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## Press release : 2013 : 12 : 09 : Former Mayor Rick Baker to be honored for civic leadership at Fall Commencement

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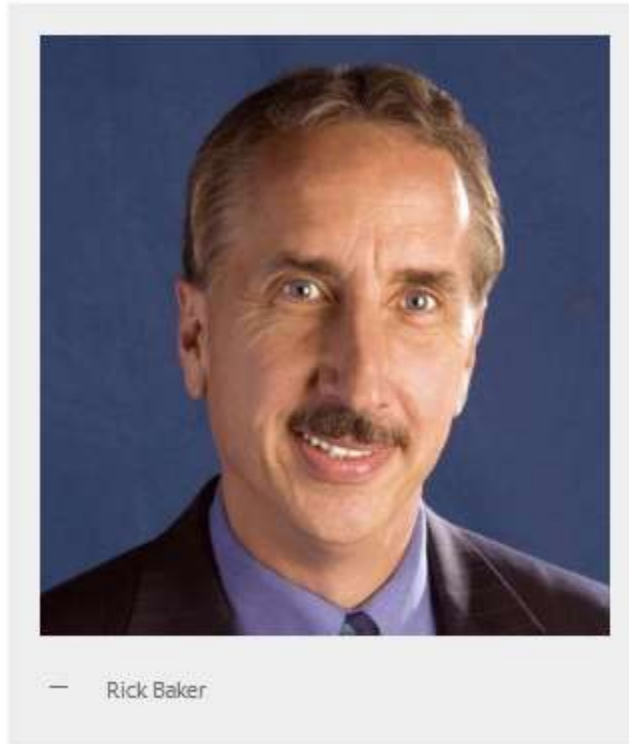
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# Former Mayor Rick Baker to be honored for civic leadership at Fall Commencement

Posted December 9, 2013 at 10:34 am by [Tom Scherberger](#)



Former St. Petersburg Mayor Rick Baker will receive the Chancellor's Award for Civic Leadership during USF St. Petersburg's Fall 2013 Commencement ceremonies Dec. 15.

More than 400 students will receive degrees, and about 250 are expected to participate in commencement ceremonies.

The Chancellor's Award for Civic Leadership is bestowed in recognition of outstanding contributions to the community. It is the most prestigious award granted by USF St. Petersburg and recognizes the institution's strong ties with the community.

Baker will be honored for his commitment to education, the arts, diversity and economic development. Besides serving eight years as St. Petersburg mayor, Baker served as president of the law firm of Fisher and Sauls, chairman of the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and vice

president for economic development for USF. He is now president of The Edwards Group, which includes commercial real estate, hotels and entertainment.

“The vibrant and engaging city we all know and love today is the direct result of the visionary leadership of Rick Baker,” said USFSP Regional Chancellor Sophia Wisniewska.

The Fall 2013 Outstanding Graduate Award will be given by the USF Alumni Association to Charles Matthew Hamm, a College of Business student who is earning a Bachelor’s Degree in the dual majors of Accounting and Finance. Hamm served as vice president of professional development for Beta Alpha Psi, the accounting honor society, helping students transition from school to work. He also worked with the Poynter Institute to develop a professional writing presentation that was recognized by the Beta Alpha Psi national chapter. He plans to pursue a career in accounting.

The ceremonies begin at 6 p.m. at The Mahaffey Theater, 400 First Street S in downtown St. Petersburg.

*Here is a look at Fall 2013 Commencement by the numbers:*

**406** Total number of graduates

**327** Number of students awarded bachelor’s degrees.

**79** Number of students awarded Master’s degrees.

**250** Number of graduates participating in Sunday’s commencement.

**4** Number of students graduating Summa Cum Laude

**16** Number of students graduating Magna Cum Laude

**18** Number of students graduating Cum Laude

**2** Number of students with perfect 4.0 grade point averages.

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