

RESOLUTION: MAKING THE BEST OUR STANDARD

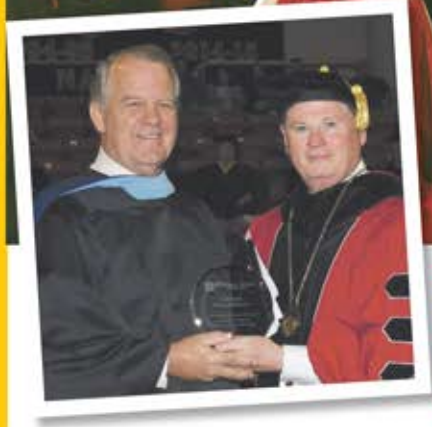
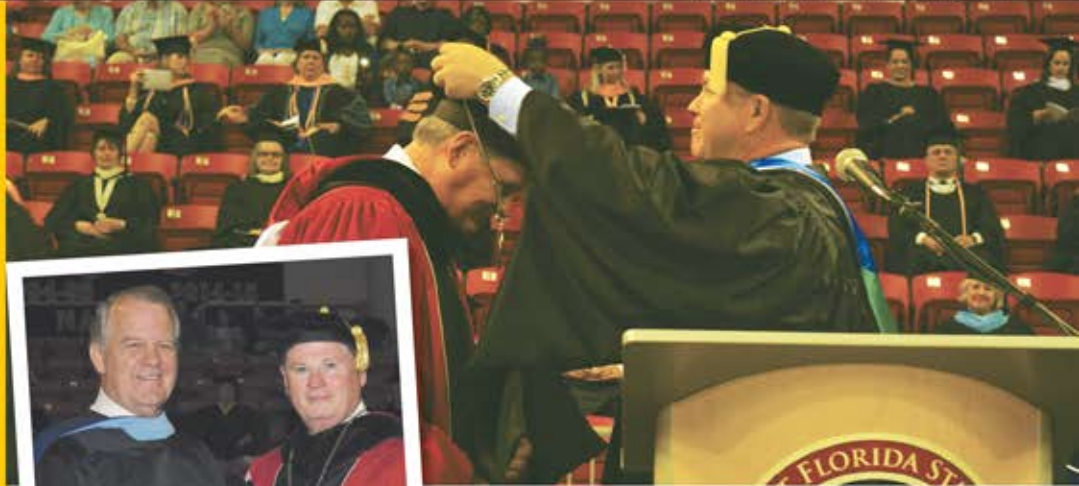
Many people will tell you the only time for resolutions is at the beginning of the New Year, but I believe one can RESOLVE to make positive changes at any time! Northwest Florida State College is resolved to continue on our journey to be the premier provider of higher education in our region and we are positioning ourselves to achieve that goal.

On May 6, we convened with 1,582 graduates and their families as they celebrated achieving their resolved goals to attain a higher education credential. Here are just a few of the unique stories that we celebrated.

Jeromy Rodriguez, a member of our nationally ranked men's basketball team, marked this milestone with his mom and dad, Carmen and Carlos. Due to a compelling letter written by our Athletics' staff, Jeromy's parents traveled to the U.S. from Dominican Republic for the first time and watched as the first member of their family to ever obtain a college degree walked across our stage. *That was a powerful moment!*

During our morning ceremony, six students representing our bachelor of applied science (BAS) degree as exchange students with the University Technology Institute at La Roche-Sur-Yan in France celebrated the end of our first year of this unique program which began in August 2016. Maxime Chardonneau, Marie Garborieau, Noemie Le Roy, Alice Merceron, Sandra Picorit, and Clément Pineau were all chosen through a

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52ND ANNUAL NORTHWEST FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT

On Saturday, May 6, the 52nd Annual Commencement ceremonies took place in the Raider Arena with 1,582 graduates being conferred their degrees.

During the first ceremony, Brian Pennington, Chairman of the NWF Board of Trustees, led the inauguration of Dr. Devin Stephenson as the fourth president of NWF State College. Senator Doug Broxson served as keynote speaker for both ceremonies. ■

Pictured (top): Brian Pennington, Chairman of the NWF Board of Trustees leads the inauguration of the college's fourth president, Dr. Devin Stephenson. Pictured (inset, L-R): Senator Doug Broxson and Dr. Devin Stephenson.

Online BSN Program Among TOP 50 BEST

College Choice recently ranked Northwest Florida State College, the only community college to make the list, among the top 50 Best Online Bachelor's of Nursing (BSN) programs.

"Northwest Florida State College is the only community/state college on this list and that is cause for celebration for our nursing faculty, staff, and students," said Dr. Devin Stephenson, President of NWF State College. "This national ranking is a real distinction given the stiff competition. We are honored and will continue to create a culture of excellence and continuous improvement at NWF."

"The faculty and staff who are a part of the nursing program are honored and humbled to be named in the 50 Best Online BSN Degrees for 2017 by Collegechoice.net," said Dr. Marty Walker, Director of the Nursing Program at NWF. NWF State College ranked 50 among the top 50 Best Online BSN programs in the nation. ■



Resolution (continued from page 1)

competitive selection process to spend their third year of college in our BAS program. They lived with host families and immersed themselves in American cultures and studies. This program is unique simply because, in France, institutions do not offer commencement ceremonies. NWF State College offered them a once in a lifetime education and a once in a lifetime experience. *That was a powerful moment!*

Rachel "Polly" Vida is from the village Kiambaa in Kenya where her parents and siblings still live today. In Polly's family, everyone is expected to work and are encouraged to pursue an education. In 1994, Polly made her way to Dayton, Ohio, where she embarked on her educational journey. She also met her husband, a member of the United States Air Force. In 2014, Polly and her husband were transferred to Hurlburt Field. Almost immediately after arriving, Polly began her journey to pursue admission into the NWF Nursing program. Unfortunately, Polly was unable to show documentation that she completed high school in Kenya, so she took the GED and the HESI examination on the same day to fulfill her nursing application

requirements! Polly completed our program with honors, and her mother, Mary, wanted nothing more than to attend her daughter's commencement ceremonies. Traveling to the United States from Kenya is difficult and requires much documentation. Also, an intermittent travel ban to the U.S. created concerns that Mary wouldn't be authorized to visit, but with some help from NWF nursing faculty and staff, pinning ceremony invitations were printed early and Mary's visa was approved. Due to the resolve of our team, Mary watched her daughter, and the first person in their family, walk across the stage to receive her college degree. *That was a powerful moment!*

Lastly, I was catching up on paperwork in my office the day after our commencement ceremonies when I received an email. The author of the email was Carla Alldredge, an adjunct instructor in our mathematics department for 25 years. Carla shared with me the story of her daughter, Esther, who had overcome significant challenges to receive both her associate degree from NWF and, most recently, her bachelor's degree in



Pictured: Dr. Stephenson and Esther Alldredge

early childhood education. Carla and many members of Esther's family were in the crowd and watched Esther walk across our stage. Little did I know, Esther would be one of the students with who I would pause to take a photo during the awarding of credentials. *That was a powerful moment!* Tears welled-up in my eyes as I read the email and recalled the stories of resolve from our outstanding graduates on Saturday.

Friends, student success is what it's all about and must be the focus of our work! Thank you for your support and for joining us as we resolve to be the premier provider of higher education in our region. ■

#thebestisourstandard

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



■ **Kristen Last**, Curriculum and Instructional Specialist, received the AFC Distinguished Service Member Award for exceptional achievement. *Pictured (left): Kristen Last.*

■ Several CHS students will receive recognition in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program: **Sarah Anchor, Nina Brown, Kaitlyn Hall, Allison Keen, Emma Pirmann, Elise Ponders, Kasey Rigby, Andrew Stephens, Isaac Suendermann, and Ryan Werley.**

■ **Dr. Jon Bryan**, Science Professor, recently presented a paper at the BioLogos conference, *The Whole World an Icon of God: Sacramental Theology in the Science-Faith Dialogue*, and participated in board meetings of the Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists as VP of the Southeastern Geological Society.

■ **Dr. Dirk Dunbar**, professor of Philosophy, recently published a new book titled *Renewing the Balance*.

■ **Dr. Deborah Fontaine**, Chair, English/Communication and Social Sciences Departments, will be presenting a concurrent session entitled "A Cultural Shift Toward Authentic Student Learning Outcome Assessment" at the 2017 SACSCOC Annual Conference Meeting in Dallas.

■ **Dr. Mark Horrell**, Professor of Earth Science, was interviewed and quoted as an expert on climate change in the April 15 NWF Daily News.

■ **Tawanda Brown** was recognized as Chancellor's Clark Maxwell Scholar Student of the Month for April and awarded \$150 for her exemplary leadership skills and student success. This award is given monthly by Florida College System.



NFSO Education Week

In May, more than 2,500 Okaloosa and Walton County fourth graders (pictured above) participated in the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra's annual "Link Up with Carnegie Hall" concerts as part of the NFSO's Education Week. A special thanks to our presenting sponsors: Fred and Annette Semasko, Fort Walton Beach Medical Center, and the NFSO Guild. ■

Pictured: Okaloosa and Walton County fourth graders during the NFSO Education Week.



Dental Assisting experiences 100% pass rate

The NWF Dental Assisting program recently received the 2016 Dental Assisting National Board results which reported a 100% pass rate for all 16 graduates with an average of 27 points higher on their board than other accredited programs in Florida and an average of 38 points higher than accredited programs in the nation.

"We never tire of celebrating the success of our outstanding students," said Dr. Devin Stephenson, NWF State College President. "We are creating a culture of excellence through academic programs such as our Dental Assisting program that are relevant and meeting the workforce needs of our communities." ■

Pictured: Students in Dental Assisting.

MARY OGLETREE CONTINUES TO IMPACT STUDENT LIVES

Last year, Mary Ogletree combined her two scholarship endowments, creating the Sidney J. "Sid" and Mary Ogletree Endowed Scholarship. This year she added another \$10,000 bringing her lifetime giving to over \$55,000. Over the years, her endowments have impacted the lives of 28 students and will continue to provide many with the opportunity to earn an education without the burden of financial worry. ■

*Pictured:
Mary Ogletree.*



Rotary Club of Crestview Supports Raider Athletic Success

The Crestview Rotary Club's Annual Wild Game Feast, held in February at the Gum Creek Lodge, was a resounding success this year and grossed \$7,500 in support to the Raider Athletic programs. This year's gift is being used to enhance student athlete success – providing laptops and tutoring services for athletes. The Club's generosity totals more than \$140,000 and has helped Raider Athletic teams enjoy another stellar year. ■

Pictured (L-R): Crestview Rotary Club President Larry Ward; Dr. Devin Stephenson, NWF State College President; Ramsey Ross, NWF Raider Athletic Director.



ATHLETICS



Bart Walker chosen as the next head coach for Women's Basketball

In April, NWF chose Bart Walker as head coach of women's basketball. "I am honored to be selected as the next Head Coach for this outstanding women's basketball program," said Walker. "I will begin to recruit immediately and bring the best athletes to compete at NWF. The Panhandle Conference is the most difficult conference in the nation and we accept the challenge. As always, our goal is to be #1 in the Panhandle, the nation, and academically." ■



The Raider Baseball team finished their season as runner-ups in the Panhandle Conference with an overall record of 34-17. Their season came to an end in the quarterfinals of the State Tournament in Lakeland. We are very proud of this team and their accomplishments! ■

Other News in Athletics

NWF Softball finished their season with an overall record of 46-15. The conclusion of their season came in the quarterfinals of the FCSAA/NJCAA Region 8 Tournament in Vero Beach. Congratulations ladies on a fantastic season!



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Nursing Trip to Guatemala

For several years, the nursing program at NWF State College has offered an opportunity for nursing students to travel to Guatemala to experience healthcare in an underdeveloped country. This year, seven students and Dr. Marty Walker, Director of Nursing, traveled abroad to provide health education programs to the underserved. ■

Pictured (below): NWF Nursing students wash the feet of Guatemalan children to check for parasites.



Pictured (L-R): Elpidtha Maria Gibson (Crestview), Mary Swisher (Ft. Walton Beach), Tawanda Brown (Crestview).

STUDENTS ADVANCE TO SKILLSUSA NATIONAL COMPETITION

In late April, NWF students learned that many of them would continue to the June national SkillsUSA tournament in Louisville, Kentucky.

At this year's state competition, NWF teams representing the Career Pathways: Human Services - Education and Training division and Career Pathways: Health Services division placed first. Several students also placed individually—bringing home first and second place in Dental Assisting, and first place in Early Childhood Education. ■

NWF AmeriCorps team honored

At the 5th Annual Mayor, County and Tribal Recognition Day for National Service, Destin Mayor Scott Fischer and former Destin Mayor Sam SeEVERS, Volunteer Florida Commission Chair, issued a Mayor's Proclamation honoring the college's 2017 AmeriCorps NWF Environmental Stewards team for outstanding community service. ■

Pictured: 2017 AmeriCorps NWF Environmental Stewards team receives a Mayor's Proclamation.

