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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EASTERN GRADUATES URGED TO EMBRACE LIFELONG LEARNING AS THEY
LEAVE FORMAL STUDIES BEHIND

CHARLESTON -- More than 600 new graduates of Eastern Illinois University took part in the university's fall commencement ceremonies Saturday, Dec. 13, at Lantz Gymnasium.

The graduates heard congratulatory remarks from Board of Trustee members Mack W. Hollowell, M.D., of Charleston and Betsy Mitchell of Champaign and also left with a challenge from Eastern President David Jorns to "be open to the thrill of new experience" as they pursue career and personal goals for the next 60 or so years.

Jorns told the 625 seniors and graduate students that they have been graduating from one school or another for all their lives, but for the first time, they have arrived at the end of a known universe and are "cordially invited to step off into apparent oblivion."

"It's not like that, as you know," Jorns said. "You have a good education...you will participate in the endless wonders that lie before us in a new century and a new millennium. However, I hope you will always remain 'freshmen' - fresh men and fresh women, renewed and ready for whatever is around the corner."

Jorns urged graduates to remember that there is always something new to learn and a sense

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of curiosity is what keeps people young and vital.

He recounted the story about Oliver Wendall Holmes, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, who attempted to learn to read Greek, even as he lay dying.

"When asked why, at this point, he was undertaking such a difficult course of study, he said that he was improving his mind," Jorns said.

He acknowledged that a good deal of specific information learned at Eastern would undoubtedly slip away from the soon-to-be "ex-students." But he told graduates that Eastern's faculty had given them the tools to succeed.

"What the faculty were trying to give you, bottom line, was the desire to challenge yourself, to be curious, and the basic ability to find the answers you seek," Jorns said. That way, if you find yourself at the end of the known universe and about to step off into apparent oblivion, you'll think of it as a step in the right direction."

Other commencement speakers were Student Body President Kim Harris of Tuscola; EIU Alumni Association President Michael Lester of Hazel Crest, a 1966 Eastern graduate; and Faculty Senate Chairperson Gail Richard.

Faculty marshals were Patrick Lenihan, professor of economics, representing the Graduate School during the morning ceremony, and J. W. Sanders, professor of physical education, representing the College of Education and Professional Studies during the afternoon.

There were 955 eligible fall graduates.