



# News Release

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## 212 students graduate from Northern Maine Community College

*Aroostook County* - Words of wisdom from a faculty member who has taught at the College for more than three decades and the advice he solicited from a number of his former students were imparted on the 212 members of the graduating class during commencement exercises at Northern Maine Community College on Saturday, May 16, in the College gymnasium.

Instructor Daniel Hotham, who is NMCC's longest serving employee, first joined the campus community in 1974 as a coordinator of residential life, and has served the better part of his 35 years teaching communications classes and instructing and directing the first-year seminar. In preparation for this address to the graduates, he contacted 60 of his former students who have graduated from the College over the years and asked them to reflect on their experience, as well as to share any advice.

"Northern Maine Community College has meant an awful lot to me and my family. I have spent most of my life within a five-mile radius of where I am standing. For the past 34 years, I have been fortunate to work with a dedicated and caring faculty and staff who come to work each day for one purpose – to help you make it to today so that you will have the opportunity to reach your goals and dreams," said Hotham. "Without exception, every former student who sent me comments to share with you today took a moment to say something positive about their experience with the faculty and staff at NMCC."

Hotham, citing the success of many alumni who earned NMCC degrees, including members of his own family, challenged the graduates to use the knowledge and skills they learned as students to better the lives of others.

"Educational attainment means a higher level of prosperity in terms of income, opens doors to a wider range of career opportunities and gives you the chance to do what you love. Your accomplishment we are celebrating today and the heights it will enable you to attain will encourage others within your sphere of influence to continue their education in order to make a better life for themselves and their families. Yes, whether you realize it or not, your achievement today has indeed changed your family tree forever," said Hotham.

Also speaking at commencement was NMCC's "Student of the Year," Charles Zappone. The 38-year-old associate degree nursing program graduate and father of two served as president of Phi Theta Kappa honor society, as a member of the Student Nurses Association and has volunteered to assist with several projects during his tenure as a student.

"One thing is for certain; we are not the same people that we were when we started. We have grown. We have learned. And we have succeeded. Sometimes it felt like we wanted to run down the hall screaming, maybe other times weep, or perhaps shout out loud when we 'aced' a difficult test. These things have taught us that with work, determination and a wee bit o'luck that success can be achieved," said Zappone.

NMCC President Timothy Crowley conferred 177 associate degrees and 41 certificates to members of the graduating class. In his remarks prior to presenting the awards, Crowley encouraged the students to forge ahead despite the difficult economic conditions.

"The challenges the economy present to you are significant; as you move forward you need to keep this in perspective. You live in one of the richest countries in the world. Reflect on the position our country has in the world and know that, even in these difficult times, opportunity exists," said Crowley. "Quality work and persistence over time are keys to success. I want to encourage you to be a committed professional in all that you do. Use your ability to work as a team member to contribute to the betterment of your profession and your community. Take care of your family—they are at the center of your happiness and strength."

In addition to the graduates, Crowley also honored a member of the NMCC campus community with the President's Award, which is presented annually during commencement exercises.

Wendy Bradstreet of Bridgewater, an accountant in the College business office, was lauded for her service to the campus and volunteer work in the local community. Among other things, she is the founder, spokesperson and lead board member of Megan's Fund, a non-profit organization named in honor and memory of her five-year-old daughter Megan, who died as a result of injuries she sustained after being hit by a car within sight of the family's home on U.S. Route 1 in Bridgewater in July 2005.

In the four years since the organization began, Megan's Fund has raised thousands of dollars to support education and training initiatives for local paramedics, which have been offered through the emergency medical services program and continuing education division of NMCC. In addition, funds raised have been used to purchase needed pediatric emergency medical equipment for local emergency medical transport units and County area hospitals.

At NMCC, Bradstreet has served on numerous committees, including serving as chairperson for several, serves on the President’s Council and is actively involved with the NMCC Foundation. She also serves as an adjunct faculty member for the business technology department and is a 1992 graduate of the College business administration program.

“Wendy Bradstreet is an outstanding example for students, faculty and staff members to follow. She has delivered high quality work over an extended period of time. She has overcome obstacles to do this and has emerged as a leader on this campus and in her community. Her commitment to tasks she undertakes is remarkable and her willingness to take on new challenges is most impressive,” said Crowley.

The NMCC President’s Award is presented annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the College, meeting the needs of students, employees and the general public, as well as assisting in moving the College toward fulfilling its mission, vision and goals.

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*Meggan Pratt of Van Buren helps Mindy Morrow of Presque Isle get ready for graduation while Jeri St. Peter of Caribou looks on. All three graduated from Northern Maine Community College’s business administration program on May 16.*



*Northern Maine Community College seniors, from left, Marina Grivois of Van Buren, Amber Hill of Limestone, and Joane Maingrette of Presque Isle, along with more than 200 of their classmates, listen to the closing remarks at graduation after having been presented their diploma folders by President Crowley to the applause of the more than 1,000 family members and friends in attendance at NMCC's Commencement on May 16. All three graduated from the College's liberal studies program, earning their Associate in Arts degree.*