

Greetings from IUPUI

May 2009

Commencement weekend has come and gone, and 5,925 graduates of the IUPUI campus are on their way to the next stage of their lives. All of us—students, faculty, staff, and administrators—are uplifted by the pride of accomplishment that flashes in the smiles of graduates and their families on commencement day.

That pride of accomplishment is well earned by all, but it is particularly compelling for some of our graduates, whose stories I am proud to share with you.

Erin Bower just graduated from our **Doctor of Physical Therapy** program. In 1989, when Erin was five years old, she was the **victim of a pipe bomb explosion** at a Kmart store where her family was shopping. She lost her hand and the sight in one eye when the bomb, concealed in a tube of toothpaste, exploded in her hand.

What is remarkable about Erin is that she is about to enter a profession where typically **patients' treatment requires two functional hands**. Erin learned to modify the techniques she was taught so that she could achieve the same therapeutic effects despite her disability. In addition to the many other physical therapy faculty who helped Erin adapt, Professor **Valerie Strunk** organized a clinical rotation for Erin with a physical therapist in Minnesota who also has only one hand. This past Sunday, Erin **graduated first in her class**.

It was faculty member **Cathy Pike** who inspired **Virgil Gregory** to earn a **Ph.D. in social work**—his third degree from IUPUI. The 1997 Decatur Central High School graduate received a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and entered the Master of Social Work degree program, where two research methods courses taught by Dr. Pike awakened both his intellectual curiosity and the desire to investigate problems and find credible solutions. With doctorate in hand, Virgil's next goal is to do academic research and **teach evidence-based practice** to the next generation of social workers.

For **Natalia Slain**, it was her **Marine Corps** experience as a counterterrorism analyst in Iraq and geo/political analyst in Africa that motivated her to pursue an **International Studies** degree. A Liberal Arts Dean's Scholar, she also won the 2009 **Medical Humanities - Health Studies Program Student Essay Award** for her paper titled "Collaboration in Health Care: Integrating Traditional Medicine and Modern Biomedicine in Comprehensive Health Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa."

Ashley Mack, an English and African-American Diaspora major, followed the **School of Liberal Arts Creative Writing track** to earn her baccalaureate. Along the way, the North Central High School graduate and published poet earned seven IUPUI scholarships and awards, which in turn opened up new doors for her and new ways to give back to others. With the help of a **Gail M. and William H. Plater Scholarship for**

International Civic Engagement, she participated in IUPUI's **To Mexico with Love** program. As a service learning project, she and **Trina Otero** collected and cataloged books to outfit an elementary school library and then instructed the citizens of Cuernavaca on keeping the new library in working order.

Charlene Gonzalez was born in the Dominican Republic. Upon receiving her undergraduate degree in **finance and international business**, she became the first member of her family to graduate college. With the help of a Kelley School of Business Diversity Research Scholarship, she worked with faculty member **Catherine Bonser-Neal** on undergraduate research involving the Chinese banking system. She also had five internships, including one with Citigroup's national headquarters in New York, and will now start work as a business advisor with Deloitte Consulting in Chicago.

When asked about her experiences at IUPUI, Charlene spoke for many of our graduates, regardless of the school they attended, when she said: "**Attending this university provides a sense of what the culture of the working world will be.** The students at Kelley Indianapolis come from many walks of life: traditional students, full-time employees, parents, etc. All the different experiences of students are shared in the classroom, allowing each student to learn beyond what is within their reach."

My congratulations and best wishes to these and all our graduates!

Charles R. Bantz
Chancellor

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