



Fall 8-2-2020

Class of 2020 Honored at Virtual Commencement

John Twork
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

Recommended Citation

Twork, John, "Class of 2020 Honored at Virtual Commencement" (2020). *News and Events*. 4054.

<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/4054>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at The Ames Library at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Class of 2020 Honored at Virtual Commencement

Aug. 2, 2020

[Watch: Commencement Ceremony](#) | [Commencement Program](#) | [Honors Program](#)

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Illinois Wesleyan University celebrated more than 380 graduating members of the Class of 2020 — virtually — during Commencement exercises on Sunday, Aug. 2.

Speaking on the Glenn '22 and Rozanne Parker Kemp '27 Commencement Plaza in front of State Farm Hall, President S. Georgia Nugent welcomed more than 1,400 viewers from around the country and the world to “Illinois Wesleyan University’s 170th Commencement — and our first virtual ceremony.”

Originally scheduled for May 3, Commencement was postponed and later transformed into a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The recorded ceremony was streamed live and available for real-time translation in 16 different languages through Wordly. Class of 2020 graduates were also invited to participate in Illinois Wesleyan’s next in-person Commencement ceremony.

Following a performance of “America The Beautiful” by Claire Challacombe '20, University Chaplain Elyse Nelson Winger delivered the invocation. “We are apart: distanced by a pandemic that scattered our community across the country and around the world,” Nelson Winger said. “Yet now we join together in spirit to celebrate the accomplishments of the Class of 2020. On this Quad we imagine you now regalia-clad, ready to take this stage and take on the world wherever you are, we are cheering you on because this world needs you now. You are called, as an ancient prayer affirms, to “ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths yet untrodden, through perils unknown.”

Timothy J. Szerlong '74, Chair of the University’s Board of Trustees, congratulated graduates on their academic achievement and the “individual imprint” they left on the Illinois Wesleyan Community. “This year has brought very different experiences for all of us,” Szerlong said. “Our way of life has been challenged and our societal ills exposed. With that has come anxiety and an unsettling uncertainty. Certainly this last semester here was not what we had hoped for you. This condition prompts all of us to ask ourselves how we can better participate in making this world a better place. We are very proud of the long list of alumni that have met that challenge in so many different ways over the years. I look forward to seeing how the pursuits of today’s graduates will unfold, how soon many of you will make IWU proud and join that esteemed roster.”



President S. Georgia Nugent presided over her first Illinois Wesleyan Commencement, which was also the University's first-ever virtual ceremony.



Claire Challacombe '20 sang "America the Beautiful" and "Alma Wesleyana" during the virtual Commencement ceremony for the Class of 2020.

Class of 2020 President Kayley Rettberg '20 told her classmates, “We must work together to come up with and to actualize creative solutions to all of the world’s problems. Fortunately, our time at Wesleyan has placed us in the position to be the thinkers that our world so desperately needs.”

Rettberg continued, “Many of us are embarking on journeys that, six months ago, we never would’ve even thought of. With that, there comes fear, sadness and some instability. But regardless, I firmly believe that each of us has the ability to prevail. We will find what we are passionate about, we will fight hard for it, and we will all land on our feet. And, we won’t do it alone, because our time at Wesleyan has brought us incredible friendships and incredible bonds that will never let us sink. They’re irreplaceable.”

Visiting Professor of Accounting, Interim Chair of Business and Marketing and Class of 2020 Professor of the Year Joseph Solberg congratulated graduates on completing “one of life’s most memorable achievements — a college degree from an outstanding university.” He continued, “You give us hope that the future will be OK. When people ask, and they do, what Wesleyan students are like, my immediate response is, ‘Wonderful. They work hard, strive for excellence, respect others, and care about things that are important.’ The world will be better because you are in it.”

Presiding over her first Commencement ceremony at Illinois Wesleyan, President S. Georgia Nugent welcomed the University’s newest graduates into the strong network of Titan alumni. “Alumni watch out for one another. And they’re watching out for you,” Nugent said. “Just this week, with the Hart Career Center, we’ve launched a special initiative for the Class of 2020. The pandemic, we know, has affected all of us. But it may present especially tough economic challenges, just as the Class of 2020 is entering the workforce.”

Nugent continued, “This year, we’re asking the alumni network to be especially supportive of your class, letting us know if their company or organization has internship or employment opportunities that could benefit you, our newest alumni.”

Nugent concluded, “We call this ceremony Commencement, because you are commencing, on a new part of your life. We have tried to prepare you well, and generations of Illinois Wesleyan graduates give us confidence that you will succeed, as you commence. And your alma mater will always be there, caring about you and watching you pursue your dreams.”



Class of 2020 President Kayley Rettberg '20 addressed her graduating classmates via video during Commencement.



Visiting Professor of Accounting, Interim Chair of Business and Marketing and Class of 2020 Professor of the Year Joseph Solberg spoke during the Class of 2020 commencement ceremony.



The platform party joined in — virtually — congratulating the Class of 2020.