

NEWS RELEASE

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Glen Oaks conducts 41st graduation ceremony

CENTREVILLE---Glen Oaks Community College's 41st Graduation held Friday, May 1, in the gymnasium included 150 graduates who took part in the ceremonies. College officials said 280 individuals were eligible to receive nine associate degrees or 19 occupational certificates awarded.

After Dr. Ana Gaillat, Dean of the College, proclaimed the students as new graduates, Dr. Gary Wheeler, President, greeted each graduate with a firm handshake. "As you prepare to go out and begin the next phase of your life, one of the more important gestures you can make on this day is thanking those around you who supported you and are responsible, in part, for your being here today. Your support group may be parents, a spouse, family members, friends, and faculty and staff," the president said earlier.

President Wheeler singled out several people for special awards.

The President's Award to an outstanding student went to Charity Brown, of Sturgis, and a Summa Cum Laude graduate with an Associate of General Studies degree. *The Glen Oaks Fellow Award*, presented to someone who has been a great friend to the college and its mission of transforming lives through education, was awarded to Terry Conklin, Superintendent of Burr Oaks Community Schools. In his 16 years as an educator, coach, and top administrator at Burr Oak, Conklin has inspired students to push themselves as far as possible for an education.

As Conklin and wife Lanette sat near the graduation stage, several graduates from Burr Oak stopped to say hello, thank him and say they were doing well and ready for new careers. "I feel it is my job to help young people go out and be productive members of society. I encourage kids to further their education," said Conklin, who graduated with the first Glen Oaks' class in 1968 and transferred to Grand Valley State University. He lettered in baseball and golf at GVSU after an injury ended his football plans. Conklin earned a Bachelor's Degree before entering teaching and coaching. He later earned a Master's Degree from Central Michigan University with principal/administrator and superintendent's endorsements. "Terry clearly exemplifies the final phrase of the Glen Oaks alma mater: 'Faith and hope you hold'," said President Wheeler.

Student speaker Ryan Davis, of Sturgis, was a Summa Cum Laude graduate with an Associate of General Studies degree. Davis was thankful for Glen Oaks Community College. Davis said he came to Glen Oaks because he didn't feel quite ready to join thousands of other students at a crowded university. "I appreciate the faculty here and I thank them for all the support and the personal attention. Studies support the fact that community college students generally earn better grades at a university than those who started there as freshmen," and Davis added, "Attending Glen Oaks for my first two years has saved thousands of dollars while I received a strong educational foundation. It really has been a great place to start."

Dr. Ren Hartung, Instructor of Science, was recognized as the 25th recipient of the *E. J. Shaheen Award for Teaching Excellence* at Glen Oaks Community College.

Other highlights of the graduation ceremony included Robert Gray, retired music instructor at Glen Oaks, leading the College Choir in the Alma Mater he composed in 1972. Dr. Patricia Morgenstern, Associate Dean of Instruction, served as Grand Marshall. Music instructor Pam Dyer led the Glen Oaks Choir and Robert Gray led the Brass Quintet in music for the program. A reception for graduates and guests was held on the Concourse after the ceremony.



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A happy graduate!