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Millennium commencement this month

USF will confer more than 3,393 degrees during spring commencement ceremonies starting May 5 at USF-Sarasota and continuing May 6 at the Sun Dome at USF-Tampa.

Former USF President Betty Castor, now the president and chief executive officer of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, will speak at the 7:30 p.m. May 6 Tampa convocation and receive an honorary doctorate of Humane Letters from USF.

During her presidency that began in January 1994, USF embraced changes to its physical landscape, academic programs, research status and campus environment.

USF underwent a beautification campaign that included the creation of the Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza and the completion of a 155,000 square-foot College of Education building.

The university's curricula flourished with the addition of half a dozen Ph.D. degree programs.

Sponsored research funding rose from $92 million to more than $161 million in the last four years of Castor's term. This set the foundation for USF to be declared one of only three Florida Research 1 institutions by the Board of Regents.

Castor also helped establish the Florida High-Tech Corridor, along Interstate 4 from St. Petersburg to Orlando, as an area to attract technical companies to the region and redefine Florida as a high-technology state.

During the two Tampa campus ceremonies starting May 5 at the Sun Dome and at 7:30 p.m. May 6 in the Sun Dome at USF-Tampa, and May 5 at 7 p.m. May 7 in the Sun Dome at USF-Tampa, Commencement Committee and the Family Court Steering Committee.

Debra Jacobs, president of the Selby Foundation, will speak at the 7 p.m. May 5 USF-Sarasota ceremony. Jacobs works with the community and foundation trustees to enhance the quality of life in the arts, education and human services.

Before joining the foundation in 1998, Jacobs was the vice president for institutional advancement for Ringling School of Art and Design, responsible for admissions, alumni relations, career services, the design center, development, financial aid and marketing. Jacobs came to Ringling after 11 years as executive vice president for SunTrust Bank, Gulf Coast.

A graduate of UTC College of Syracuse University and the University of Rochester, Jacobs is past-chairman of the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce board of directors, the Sarasota County Committee of 100 and the Community Housing Corp. She has served on the boards of the Sarasota Family YMCA, Sarasota University Club and the Sarasota Opera Association.

For more information about any of the ceremonies, call USF’s University Relations office at ext. 4-1816 or 4-1816, or the Office of Media Relations at ext. 4-4014.

by Lisa Cunningham

Tickets will be required, however, for the USF-St. Petersburg commencement ceremony at 2 p.m. May 7 in the Bayfront Center at Mahaffey Theater. Tickets may be required for the USF-Sarasota graduation at 7 p.m. May 9 at College Hall on Sarasota Bay at the Sarasota campus.

Judge Raymond Gross, who presides over dependency cases in Pinellas County, as well as the USF Alumni Association, will speak at the 2 p.m. May 7 ceremony for USF-St. Petersburg graduates.

Anete Vasquez, an English teacher at Palm Harbor University High School and Pinellas County's Teacher of the Year, will also speak at the ceremony.

Gross is responsible for deciding cases which deal with children at risk. He also decides termination of parental rights cases and adoptions. Gross graduated from USF with a bachelor's degree in political science in 1969.

Before being appointed as a Circuit Court judge in 1995 by the late Gov. Lawton Chiles, Gross practiced law in Pinellas.

He served as president of the Clearwater Bar Association, Florida Bar Grievance Committee and the Sixth Circuit Judicial Nominating Committee. He's a member of several Supreme Court Rules Committees, as well as the Statewide Dependency Court Improvement

New master's program created in Latin, Caribbean studies

USF now has a master's program in Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies.

The program will accept its first class of graduate students in the fall 2000 semester. The program was approved by the Board of Regents in November 1999.

The program, unlike many other Latin American programs, includes the study of the Latino communities in the United States in its interdisciplinary approach. USF, with strong ties and commitments to the community, is uniquely positioned to offer an interdisciplinary graduate degree to students interested in academia, international business, government service and international development.

Under the direction of Michael L. Conniff, the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies has expanded its horizons, signed exchange agreements with universities in Central and South America and increased the number of undergraduate students enrolled in its certificate program.

The university is now accepting applications for admission to its program. Paul J. Dosai, a native of Tampa and specialist in the history of Central America and the Caribbean, will coordinate the graduate program and teach the core seminars.

The two-semester seminar sequence will provide graduate students with a common orientation and preparation for interdisciplinary studies and research.

The second core seminar will focus on selected topics within the field of Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies. Both seminars are designed to foster the development of analytical, multi-cultural and problem-solving skills required of graduate students.

Next year, students may take classes in the schools of arts and sciences or business.

For more information, contact the Latin American and Caribbean Studies office at ext. 4-3547, or email pdsalab@luna.ca.usf.edu.