



NEW JERSEY

Association of State Colleges and Universities

150 West State Street, Trenton NJ 08608

Phone (609) 989-1100

QuickTakes!

Thomas Edison State University Inaugurates its Fourth President, Dr. Merodie Hancock, at 46th Commencement Ceremony

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New Jersey Congresswoman and TESU alumna Bonnie Watson Coleman, BA '85, looks on as Dr. Merodie Hancock (on right) addresses Thomas Edison State University's graduates during Dr. Hancock's inauguration as president and the institution's 46th Annual Commencement Ceremony on Sept. 29 at the CURE Insurance Arena in Trenton, N.J. *Photo credit: Catherine "Cie" Stroud Photography.*

Thomas Edison State University (TESU) had plenty of cause for celebration during its 46th Annual Commencement, on Saturday, September 29, 2018 at the CURE Insurance Arena in Trenton, NJ. During the ceremony, the university inaugurated its fourth president, [Merodie A. Hancock, PhD](#), and recognized 10 graduates who are the first graduates of TESU's Doctor of Nursing Practice ([DNP](#)) degree program.

New Jersey Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ 12th District), a TESU graduate, class of 1985, served as keynote speaker. "I am thrilled that this is my alma mater. Today, is both a commencement and the

inauguration of President Merodie Hancock," said Congresswoman Watson Coleman, who is the daughter of a renowned New Jersey government leader Assemblyman John S. Watson after whom the university's John S. Watson School of Public Service and The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy are named. "There is no doubt in my mind that Dr. Hancock represents the kind of energy, compassion, understanding, experience, leadership and readiness to take this university to its next level," said Rep. Watson Coleman.

The TESU's class of 2018 included 2,464 graduates, 424 of whom attended the ceremony with 5,406 of their family members and guests. The graduates who attended came from 36 U.S. states, including California and Hawaii as well as Canada and the U.S. Virgin Island.

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"I am honored to serve as Thomas Edison State University's fourth president," said Dr. Hancock. "In particular I would like to express my appreciation for two gentleman who have individually and collectively accomplished so much in the world of nontraditional education: Dr. James Hall, founding president emeritus of SUNY Empire State College and Dr. George Pruitt, president emeritus of Thomas Edison State University. Most importantly, I want to acknowledge our graduates. This joint inauguration and graduation ceremony is most fittingly a 'commencement.' Today marks a wonderful new beginning. For some of you that beginning may be showing yourself and family members that a university degree is indeed achievable. For others, you may be using your undergraduate or graduate degrees to progress your professional, civic or personal lives. Regardless of your goals, this commencement, this new beginning, is opening doors of opportunity to a future you can't even yet imagine. Opening doors and creating opportunities are the reasons I'm so excited to be the university's fourth president." Dr. George Pruitt served as the institution's president for 35 years prior to Dr. Hancock assuming the role.

In honor of Dr. Hancock's inauguration, the TESU Board of Trustees approved a \$500 tuition scholarship voucher for all graduates. Recipients will have the option of using the voucher to continue their education or pass it along to someone they feel will benefit from the opportunity to attend the university.

The university has awarded approximately 61,750 degrees to more than 56,230 graduates since it began providing flexible, high-quality, collegiate learning opportunities for self-directed adults in 1972.