



## Connecticut State University System NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### ***Commencement Week at Connecticut State University System Includes Connecticut Governor, Technology Company CEO, Humanitarian, and International Business Leader***

The Connecticut State University System—which includes Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Connecticut State Universities—will hold commencement ceremonies beginning **Friday, May 16**, and continuing through **Friday, May 23**. Commencement speakers at the four universities, which together compose Connecticut's largest state university system with more than 35,000 students, include Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell; the CEO and founder of a technology company; a humanitarian, producer and actor; and international business leader. (See commencement schedule on Page 4)

**Central Connecticut State University** will hold commencement exercises for undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degree candidates on **Saturday, May 17**, at **10:30 a.m.** at the XL Center in Hartford (formerly the Hartford Civic Center) in Hartford. A total of 1,334 undergraduates will be joined by 488 students receiving graduate degrees.

Central's commencement speaker is **Governor M. Jodi Rell**, the 87<sup>th</sup> governor of the state and first Republican woman to hold the office. Rell served more than nine years as lieutenant governor, has held elective office in the state for more than 20 years, and was elected governor in 2006 after succeeding to the office. Born in Norfolk, Va., she attended Old Dominion University and Western Connecticut State University.

**Eastern Connecticut State University** will confer 1,020 undergraduate and 157 graduate degrees during its 118<sup>th</sup> commencement exercises on **Sunday, May 18**, at **11 a.m.** The event will be held on the Windham Regional Technical High School athletic field, across from Eastern's Sports Center in Willimantic. In case of inclement weather, the ceremony will be held in the Francis E. Geissler Gymnasium in the Sports Center.

**Tom Sweeney**, chairman and chief executive officer of Incentra Solutions, Inc. in Boulder Colo., will deliver Eastern's commencement address. Sweeney graduated from Eastern in 1983 with a bachelor's degree in mathematics.

Incentra, established by Sweeney in 2004, provides outsourcing storage and data management solutions for more 2,000 mid-sized companies in the United States and Europe. He was previously CEO of ManagedStorage International and chairman of the board at Front Porch Digital.

He was managing partner and founder of Equity Pier, which provided capital and management expertise to emerging information technology and telecommunication companies. Before founding Equity Pier, Sweeney built three telecommunications start-ups, and was senior vice president of Strategic Alliances and Global Sales at Level 3 Communications.

**Western Connecticut State University** will confer 904 undergraduate degrees at its undergraduate commencement ceremony on **Sunday, May 18**, at **10:30 a.m.** at the Westside Athletic Facility, Westside campus in Danbury. **Farooq Kathwari**, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Ethan Allen Interiors Inc., will be the undergraduate commencement speaker.

Western will also confer 236 graduate degrees at commencement ceremonies held on **Friday, May 16**, at **7 p.m.** in the O'Neill Center on the Midtown campus in Danbury. Connecticut Attorney General **Richard Blumenthal** will deliver the graduate commencement address.

**Kathwari** has been president of Ethan Allen Interiors, Inc. since 1985 and CEO since 1988. In 1989, he formed a group to purchase Ethan Allen and took the company public in 1993. Under his leadership, Ethan Allen has been transformed into a leading manufacturer and retailer of home furnishings in the United States, with its world headquarters in Danbury. Kathwari earned a bachelor's degree from Kashmir University in English literature and political science and a master's of business administration degree in International Marketing from New York University.

He holds leadership and membership positions in several nonprofit organizations such as Refugees International, the Mahatma Gandhid Center for Global Nonviolence Advisory Board, and National Retail Federation. Kathwari has also received several recognitions, including the "Outstanding American by Choice Award" by the United States Government and "National Human Relations Award" by the American Jewish Committee.

First elected in 1990, **Blumenthal** is serving an unprecedented fifth term as attorney general. He was U.S. Attorney for Connecticut, the state's chief federal prosecutor from 1977–81, served in the Connecticut House of Representatives from 1984–87, and the State Senate from 1987–90. Blumenthal graduated from Harvard College with honors, and from Yale Law School, where he was editor of the *Yale Law Journal*. He also served as a sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

**Southern Connecticut State University** will confer 1,200 undergraduate degrees at its commencement ceremony on **Friday, May 23**, beginning at **10:15 a.m.** at the Connecticut Tennis Center off Derby Avenue (Route 34) in New Haven. **Trudie Styler**, humanitarian, producer, and actor will be the undergraduate commencement speaker.

Southern will confer 1,100 graduate degrees at graduate commencement ceremonies on **Thursday, May 22**, at **2 p.m.** and **7 p.m.** in the John Lyman Center for the Performing Arts. **The Honorable Flemming L. Norcott, Jr.**, an associate justice on the Connecticut

Supreme Court, will speak at 2 p.m. for graduate students in the School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, and School of Health and Human Services; and **Dr. Jonathan Daube**, president, Manchester Community College, will speak at 7 p.m. for graduate students in the School of Education and School of Communication, Information and Library Science.

In 1988, Trudie Styler and her husband, rock legend Sting, launched the nonprofit Rainforest Foundation, an organization devoted to protecting rainforests and their indigenous peoples. Since its founding, the foundation's efforts have raised worldwide awareness about the importance of protecting lands and sustaining lives and focuses on South America, Africa, and Asia.

An experienced theatrical and motion picture producer, Styler put together the first Rainforest Foundation Benefit Concert at Carnegie Hall 15 years ago. On May 8, 2008, the organization staged its annual concert at Carnegie Hall, featuring some of the most celebrated performers in the world.

Styler is a UNICEF ambassador and received The Humanitarian Award from the Hospitality Committee for the United Nations delegations; the Human Rights Champion Award in 2000 from Amnesty International; and the Liz Tilberis Humanitarian Award from the Council of Fashion Designers in 2004. She has also produced several award-winning documentaries on various topics with her production company Xingu Films.

The **Honorable Flemming L. Norcott, Jr.**, an associate justice on the Connecticut Supreme Court, has served with distinction for nearly 30 years as a Connecticut judicial officer. He was nominated to the Superior Court in 1979, to the Appellate Court in 1987, and elevated to his current position as an associate justice of the Supreme Court in 1992. He has served on the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporations Legal Staff in New York City and as an assistant attorney general in the United States Virgin Islands. He was the co-founder and executive director of the Center for Advocacy, Research and Planning, Inc. in New Haven, and is currently an Associate Fellow of Calhoun College at Yale where he serves as a lecturer.

**Dr. Jonathan Daube**, president of Manchester Community College (MCC) for 21 years, has propelled Connecticut's largest community college into the national and state limelight with a significant building program and an innovative curriculum. He will retire this month. Under his stewardship, Great Path Academy, the first public high school constructed on a college campus in Connecticut, began operations. He was also the recipient of the 2008 New England Higher Education Excellence Award.

#### **Media Contacts**

*Terri Raimondi, Public Relations Associate, CSUS*

860.493.0040, [raimondit@ct.edu](mailto:raimondit@ct.edu)

*Mark McLaughlin, Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communications, CCSU*

860.832.0065, [McLaughlinM@ccsu.edu](mailto:McLaughlinM@ccsu.edu)

*Edward Osborn, Director of University Relations, Eastern*

860.465.5043, [Osborne@easternct.edu](mailto:Osborne@easternct.edu)

*Patrick Dilger, Director of Public Affairs, SCSU*

203.392.6588, [dilgerp1@southernct.edu](mailto:dilgerp1@southernct.edu)

*Paul Steinmetz, Director of University Relations, WCSU*

203.837.8771, [Steinmetzp@wcsu.edu](mailto:Steinmetzp@wcsu.edu)

**Connecticut State University System  
Undergraduate and Graduate Commencement Ceremony Schedule**

<b>University</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
<b>Central</b>  Undergraduate and Graduate Ceremonies	Saturday, May 17	10:30 a.m.	XL Center, Hartford	Governor M. Jodi Rell
<b>Eastern</b>  Undergraduate and Graduate Ceremonies	Sunday, May 18	11 a.m.	Windham Regional Technical School, Willimantic	Tom Sweeney, '83, chairman and CEO, Incentra Solutions, Inc.
<b>Western</b>  Undergraduate Ceremony	Sunday, May 18	10:30 a.m.	Westside Athletic Facility, Westside Campus, Danbury	Farooq Kathwari, chairman, president and CEO, Ethan Allen Interiors
<b>Western</b>  Graduate Ceremony	Friday, May 16	7 p.m.	O'Neill Center, Midtown Campus, Danbury	Attorney General Richard Blumenthal
<b>Southern</b>  Undergraduate Ceremony	Friday, May 23	10:15 a.m.	Connecticut Tennis Center, Derby Ave., New Haven	Trudie Styler, humanitarian, producer, actor
<b>Southern</b>  Graduate Ceremonies	Thursday, May 22	2 p.m. and 7 p.m.	John Lyman Center for the Performing Arts, SCSU	The Honorable Flemming L. Norcott Jr., 2 p.m.; and Jonathan Daube, president, Manchester Community College, 7 p.m.

