May is the month we celebrate commencement! This year’s graduation ceremonies happen to fall on May the 4th – May the Fourth be With You!

Many of you know I enjoy quoting Yoda, from Star Wars, any time of year, and one of my favorite sayings is, “Do or do not. There is no try.”

This quote is a lesson in commitment and the power in giving something our all—not just giving it a try with no real expectation for success.

I am very proud of the students who have worked so diligently to complete their certificate and degree programs. It takes grit and determination to “do.” The faculty and support staff at Northwest Florida State College are doing exceptional work in assisting our students to be successful in their educational pursuits. We make sure students are not flying solo by providing exceptional navigation (advising) and effective wrap-around support services as they pursue their credentials. “Today is a new day, and you are not the same person you were yesterday, last week or years ago. Today is a day to be better than you were the day before.” As Yoda says,

(continued on next page)
“YOU MUST UNLEARN WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED.”

As creatures of habit, we tend to love our routines and our go-to methods. But sometimes, we must shake up those traditional processes—and even unlearn those processes—to succeed. We understand this continuous improvement concept at Northwest Florida State College, and we are committed to standing with our students when new perspectives are awakening and new challenges present themselves.

“PASS ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED.”

The wisdom we gain in life is a gift to pass along—not to keep to ourselves. It is important that we share insights with others. I recently heard a motivational speaker say to an audience that “we are not here to see through people, but to see people through.” And that is exactly what we intend to do – Improve Lives through the transformational power of education and training.

So, to the Northwest Florida State College Graduating Class of 2019, we wish you a bright and prosperous future. Congratulations! The Force is strong with you,

Dr. Devin Stephenson
President
#TheBestisOurStandard

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

- **NWF students** brought home three first place and two second place accolades from the SkillsUSA State Conference held in Pensacola on April 7 – April 9, 2019. All NWF students who placed first in their category at the state level are invited to compete at the National Leadership and Skills Conference in Louisville, Kentucky on June 24-28, 2019. First place awards were earned in audio/radio production by Samuel McClead and Rachel Williams, early childhood education by Lena Webb and computer programming by Gabrielle Jackson. Second place awards were earned in medical terminology by Jacquelyn Figueroa and career pathways by Donna Michelle Long, Amber Mihacsi and Jami Schultz.

- **The Strategic Communications Office** at Northwest Florida State College recently won a silver for original photography and a bronze award for its Twitter profile from the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations (NCMPR).

- **Collegiate High School** Wins Big at 32nd Annual Math Bowl – Team 1st place Class Y, and individual winners in Class Y – Teertho Bhattacharya (1st) and Eric Fowler (2nd)
MAY CALENDAR

The Mattie Kelly Arts Center Galleries
May 18-21
27th Emerald Coast National Juried Exhibition with Isaac McCaslin, 2018 Best in Show Winner

Memorial Day Concert
$20 - Mattie Kelly Arts Center Amphitheater
May 25 at 6:30 p.m.
In honor of America’s veterans and first responders, the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra and Northwest Florida State College present a stirring concert of patriotic tunes for the whole family. Pack a picnic and enjoy an evening under the stars!

ATHLETICS

Raider Basketball Teams Place in the Elite Eight
The NWF men’s basketball team earned the #1 seed in this year’s NJCAA National Tournament after clinching the FCSAA/NJCAA Region VIII Tournament. The Raiders faced Ranger College in the national quarterfinals where their season ended after making their third Elite Eight appearance in the past four years. They finished with an overall record of 28-5 on the year and made their seventh national tournament appearance in the last eight years.

Coach Bart Walker and the Lady Raiders entered the national tournament as the #11 seed after finishing as runner-up in the FCSAA/NJCAA Region VIII championship game. Their season also ended in the Elite Eight for the second straight year. They ended the season with a record of 26-6.

Raider Softball Finishes 2019 Season
NWF Softball’s season ended in the conference playoffs with an 8-4 loss to Pensacola State College on April 18. A notable highlight from the season was a walk-off home run from Emily Sinclair to give the Raiders a 13-12 victory over conference rival Chipola that handed the Indians their only conference loss of the season. Freshman Ashley Autuori led her team at the plate with a .418 batting average and .778 slugging percentage that included 21 doubles, five triples and eight home runs while only striking out three times.

Raider Basketball is on Fire!
Raider Baseball claimed the Panhandle Conference championship, their first since 2011, with a 3-2 win over Tallahassee Community College on April 20 and currently sits at #5 in the nation as the regular season winds down. The Raiders currently rank first nationally in ERA with a combined average of 1.99 and have notched 11 shutouts on the season. The Raiders now turn their sights to the FCSAA State Tournament that will be held at Joker Marchant Stadium in Lakeland, Florida on May 10-14, 2019.

Ashley Autuori at the plate in a game earlier this season.
The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance (CBA) has been accepted into the unique 1% for the Planet network. Each nonprofit organization entering 1% for the Planet is nominated by a business or individual already participating in the movement. After donating to CBA programs for two years, New Belgium Brewing Company nominated CBA. Members of the network give 1% of their revenue or individual earnings back to environmental nonprofits each year. As an organizational member of 1%, CBA is now eligible to receive these gifts to improve swimmable, fishable waterways.

“1% for the Planet allows us to reach a brand new audience not only in our region, but nationally as well,” explains Alison McDowell, Director of CBA, “We appreciate that 1% for the Planet encourages partnerships through monetary gifts, but also through volunteer events, in-kind contributions, and more.” McDowell continues, “Each gift will be invested into the Choctawhatchee Bay watershed to preserve the heart and soul of our community for generations to come.”

For more information, please contact Erika Zambello, at zambelle@nwfsc.edu.