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CAPITAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES LARGEST CLASS IN HISTORY



Atty. Pedro Segarra (left) and President Calvin Woodland at Capital Community College's Commencement May 25th at the Connecticut Convention Center. (McPhoto)

Hartford, CT – Capital Community College's 59th Commencement, the fourth since the College's move downtown, was held yesterday, Thursday, May 25, 2006. For the second year the ceremony took place in the Connecticut Convention Center. This year's graduating class was the largest in the College's history, with 400 students receiving their Associate in Science and Associate in Arts degrees. Calvin E. Woodland, Capital's president, spoke in his address about the persistence of so many students, most of whom did not earn their two-year degree in two years. He singled out Brenda McClain, who "not only triumphed over an abusive relationship, but has been juggling caring for her four daughters with academics and working up to sixty hours a week." Brenda is the recipient of the Eastern Connecticut State University Scholarship, and after she earns her Bachelor's degree plans to go to law school.

Capital's keynote speaker was Attorney Pedro E. Segarra, Capital Community College alumnus and managing partner of the law office of Segarra & Lopez in Hartford and Miami. After graduating from Capital in 1978, Pedro Segarra went on to earn his BA from the University of Hartford, and both a master's in Social Work and a law degree from University of Connecticut. At Capital, Segarra was founder and president of the Hispanic Student Association, now known as LASA. In 1991, Pedro Segarra was appointed Corporation Counsel for the City of Hartford, the youngest person ever selected for the position at that time. Segarra told a graduation audience of more than 2,000 that he protested his own graduation in 1978, because he was the only Latino and one of only a handful of minorities in the community college at the time. But he had high praise for his former professors, saying "we were fortunate that most of them wanted not only to educate us, but to assist us on our journey, which they knew would be rough and filled with barriers. We became their professional challenges and they were there for us. It was an experience unlike any other." Because Capital Community College was such an important force in his personal development, Segarra announced his creation of two full-time scholarships: The Robert Ortiz Memorial Scholarship Award for a student who is working on or intends to on HIV/AIDS, and The Segarra & Lopez Scholarship Award for a student to pursue a career in social work or law.

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