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More Than 1,600 to Receive Degrees from EIU

May-07-2009

More than 1,600 students are eligible to graduate from Eastern Illinois University this spring, and the majority of those plan to participate in formal commencement ceremonies Saturday, May 9.

Graduation ceremonies will take place at 9 a.m., noon, 3 and 6 p.m. in Lantz Arena. Guest tickets are required for admission into the ceremonies.

Students from the College of Sciences will march in the morning ceremony; the College of Arts and Humanities and the School of Continuing Education (Bachelor of Arts in General Studies program) at noon; the College of Education and Professional Studies at 3 p.m.; and the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences at 6.

Graduate students will walk with their respective colleges.

EIU President **Bill Perry** will preside over the ceremonies. **Levi Bulgar**, student body president, and **John Henry Pommier**, chair, EIU Faculty Senate, will also address the graduates.

Representing Eastern's Board of Trustees will be **Julie Nimmons** and **Eric Wilber** (9 a.m.), **Leo Welch** (noon), **Robert Webb** (3 p.m.) and **Don Yost** (6 p.m.).

Each ceremony will feature a special guest speaker who will present the official commencement address. **Marc Miller**, director of the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources, will speak at 9 a.m., while **James Johnson**, dean of Eastern's College of Arts and Humanities, plans to speak at noon. **Morrie Reece** and **Rudy Hlavek**, two of this year's honorary degree recipients, will speak at 3 and 6 p.m., respectively.

Robert "Morrie" Reece's education career began when he was a member of the U.S. Navy, where his responsibilities included teaching math and nuclear reactor courses in the Naval Nuclear Power Academy. He later attended Eastern, where he earned his bachelor's degree in physical education. After teaching for a time at the University of Illinois and at University High School in Urbana, Reece worked in Washington, D.C., designing computer training and education projects for many Fortune 500 companies and 18 federal agencies. He joined Apple Inc. more than 25 years ago and now, as a higher education development executive, travels throughout the country teaching how to incorporate new technologies in the classroom.

After earning his bachelor's degree in business from EIU, **Rudolph "Rudy" G. Hlavek** joined H. Hentz and Co., which later became Smith Barney, a leader in the U.S. securities industry. He rose through the ranks before retiring in 2001 as senior executive vice president and director of the Midwest and Southern divisions. His continued association with Eastern has been extensive. During his tenure on the EIU Foundation Board of Directors, he was instrumental in the creation of a program that allows EIU finance students to manage \$100,000 of the board's portfolio.

Other honorary degree recipients include **Robert W. "Bob" Sterling** and **Matthew Polenzani**. Both will receive their honors at Saturday's noon ceremony.

Sterling, who received his bachelor's and master's degrees from EIU, has distinguished himself on local and national levels in two simultaneous careers. He started his work as a historian and educator teaching in public schools before joining Eastern's history department in 1956. Since 1946, he has also covered auto racing for National Speed Sport News, and has spent many years covering racing for national television networks. He and his ABC Sports colleagues won Emmy Awards for coverage of the Indianapolis 500 in 1989 and 1990.

Polenzani's remarkable talent for opera was evident during his days as a music student at EIU, and shortly after he earned his bachelor's degree in 1990, he embarked on a career that has led him to becoming one of the world's most prominent opera singers. The lyric tenor, who went on to receive his Master of Music degree from Yale University, joined the world-renowned Metropolitan Opera of New York in 1997. He has sung in some of the most celebrated opera companies in the world, and he frequently makes guest appearances with the Chicago Lyric Opera, Los Angeles Opera and the Opera Company of Philadelphia.

Also at noon, **David Allen Radavich**, professor of English at Eastern, will formally receive the 2009 Distinguished Faculty Award. This award is presented annually to a full-time faculty member who has excelled in teaching, professional research/creative activity and service.

Commencement marshals lead the procession while carrying the university mace inscribed with past marshals' names:

- **Leonard Storm**, professor of physics, representing the College of Sciences during the morning ceremony. Storm has been a member of Eastern's faculty since 1979.
- **David Radavich**, professor of English, representing the College of Arts and Humanities during the noon ceremony. Radavich has been a member of Eastern's faculty since 1984.
- **Linda Morford**, associate professor and chair, educational leadership, representing the College of Education and Professional Studies during the 3 p.m. ceremony. Morford has been a member of Eastern's faculty since 2001.
- **Karen Nantz**, professor, School of Business, representing the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences during the 6 p.m. ceremony. Nantz has been a member of Eastern's faculty since 1990.

Faculty marshals are given the honor of carrying the college banner for their respective colleges:

- 9 a.m.: **Tina Veale**, Graduate School and College of Sciences; **Doug Klarup**, College of Sciences.
- Noon: **Paul Johnston**, Graduate School and College of Arts and Humanities; **Norman Greer**, College of Arts and Humanities; **Gary**

- Noon: **Paul Johnston**, Graduate School and College of Arts and Humanities; **Norman Greer**, College of Arts and Humanities; **Gary Foster**, School of Continuing Education.
- 3 p.m.: **Joy Russell**, Graduate School and College of Education and Professional Studies; **Larry Ankenbrand**, College of Education and Professional Studies.
- 6 p.m.: **John Willems**, Graduate School and Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences; **Roann Kopel**, Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences.

Stefan Aydt, a mathematics and computer science major from Paris, will serve as the Honors College banner marshal during all four ceremonies.