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CAPITAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE CELEBRATES 60TH COMMENCEMENT

Hartford, CT – Capital Community College’s 60th commencement, the fifth since the college’s move downtown, took place Thursday evening, May 31st. For the third year the event was held in the Connecticut Convention Center and close to 400 students received their Associate in Science and Associate in Arts degrees.

President Calvin Woodland recognized the college’s notable achievements over the past academic year, highlighting Capital’s recent 10-year re-accreditation and newly-attained five-star status with the International Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. The president praised graduates for their persistence, noting most had to “make a concerted choice” to complete their studies, as their lives “are filled with so much more.” Many Capital students juggle academics with more than one job and caring for family members. “For most of you,” he said “this hard-earned degree took well over two years to achieve.”

The keynote speaker was Dr. Patrick Nickoletti, an assistant professor of psychology at Saint Joseph College. Dr. Nickoletti’s areas of specialty include juvenile resilience, impact of social status, and life-span psychological development. He stressed the theme that “nobody makes it on their own,” and shared his dramatic history of being made a ward of the state from the day he was born until he ran away as a teenager.

“The whole ‘rugged individual’ concept is a myth,” Nickoletti pronounced, “and if you become isolated, you may never meet your potential or dreams.” Instead, he urged graduates to “personally seek out, embrace and learn from mentors,” as he did. To complete the “Great Chain of Being” he encouraged the rapt audience to “mentor struggling undergraduates, or even better, mentor young children and at-risk families, because that’s where the story of success is most crucial. Seek good mentors, be good mentors and success will find you.”

Professors Connie Carter and Joyce Darling both received Educational Excellence Awards for their twenty-plus decades of contributions to the college. Lewis J. Robinson, Jr., an attorney and member of the college’s foundation, was presented with the Board of Trustee Merit Award for advocating and advancing Capital in the community and creating beneficial partnerships with the college’s neighbors. Philip Knecht, a student and real estate instructor associated with the college for thirty years, received an Honorary Degree. The 79 year old “is the Gold Standard for Lifelong Learning,” said Doris Arrington, Capital’s dean of student services.

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The only public undergraduate college in the city of Hartford, Capital Community College provides access to higher education to the diverse residents of the region. The college develops students’ academic and professional skills to prepare them for transfer education, careers and other ongoing challenges and opportunities.