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[ARTICLE+ILLUSTRATION]

Dimaggio and Dinkins grace CU's graduation

By Catherine Thorpe and
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At the University commencement ceremony held last Wednesday, University President Michael Sovern urged graduates to maintain an analytical view of the world into which they would enter.

Heavy showers held off throughout the outdoor ceremony, held on Low Library Plaza, which marked the commencement of the University's 236th year.

The ceremony was attended by 7554 graduates of the University's 16 divisions and three affiliated institutions and their families.

In his speech, Sovern stressed the importance of recent world events.

"Last year, as the class of '89 sat where you sit now, the Berlin Wall was intact, seemingly irrefragable," Sovern said. "Vaclav Havel was officially a non-person in his native land, a once and probably future prisoner of the State."

Sovern urged the graduates to continue a vigilant watch over world events, adding that the battle for

freedom was not universally won.

“I urge you to maintain a healthy anxiety about the so-called ‘inoxerable’ road to freedom,” Sovern said. “There is nothing ‘inoxerable’ about it.”

“In Czechoslovakia, the peaceful revolution in Wenceslas Square succeeded,” he added. “The peaceful revolution in Tiananmen Square did not.”

Sovern warned the audience against complacency in viewing world and local events, saying, “Complacency is a subtle but always monstrous evil.”

“I do believe that freedom is undying,” he said. “But if we fall asleep, it can, too.”

Sovern also bestowed seven honorary degrees, including a Doctor of Laws degree to baseball legend Joe Dimaggio.

DiMaggio was a player with the New York Yankees during the 1930s and set many records for hitting that

are currently standing.

“You are, unabashedly, our hero,” Sovern said of DiMaggio. “We honor you as the earnest and gentle son of a San Francisco fisherman, as a proud and sensitive man with an enduring sense of responsibility to your millions of admirers, and as the graceful athlete whose inspiring play helped lift America out of the gloom of the Great Depression.”

DiMaggio’s presence was noted by the graduates, and some ran to the dais on which DiMaggio was seated, hoping for an autograph or photo. In addition, graduates sung “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” during the ceremony.

Milton Handler and Helene L. Kaplan also received honorary Doctor of Laws degrees. Natalie Zemon Davis received a Doctor of Letters degree, Samuel DeWitt Proctor received a Doctor of Sacred Theology degree, and Frank Press and P. Roy Vagelos received honorary Doctor of Science degrees.

At ceremonies for the 127 graduates of the School of Nursing last Tuesday, Mayor of New York City David Dinkins said his administration was committed to promoting the recruitment and retention of nurses, especially minorities, to help combat AIDS, the high infant mortality rate, drugs, and teenage pregnancy.

“While doctors treat a variety of patients often on different floors and in different sec-

tions of the hospital, nurses provide around the clock care, healing the sick, comforting their families,” Dinkins said. “You are the heart and soul of our health system.”

“Yours is a highly technical and deeply emotional profession- and an extremely rewarding one- that we must promote and expand in every possible way,” he added.

Dinkins urged the graduates to seek work in community service, “to apply your talents,” he said, “to our areas of greatest need, right here in New York City.”

Health Policy Staff Director for the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources David Nexon also spoke.

Also last Tuesday, Congressional Correspondent for ABC News and National Public Radio (NPR) and Pringle Memorial Lecturer Cokie Roberts urged the 212 graduates of the School of Journalism to be fair and accurate.

“Re-creations and dramatizations destroy our credibility at its very heart,” Roberts said. “You have to pay attention to the lives you are affecting.”

“The first obligation is, for God’s sake, get it right,” she added. “Do the right thing, if you can figure out what that is.”

At last Wednesday’s ceremonies for graduates of the Graduate School of Law, Tom Brokaw, anchor and managing editor of “NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw,” told graduates to use their degrees for good causes.

“It’s easy to make a buck,” Brokaw told

the graduates. "It's tougher to make a difference."

He added that people holding law degrees have an important role to play in the democracy movement which is spreading throughout the world.

"It [the law degree] is your ticket to the good life. Consider it also a ticket to join the democracy movement," Brokaw said.

Lawyers who do not-for-profit work are much more historically significant than those who get rich from their degrees, Brokaw added.

"The lawyers I remember most, the lawyers that mean the most to me, are those who are doing pro bono work," he said.

Brokaw also urged graduates to support public education in his speech.

"It is in public education that the dream of America begins to take shape," he said.

In her speech, George Welwood Murray Professor of Legal History and Dean of the Faculty of Law Barbara A. Black addressed the misconception by the public that lawyers are inherently bad people.

"Lawyers are pretty much like everyone else, good and bad," Black said.

At Wednesday's College of Physicians and Surgeons' commencement, National Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan urged graduates to take a leading role in fighting the nation's scourge of health dilemmas, including AIDS and rising health care

costs.

“Nowhere is it etched in stone that these problems are eventual and perpetual,” Sullivan said, adding, “Physicians are the foundation of our health care system.”

Sullivan also advised the graduates to continue learning new techniques, and to widen their scope of knowledge.

“If you remain at the level of knowledge you now know, you will be obsolete in 10 years,” he said. “As a physician you must be a perpetual student.”

At last Wednesday’s exercises held for the graduates of the School of Public Health, New York City Commissioner of Health Woodrow Myers argued that the public health care network is unprepared to face the city’s problems.

“We as a group were not ready for our success,” Myers said, referring to the recent interest caused by AIDS and other issues in public health.

“We do not know how to exploit all the opportunities we have,” he added.

Myers called for modernization of the public health care system, as well as continued good service.

“If we want to continue with our warm and fuzzy ways, let’s do it with computers,” Myers said. “Precision, accountability, and empathy and concern are not mutually exclusive.”

Additional reporting by Josh E. Taylor and Ken Levine



SPECTATOR/ MICHAEL HALL

A LITTLE BIT LOUDER, NOW: The third class to be called "the most diverse group since Noah's Ark" celebrates after commencement activities last week.