

Celebrations Abound as Centralia College Holds Commencement Ceremony

Class of 2015: Students Awarded Degrees, Certificates

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Proud families, friends and loved ones gathered by the clock tower at Centralia College on Friday to witness a milestone for those they care about. The college completed its 89th continuous year of service to Lewis County, as students finished their educational careers at the community college to further pursue their dreams, educations and careers.

"The love that our families have for one another, the relationships that are all bound together, we can see them clearly in this event, and of course, the support for the learning that goes along the way," Robert Frost, Centralia College president, said. "Today is the culmination of your work, students, and we are here to celebrate your success."

Frost acknowledged several students who had undergone unusual circumstances to get to the point of graduating today. At least one family was graduating together at the ceremony on Friday.

Three members of the Hall-Fontenette family had the opportunity to earn their degrees at the same time. The father, Dana, finished the medical administrative assistant program, while his wife, Michelle, received her associate of arts degree in general studies. Their son, Dimitri, earned his high school diploma.

The family was just one of many who were highlighted for their unique stories at the college.

David Carsten, the recipient of the 2015 Distinguished Alumnus Award, acknowledged the future business owners, politicians and graduates, encouraging them to move into the world with an open-minded attitude.

He focused on the many opportunities Centralia College offers its students, adding that it gives them a chance to explore and learn about different subjects.

"I'm grateful for Centralia College. I was a smart kid who had a boatload of mailings from colleges around the country, but where did I go?," Carsten asked the graduating class.

He chose to start his post-high school education at the college to later become a dentist and anesthesiologist. "Centralia College let me experience, dream and take chances," he said. "It prepared me and I like what I have seen here today."

After the presentation of degrees and certificates, the closing recessional of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" and "What a Wonderful World," ended the ceremony.