

Contacts

585 Degrees Awarded to Students at Trinity's 190th Commencement

Alumnus William K. Marimow, Editor of 'The Philadelphia Inquirer,' Delivers Address to the Class of 2016

Hartford, Connecticut, May 22, 2016 – “This is the time that you can best afford to sample all that life has to offer,” William K. Marimow, editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, said to the 585 graduates receiving their degrees at Trinity College's 190th Commencement on Sunday, May 22. A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist whose résumé also includes serving as the top news executive at National Public Radio and as editor of *The Baltimore Sun*, Marimow is a Trinity alumnus from the Class of 1969.

During his [Commencement address](#), Marimow told the 536 undergraduates and 49 master's degree students, “I have three themes today, and they are all interrelated: First, find a mentor at your first job and in all the jobs you ever have. Second, make sure to contribute to the public good. It will enhance the world we live in, and it will enhance your own lives. And, last but not least: Learn to listen. It's a lost art and an invaluable skill.”

As an example of someone contributing to the public good, Marimow spoke of Gerry Lenfest, who recently donated *The Inquirer*, the *Daily News*, and the website Philly.com to The Philadelphia Foundation, establishing what Marimow said is an unwavering commitment to public service journalism. “Never forget the people and the places that fostered your growth along the way,” he added. “Listen carefully. And then make sure to believe in yourself as much as the person who is guiding your way.”



William K. Marimow

Marimow concluded by making a request to the graduates. “As you leave this campus, I would ask you to think of a professor, a coach, or a staff member here at Trinity who has enriched your life over these last four years. I would ask that you write that person a letter to express your gratitude,” he said. “That letter will be a gift – a gift that I guarantee will enhance the recipient's life as much as his or her work has enhanced yours.”

Marimow's address came on a day in which a crowd of thousands of students, faculty, administrators, family members, and other guests gathered on the main quadrangle in front of the historic Long Walk buildings to witness the College's 190th Commencement exercises.

For his accomplishments in the field of journalism and his dedication to Trinity, Marimow was awarded an honorary doctor of letters degree. In addition to Marimow, two other honorary degrees were bestowed: to Miriam Colón-Valle, an honorary doctor of humane letters degree in recognition of her career as a pioneer of Hispanic theater; and to Trinity alumnus Michael P. Conforti '68, P'16, an honorary doctor of fine arts degree for promotion of the visual arts, arts education, and community involvement with arts institutions.

Graduate Hamdi Hamza Abdi, who was selected as the student speaker, asked, “Who gets to be Trinity?” She told her classmates, “Getting here was hard. ... It



Hamdi Hamza Abdi

matters that you are all here. It matters to me and it matters to you and it matters that we will all stay Trinity." Her address received a standing ovation from the crowd. Abdi, a biology major from Sewanee, Georgia, was a writing associate at the Allan K. Smith Center for Writing and Rhetoric, a QuestBridge Scholar, and past president of Trinity's Muslim Students' Association.

The [valedictorian and salutatorian of the Class of 2016](#) were also named. Jami R. Cogswell of Glastonbury, Connecticut, who was a Jacob W. Edwards Memorial Scholar and R.C. Knox and Company Scholar at Trinity, had the highest grade point average among her peers and was named

valedictorian. She earned her bachelor of science degree *summa cum laude* with dual majors in mathematics and classical studies, the latter of which she completed with honors. In addition, she completed a minor in Latin. The salutatorian was her twin sister Darcy J. Cogswell of Glastonbury, Connecticut, who was an Oliver F. Johnson Memorial Scholar and R.C. Knox and Company Scholar at Trinity. She earned her bachelor of arts degree *summa cum laude* with a major in classical studies and a minor in history.

Twenty-nine students graduated *summa cum laude*, 33 students graduated *magna cum laude* and 48 graduated *cum laude*.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, awards were presented for Faculty, Staff, and Student Excellence. The first went to Craig W. Schneider, Charles A. Dana Professor of Biology, who was recognized for his innovative use of the classroom and laboratory by involving students in active learning. Schneider is a 1996 recipient of the Brownell Prize for Teaching Excellence who is an author and internationally recognized scholar with a distinguished record of accomplishment in the field of marine botany. He also chairs his department and serves on numerous Trinity committees. Schneider was recognized for his integrity, high ethical and professional standards, and devotion to engaging students for more than 40 years.

Amy F. Brough, director of institutional support, and Laura R. Lockwood, director of the Women & Gender Resource Action Center (WGRAC), were awarded the Trustee Award for Staff Excellence. Brough, who has demonstrated outstanding College and community citizenship for nearly 25 years, works to connect the priorities of potential donors to Trinity's mission and the needs of faculty and students. She was recognized for her unwavering dedication and service to the College and the entire Trinity community. Lockwood provides support for myriad groups and programs such as Big Sister/Little Sister and Students Encouraging Consensual Sex. She also started the Safe Zone Program and the Coming-Out Network, which are now run by the Queer Resource Center. Lockwood is the coordinator of the Sexual Assault Response Team and a trained counselor who champions change across campus and lets every student know that they have a voice. She was recognized for her singular energy and her devotion to the students of Trinity.

The Trustee Award for Student Excellence went to Jami R. Cogswell and Julia Rose Duggan. Cogswell, a double major in mathematics and classics with a minor in Latin, graduated with a GPA above 4.0. She conducted research with faculty and presented her findings at multiple symposia. She also served as a tutor in math, physics, and Latin, and as president of the Rock Climbing Club and of the Newman Club. Duggan, a neuroscience major, was elected into Nu Rho Psi, the National Honor Society in Neuroscience, and served as vice president of Trinity's chapter. She also conducted research with faculty and served as a first-year mentor, a tutor, and a teaching assistant. Duggan also played field hockey, served as an RA, sang with the Dischords, and co-founded Project PACKS, which helps provide food to Hartford children who would otherwise go hungry.

Two faculty members were honored for their devotion and dedication to the academic life of Trinity, whether in the quality of their teaching, research, writing, or all three. John Platoff, professor of music, was presented with the Thomas Church Brownell Prize for Teaching Excellence, which is given to a senior faculty member who consistently performs exemplary work. The Arthur H. Hughes Award for Teaching Excellence, which is given to a faculty member who has taught for fewer than nine years, was awarded to Jennifer M. Regan-Lefebvre, assistant professor of history.

In her [charge to the graduating class](#), President Berger-Sweeney said that Trinity, like other institutions of higher education, is in the business of developing intellectual capacity and harnessing creativity for social good. As examples of

this, she cited entrepreneurial alumni including Danny Meyer, Trinity Class of 1980, who majored in political science. "Many of you may know of his restaurants past and present – Shake Shack, Union Square Café, and Gramercy Tavern, just to name a few," Berger-Sweeney said. "Last fall, Danny's Union Square Hospitality Group announced that it would eliminate tips at all of its full-service restaurants. ... I say Danny is simply using the creativity he learned at Trinity to give restaurant workers what he sees as fair wages."

Berger-Sweeney said there is a common theme that connects successful alumni to the members of the graduating class. "I think it is fair to say that there is something in the very DNA of Trinity. I'm just putting a name on it – creativity, innovation, and emotional intelligence – but it has always been here," she said. "Graduates, I hope that during your time here, Trinity has tapped into *your* creativity and innovative spirit. ... It's important to remember that all new businesses start with a new idea. Liberal arts colleges are in the business of ideas. That's what we do best."

She encouraged the students to pair their confidence with a sense of morality and civic engagement to uplift and empower others. Berger-Sweeney concluded, "What you now owe to yourselves and to Trinity College – as you graduate today – is to use your confidence, your creativity, and your innovative nature to seize the opportunities that await you and to make the most of your lives."

To view photos from Commencement 2016, please click [here](#) and [here](#).

Visit [Trinity College on SoundCloud](#) to hear William K. Marimow's [Commencement address](#) and President Joanne Berger-Sweeney's [charge to the graduating class](#).

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300 Summit Street, Hartford CT 06106 | Tel. 860.297.2000