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QuickTakes!

Commencement News:

William Paterson University Graduation Will Feature Keynote Address from WCBS-TV Anchor Kristine Johnson

March 7, 2018



Kristine Johnson



Kristine Johnson, an anchor for WCBS-TV in New York, will give the keynote address at William Paterson University's 2018 undergraduate commencement ceremony on Friday, May 18, 9 a.m. at the Prudential Center in Newark. Ms. Johnson also will receive an honorary doctor of humane letters degree. Also, being honored is Dr. Henry Pruitt, William Paterson University (WPU) trustee emeritus, who served on the WPU board for 33 years.

"Kristine Johnson is an exemplary role model for our students," says President Kathleen Waldron. "She has not only demonstrated excellence in her field, anchoring coverage of many major news events, but also demonstrated her dedication to civic engagement, a core value on our campus, as witnessed by her role as the moderator for two New Jersey gubernatorial debates held at William Paterson University. We are delighted that she will speak to our graduates about the importance of taking an active role in public discourse, which is critical in today's society."

Emeritus Trustee Dr. Henry Pruitt, who retired from the Board of Trustees in June 2017 after 33 years of service, will receive an honorary doctor of humane letters degree at the ceremony. Dr. Pruitt, the longest serving board member in the University's modern history, served as chair of the board from 1991 to 1993.

"Henry Pruitt dedicated his career to fostering education excellence and advancing educational opportunities for the students of New Jersey," said President Kathleen Waldron. "We are proud to recognize his commitment to education, including his more than three decades of distinguished service on our Board of Trustees, by presenting him with this honorary degree."

The commencement also will include a speech by a graduating bachelor's degree candidate. A separate ceremony will be held for master's and doctoral degree candidates on Wednesday, May 16, at 7 p.m. in the Sports and Recreation Center on campus. A total of

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Kean University
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*New Jersey City University
Ramapo College of New Jersey
Rowan University*

*Stockton University
Thomas Edison State University
William Paterson University*

nearly 2,500 bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree candidates are expected to be recognized.

Alumni from the Class of 1968, who graduated when William Paterson was called Paterson State College, will be present at the undergraduate ceremony along with members of the Pioneer Society, those alumni who graduated at least 50 years ago.

Ms. Johnson currently co-anchors the 5 p.m. and 11 p.m. news at WCBS-TV, the CBS owned and operated station in New York City. She joined CBS 2 in fall 2006. Since then, she has been the recipient of several Emmy awards.

She has navigated her viewers through numerous breaking news events, including Hurricane Sandy, the Newtown school massacre, the Boston marathon bombings, and two separate papal visits to New York. She also anchors weekly on the network's digital platform CBSN, fills in as anchor for *CBS This Morning*, and has filed reports for *CBS Sunday Morning*.

In 1994, Ms. Johnson began her career at WPRI in Providence, Rhode Island, where she was hired as a part-time assignment editor. Over the next 10 years, she transitioned through several production positions to her ultimate goal of reporting. Ms. Johnson left Providence for New York City in 2004. She was hired by MSNBC and anchored daytime coverage.

Ms. Johnson represents CBS 2 at various events around the tri-state area. She has worked closely with the greater New York chapters of Susan G. Komen Race for a Cure, the March of Dimes, the Brain Tumor Foundation, and the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Run. A graduate of the University of Nebraska with a bachelor's degree in journalism, she lives with her family in northern New Jersey.

Dr. Pruitt was named trustee emeritus of the William Paterson University Board of Trustees in 2017. He joined the board in 1983, and served in numerous leadership roles, including chair of the board from 1991 to 1993, and chair of several key committees, including the Educational Policy and Student Development Committee, the Finance and Audit Committee, the Minority Affairs Committee, and the Personnel and Compensation Committee. Beyond the university, Dr. Pruitt served as chairman of the board of the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities, the agency that advocates on behalf of public higher education in New Jersey, from 2001 to 2003, and vice chair from 2000 to 2001.

A tireless advocate for students, and especially students of color, Dr. Pruitt focused on the intellectual, cultural, and personal merits of diversity and led William Paterson University to achieve one of the most diverse student bodies in the state and region as well as a diverse faculty and staff. During his tenure on the William Paterson Board of Trustees, Dr. Pruitt oversaw the significant expansion of the institution's student body, growth in the number of faculty to more than 400, the creation of a residential campus, the construction of major new facilities including the academic buildings University Hall, Power Arts Center, and Science West; the John Victor Machuga Student Center and University Commons; multiple residence

halls; the acquisition of the Valley Road campus; and construction of a parking garage. A career educator, Dr. Pruitt spent more than three decades as a junior high school teacher, assistant principal and principal, including 18 years as principal of Janis E. Dismus Middle School in Englewood. A resident of Teaneck, where he is an elected councilman and deputy mayor, he has served as president of the Teaneck Board of Education, president of the Teaneck Community Relations Advisory Board, member of the Teaneck Visioning Task Force, and member of the Teaneck Parks and Recreation Board, among numerous other professional and community activities. He has received numerous honors and awards for his commitment to education and service, including the 2017 Julian Bond Civil Rights Award presented by the Bergen County NAACP. Dr. Pruitt holds a doctorate in education from Teachers College, Columbia University, where he majored in education finance. He was inducted into the Hunter College Hall of Fame in 2009.

William Paterson University is a leading public university in New Jersey with more than 10,000 students and 75,000 living alumni. The third oldest public institution in the state, the university was chartered in 1855 and offers undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degree programs through five academic colleges: Arts and Communication, Cotsakos College of Business, Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Science and Health. Located on 370 hilltop acres in Wayne, the University provides a wide range of learning opportunities in its classrooms, laboratories and other state-of-the-art facilities, as well as other opportunities including research collaborations with faculty, internships and civic engagement activities. The institution's 410 full-time faculty are highly distinguished and diverse scholars and teachers, including 41 Fulbright scholars and recipients of numerous other awards, grants, and fellowships.