in the future, as we add to our:

- $50,000 kick-off gift for an expanded student-athlete academic success center
- $4 million development fund for facility renovation and enhancements
- $1.2 million endowment to enhance Intercollegiate Athletics

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www.ric.edu
Graduation 2005

A festive day from top to bottom