

Commencement

June 3, 2023

[Welcome]

Please be seated.

Good afternoon. It is truly a pleasure to welcome you to the Community College of Vermont's 2023 commencement ceremony. I am Joyce Judy, and I serve as president of CCV. I have the distinct honor of greeting you today to celebrate the Class of 2023.

Congratulations, graduates.

It is a privilege to be joined on the platform today by Vermont Governor Phil Scott; today's keynote speaker, Kyle Clark; Vermont State Colleges Chancellor Sophie Zdatny; and Vermont State Colleges Board members, chair Lynn Dickinson and trustee Bill Lippert.

Also joining me on the platform are this year's community service award recipients Bob and Lois Frey; the Class of 2023's student speaker, Kevin McGreal; faculty members Melissa Holmes, Mary Ann Boyd, and Stephanie Bush; and Academic Dean Debby Stewart.

[Acknowledgements]

Graduates, as you look around the field house this afternoon, you'll see dozens of the faculty and staff members who supported you throughout your CCV journey. Your instructors offered their expertise and encouragement, challenging you to expand your knowledge and develop new skills. CCV staff guided you along the path to meeting your goals. They join us today to celebrate you and your many achievements. Graduates, please join me in recognizing them.

I also want to thank all of the CCV staff, as well as the staff here at Norwich University, who organized today's event. We

appreciate the hard work and attention to detail that went into creating this special occasion in honor of our graduates and their accomplishments.

This year, I am pleased to recognize two very special programs that are new to the College. Both are made possible by significant contributions from philanthropic partners who share CCV's belief that everyone should have access to higher education. 2023 is the first commencement that includes graduates of the McClure Free Degree Promise. Supported by the J. Warren & Lois McClure Foundation, the program promises a free associate degree to students who participate in Early College during their senior year of high school and continue for a second year at CCV. This is an incredible opportunity for young students. We are fortunate to be joined today by the McClure Foundation's executive director and members of the board, and I invite you to join me in thanking the

Foundation for their partnership in expanding access to higher education for all Vermonters.

I am also pleased to announce the recent establishment of a \$1 million endowment from the Courtney and Victoria Buffum Family Foundation, given to create the Victoria Buffum Single Parent Program Fund. This scholarship fund will provide educational and career support to CCV students who are single parents. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the president of the Foundation and his wife, who are in attendance today. Please join me in thanking the Buffum Family Foundation for their commitment to supporting this important population of CCV students.

[Message to Graduates]

CCV Class of 2023, today is about celebrating your graduation, a rite of passage through which you officially become

alumni. Throughout your CCV journey, you balanced your role as students with the many other roles you play as parents, caregivers, and professionals; you are volunteers, hardworking employees, members of the military, and leaders in your communities. And throughout your time at CCV, you had the fortitude to keep going despite the obstacles: the sleepless nights, school closures, and illnesses; flat tires, months when you struggled to make ends meet, and a global pandemic. Whether you came to CCV one year ago or ten, you had the courage to invest in yourselves and in your families by pursuing education alongside many other responsibilities, and in the face of many challenges. Today, we celebrate your transition from students to graduates, and we recognize the many other hats you've worn along the way.

[As I acknowledge various groups of graduates, I will ask you to stand to be recognized. I invite those of you who may be unable to stand to raise your hand instead.]

Most of you were working full- or part-time jobs while you took classes. You made time to complete assignments; you attended your classes and still picked up extra shifts when coworkers called in sick; you stayed focused on your studies while bringing home a steady paycheck. Maybe you had moments of wondering if you could keep going, but you dug deep and found the strength to continue. I would like to ask all of you who have been working while going to school to please stand and be recognized.

Many of you are parents. You chose to pursue a college education because you want to create the best possible life for yourself and your children, but I know it wasn't easy. You juggled meals, school and child care, doctor's appointments, and more. You sacrificed time with your kids to attend classes. But you stuck it out because you wanted to show your children the importance of

following your dream to earn a college degree. Will all graduates who are parents please stand and be recognized?

Some of you started taking CCV classes when you were still in high school. You wanted to get a head start on your future, but I'm sure you had to overcome fears. You were among the youngest students in your classes. You may have felt overwhelmed by the rigor of college course work. But you had the courage to step outside of your comfort zone, and you developed the tools to succeed. Would all graduates who began their CCV journey as high school students please stand to be recognized?

Many of you are the first in your family to earn a college degree. You broke a generational mold by walking through CCV's doors. You navigated a long list of new challenges, often without the firsthand experience of relatives to guide you. Maybe you questioned if college was the right path, but you stayed the course.

You connected with CCV staff, built relationships with faculty, and leaned on your peers for support. I would like to ask all of you who are the first in your family to graduate from college to please stand and be recognized.

Several of you are members of Phi Theta Kappa, an international honor society for community college students who demonstrate academic integrity and excellence. It took a sustained effort to maintain high grades throughout your time at CCV, and your work ethic and drive have been an inspiration to the entire College community. Will all graduates who are members of Phi Theta Kappa stand at this time to be recognized?

Some of you are veterans or active members of the military. You have made extraordinary sacrifices on behalf of your community and your country. Maybe you took online classes during a deployment. Maybe you came to CCV after leaving the military,

eager to start a new chapter. Your perspective has been invaluable to your classes, and we thank you for your many contributions. I would like to ask all veteran and military-connected graduates to please stand and be recognized. Thank you for your service to this country.

Graduates, you have all demonstrated incredible resilience and determination in reaching this milestone. You were motivated by your parents, your friends, your children, and your dreams of a better future. You stayed focused on your goal to earn a degree, and you persevered. For that, you should be very proud.

Congratulations, CCV Class of 2023.

<Pause>

[Governor Scott]

I am pleased to share that for every year of his tenure as Governor, Phil Scott has made it a priority to attend CCV's

commencement. In fact, this tradition has become an important symbol of his involvement in Vermont communities. A few weeks ago, I received a Sunday night text message from a CCV staff member. She said she'd been out hiking and had met the Governor. She told him she hoped to see him at commencement, and he reassured her that yes, he was looking forward to being here.

As we welcome the Governor this year, I would also like to acknowledge his efforts to increase affordability at CCV. We are incredibly grateful for his support of a proposed tuition break in high-demand programs, giving more students a chance to pursue rewarding Vermont careers.

At this time, I would like to invite the Governor of the State of Vermont, Phil Scott, to the podium to greet and congratulate the class of 2023. Governor Scott.

[Service Awards]

At CCV, we take great pride in our efforts to foster healthy communities. We encourage students, faculty, and staff to become more involved citizens, and each year at commencement, we honor individuals who have given their time and energy in service to others.

[Community Service Award]

I would like to invite Bob and Lois Frey to join me at the podium.

The Community Service Award is presented each year in recognition of sustained and profound service to our state. This year it is my distinct privilege to present this award to Bob and Lois Frey.

Bob and Lois are long-time friends of the College and faithful stewards of their community. They are dedicated to uplifting the people around them and protecting the natural world, and have spent decades volunteering for local organizations, supporting a diversity

of educational causes, and lending a helping hand to anyone in need. As one news reporter wrote, Lois and Bob are “volunteer extraordinaires and all-around wonderful people”—and they are so deserving of that description. Among their many contributions to their local and statewide communities, the Freys are generous supporters of CCV students through the scholarship fund they established more than twenty years ago in memory of their daughter, CCV alumna Jennifer Frey. Jennifer was a tenacious, curious, and loving young woman whose legacy is an inspiration to CCV students, faculty, and staff. Over the years, the Freys have impacted the lives of more than 50 students through the scholarship in Jennifer’s name. Bob shared that when he had a chance to meet one scholarship recipient, she gave him a bear hug and told him how grateful she was. In Bob’s words, “she got a little teary, and so did I.”

Lois and Bob, we are grateful for your service to Vermont. It is an honor to present you both with this award.

[Give plaque; pause for photo]

[Student Service Award]

Many CCV students give generously of their time to their communities, and spend a great deal of energy supporting their neighbors, volunteering for local organizations, and helping to improve the lives of others.

This year, we are pleased to present the Student Service Award to Taylor Goodchild. Will Taylor please join me at the podium?

[Begin reading as they come forward]

Taylor Goodchild is a role model for her own two children as well as the many children she works with as a behavioral interventionist. She is a selfless leader in her local community, where she is a volunteer for youth sports and other activities;

facilitates a volunteer group at a local church; and is a patient family advisor at the University of Vermont Children's Hospital. She also volunteers building beds for local children with the non-profit Sleep in Heavenly Peace. Taylor completes her degree today in liberal studies, and plans to transfer to Vermont State University to study psychology. Congratulations, Taylor, and thank you for your service to your community.

[Give plaque; pause for photo]

[Student Leadership Award]

Many students are leaders in their CCV centers, serving as resources for fellow students and working to create a vibrant, supportive learning environment.

This year, we are very pleased to present the Student Leadership Award to Jack Taylor and Raine Towns. Will Jack and Raine please join me at the podium?

[Begin reading as they come forward]

Jack Taylor earns his degree today in behavioral science.

During his time at CCV, Jack served on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, where he provided a student voice to the work of advancing equity initiatives across the College and beyond. Jack plans to use his CCV education to support BIPOC students and those who struggle with behavioral issues.

Raine Towns studied at our Montpelier academic center, where she became a resource for high school students taking CCV classes. Raine came to CCV through the Early College program during her senior year of high school, and she is among the first students to graduate under the McClure Free Degree Promise. She earns her degree in liberal studies, and she is excited to transfer to Berea College in Kentucky.

Congratulations, Jack and Raine, on receiving this year's Student Leadership Award.

[Give plaque; pause for photo]

[Alumni Scholarship]

Graduates, today you become CCV alumni. In that role, you will always be members of the CCV community. With generous support from past graduates, every year we award the alumni scholarship to graduates who plan to continue their education at a four-year college.

This year, we are proud to award the alumni scholarship to Ryan Francoeur [Francoor] and Maia Mencucci [THREE syllables: My-EEH-ah Men-coochee]. Will Ryan and Maia please join me at the podium?

[Begin reading while they walk]

Ryan graduates today from our Middlebury academic center with a degree in environmental science. He came to CCV to pursue his passion for natural resource conservation, and he will transfer to

Oregon State University to study natural resources. He hopes to use his education to become a forester.

A graduate of CCV-St. Johnsbury, Maia [My-EEH-ah] also earns her degree today in environmental science. She plans to transfer to the University of Vermont, where she will pursue a bachelor's degree in English. Maia [My-EEH-ah] cares deeply about the natural world, and dreams of affecting positive change by becoming an environmental storyteller.

Congratulations, Ryan and Maia [My-EEH-ah], on receiving the 2023 Alumni Scholarship.

[Give certificates; pause for photos]

[Teaching Excellence Awards]

The Teaching Excellence Awards are given annually to faculty members who have been nominated by students, faculty, and staff,

with the vast majority of nominations coming from students. The 2022-2023 Teaching Excellence Award recipients are Mary Ann Boyd, Stephanie Bush, and Lou Colasanti.

Unfortunately, Lou is not able to join us today, but I would like to take a moment to acknowledge his work. Lou's diverse background includes military service, social work, IT, and more than 45 years of teaching at the post-secondary level. A first-generation college student himself, Lou teaches several CCV courses, including the two bookend classes that all students take, Dimensions of Self & Society and Seminar in Educational Inquiry. He has impacted countless students over the course of his career at CCV, and we thank him for his service.

Will Mary Ann and Stephanie please join me at the podium?

A former CCV student herself, Mary Ann Boyd brings a special perspective to the classroom. After earning both bachelor's and master's degrees in social work, Mary Ann returned to CCV as

a faculty member in 2014. Since then, she has been teaching Conflict Resolution, Death and Dying, and communications classes.

Stephanie Bush is an accomplished professional artist who shares her lifelong passion for creative expression with CCV students. Alongside her active practice as an oil painter, including regularly exhibiting her work locally and regionally, she teaches CCV classes in Studio Art, Drawing, and Painting.

Congratulations Mary Ann, Stephanie, and Lou. We thank you for your commitment to teaching and learning excellence, and for the many ways in which you support CCV students in your classrooms.

[Student Speaker]

Now, graduates, you will hear from one of your own. The Student Speaker for the Class of 2023 is Kevin McGreal, and here to introduce Kevin is faculty member Melissa Holmes.

[Give plaque to Kevin; pause for photo]

[Keynote Address]

At this time, I am pleased to introduce our keynote speaker, Kyle Clark.

Kyle is a native Vermonter who grew up in Williston and Essex, attended Essex High School, and now lives with his wife and four children in central Vermont. He is an aerospace engineer, pilot, and the founder and CEO of BETA Technologies, a rapidly growing Vermont-based electric aerospace company. They are working to turn the corner on climate change by decarbonizing aviation.

Kyle and his team are focused on building electric aviation solutions to move goods and people more safely, efficiently, and sustainably. To do this, BETA is building all-electric, net-zero aircraft and a cross-country network of multimodal charging infrastructure to enable electric transportation. The company has

designed two electric aircraft that are on the path to FAA certification. BETA has achieved significant technical milestones, becoming the first electric aircraft flown by test pilots from the Air Force, Army and FAA.

Prior to BETA, Kyle co-founded numerous businesses in the Vermont area, and before that, he played right wing in the NHL's Washington Capitals organization. He is a Certified Flight Instructor as well as a licensed commercial airplane and helicopter pilot, and holds a degree in Materials Science and Engineering from Harvard University.

Kyle grew up in Vermont, chose to launch his business here, and is committed to strengthening our state. We are fortunate to have him here today to address the Class of 2023. Kyle.

[Presentation of Class]

It is now time to turn our attention to the moment you have been waiting for: the awarding of your degrees. The many people who have helped you reach this moment are here in the audience to celebrate your achievement. I ask the families, friends, and supporters of our graduates to rise. Graduates, please join me in thanking them.

CCV has a long-standing tradition that you will share in today. As you leave the platform after receiving your diplomas, CCV staff members will present you with a red carnation. This flower is a symbol of the many people in your lives who have helped you reach this day.

Now, Academic Dean Debby Stewart will present the class of 2023.

Debby:

“President Judy, it is my pleasure to present the CCV graduating class of 2023—all of whom have successfully completed the requirements for the Associate Degree or the Associate in Applied Science Degree.

By the authority vested in the Community College of Vermont by the Board of Trustees of the Vermont State Colleges, I confer upon you, the class of 2023, the Associate Degree.

Will the graduates from BENNINGTON please stand and come to this end of the stage [POINT LEFT].

I ask that graduates from all other centers stay seated until they are invited to come forward by ushers.

[Marianne continues to read names from the lectern]

[Recessional]

Now, graduates, if you would please direct your attention to the front of the main aisle. Kevin, please lead your class in moving their tassels from right to left.

[Right to Left]

Congratulations to the class of 2023. We are proud that CCV has been a part of your journey, and we hope that you will take the time to celebrate this moment. As you move on to new chapters, we trust that you will continue to call on your own unique qualities, as well as what you have learned here, to build stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive communities wherever you go.

The group on the platform will lead the graduates out. I ask the audience to remain seated until the graduates have completed their recessional. Thank you.

