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**CONTACT:** Jim Bellamy 419.267.1267 jbellamy@NorthwestState.edu

**NSCC FALL Commencement Ceremony AWARDS 109 DEGREES/CERTIFICATES**

*ARCHBOLD, OHIO –* Northwest State Community College celebrated the December 2023 graduating class at their fall ceremony last evening, held as an in-person ceremony in the Voinovich Auditorium. The ceremony recognized the awarding of 109 degrees and/or certificates to 102 students from the divisions of Arts & Sciences; Business & Public Services; Nursing and Allied Health; and Science, Technology, Engineering Technology & Math (STEM) and Industrial Technologies.

NSCC President Dr. Todd Hernandez announced the President’s Outstanding Student: Kally Durham. Durham graduates with an Associate of Individualized Study in Health & Biology, with designs on transferring to the University of Toledo for Healthcare Administration. Dr. Lana Snider, NSCC Vice President of Enrollment Management & Student Affairs followed Dr. Hernandez, and provided a statistical snapshot of the graduating class. Dr. Snider noted that 88% of the graduating class lives in the College’s six-county service area (Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Paulding, Van Wert and Williams counties), the average age of the graduates is 27, and the grade point average of the class is 3.36.

**BREAKOUT OF ACHIEVEMENTS**

Of the 109 awards, 79 were associate degrees and 30 were certificates. Awards by academic division included Arts & Sciences (14), Business & Public Services (23), STEM & Industrial Technologies (43) and Nursing & Allied Health (27).

**STUDENT SPEAKER: FAITH MERAZ**

The student speaker for this year’s commencement ceremony was Faith Meraz of Paulding. Meraz started taking classes through NSCC in 2020 through the College Credit Plus program while attending Wayne Trace High School. Meraz is a recipient of the Presidential and Toledo Edison scholarships, and is a member the Phi Theta Kappa honor society at NSCC. Meraz graduates with an Associate of Arts degree, pursuing an eventual Master’s degree to become a school psychologist. Meraz concluded her address by noting “No matter what struggle you’re faced with, big or small, please don’t give up. If whatever you’re facing knocks you down, get back up again. Have the courage or sheer willpower to go after what you want, no matter how long or how much work it takes you to get there. We’re here today because we didn’t give up.”

**COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER: CONRAD WINKLER**

The keynote speaker for this year’s commencement ceremony was Conrad Winkler, President of North Star Bluescope Steel in Delta. Winkler, an MIT-educated Mechanical Engineer, relayed a few examples of his experience as a Nuclear Submariner in the U.S. Navy as part of his address to the graduating class. In his closing remarks, Winker said, “Perhaps one of the most important lessons I learned was the power of one person. I like to think of this as creating your own culture, but it really is about being reflective about who – and how – you want to be in this world.”

**EMERITUS STATUS HONOREES RECOGNIZED**

The College also recognized two individuals that were awarded Emeritus status, an honorary title awarded for distinguished service to the academic community. The recipients were Dr. Robert Hall (Board member), and Marsha Buehrer (staff member).

Dr. Hall served two terms on the NSCC Board of Trustees as a representative for Henry County, from 2008 to 2020. During his 12 years on the board, Dr. Hall held the positions of Chair and Vice Chair from February 2010 until February 2014. Dr. Hall is a Vietnam-era Veteran of the U.S. Navy. Buehrer started at the College in the Copy Center in 1993, and shortly thereafter transitioned to her role as Secretary for the Nursing Department in 1994. While providing administrative support for the department, Buehrer completed her Associate of Applied business in Office Services in 1999.

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*Northwest State Community College is an accredited two-year, state-assisted institution of higher education that has served northwest Ohio since 1969. Northwest State is committed to providing a quality, affordable education with personal attention and small class sizes. The College offers associate degrees with numerous transfer options, short-term certificate programs, and workforce training programs designed to meet the needs of local businesses and industries. For more information, visit NorthwestState.edu or call 419.267.5511.*

***Photography note: a Media-Only gallery is available at***

<https://northweststate.smugmug.com/20231218-Fall-Commencement-MEDIA/>