



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MAY 5, 2004

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DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS FEATURED AT UNIVERSITY SYSTEM COMMENCEMENTS IN MAY

BANGOR – An accomplished group of individuals will address graduates during 2004 commencement ceremonies taking place around the University of Maine System on Saturday, May 8, and Saturday, May 15.

Michele Montas, a 1968 graduate of the University of Maine, will address students at her alma mater during the May 8 ceremony at Morse Field at Harold Alfond Sports Stadium. Montas, who lives in exile in New York City, is a Haitian native and highly respected broadcast journalist who has risked her life and seen her husband assassinated in the name of liberty for the people of Haiti.

Chellie Pingree, President and Chief Executive Officer of Common Cause, will deliver the commencement address at the University of Maine at Augusta on May 8 at the Augusta Civic Center. Common Cause is a government watchdog group with more than 200,000 members and supporters nationwide.

Author **Rhea Cote Robbins**, founder and director of the Franco-American Women's Institute in Brewer, will address University of Maine at Farmington graduates during the May 15 ceremony, to be held behind the Olsen Student Center. The Institute promotes awareness about the contributions of Franco-American women to the culture, their families, and the communities in which they live.

Prominent Maine landscape painter **Neil Welliver** will present a video of his work, deliver remarks, and answer questions from members of the class of 2004 as part of commencement exercises at the University of Maine at Fort Kent on May 8 in the University SportsCenter. Welliver, who is known for his use of the "unromanticized" wilderness of the Maine woods as the source of his art, spent 23 years as chairman of the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Fine Arts.

Roxanne Quimby, conservationist and founder of the Burt's Bees line of personal products, will be the commencement speaker at the University of Maine at Machias on May 8. Quimby's inspirational rags-to-riches story took her from the backwoods of Maine to the 100,000-square-foot manufacturing plant in Raleigh, N.C., where the well-known Burt's Bees line is produced.

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John Hatch, founder of The Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA) and creator of the Village Banking™ method of poverty lending, will address graduates during commencement exercises at the University of Maine at Presque Isle on May 15 in Wieden Gymnasium. FINCA is an anti-poverty organization whose mission is to provide financial services to the world's poorest families so they can create their own jobs, raise household incomes, and improve their standard of living.

One of the nation's leading spokespersons and advocates for sustainability, **Ray C. Anderson**, will deliver the commencement address to graduates of the University of Southern Maine on May 15 at the Cumberland County Civic Center. Anderson is founder, chairman, and CEO of Interface, Inc., which manufactures a variety of interior decorating and architectural products. Anderson serves as co-chairman of the President's Council on Sustainable Development, and in recent years has worked to make Interface a sustainable corporation by leading a worldwide effort to pioneer the processes of sustainable development.

Established in 1968, the University of Maine System is the state's largest educational institution, with more than 34,000 students enrolled. It features seven universities – some with multiple campuses -- located across the state, as well as 11 University College outreach centers and more than 100 interactive distance education sites. For more information, log onto www.maine.edu.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The complete University of Maine System commencement schedule follows:

The University of Maine

Speaker: Michele Montas
Broadcast Journalist
Date: Saturday, May 8
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Location: Morse Field, Harold Alfond Sports Stadium (weather permitting)
Contact: Joe Carr (207-581-3571)

University of Maine at Augusta

Speaker: Chellie Pingree
President and Chief Executive Officer
Common Cause
Date: Saturday, May 8
Time: 10 a.m.
Location: Augusta Civic Center
Contact: Cindy Hook (207-621-3446)

University of Maine at Farmington

Speaker: Rhea Cote Robbins
Founder and Director
Franco-American Women's Institute
Date: Saturday, May 15
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Location: behind the Olsen Student Center (weather permitting)
Contact: Tom Donaghue (207-778-7081)

University of Maine at Fort Kent

Speaker: Neil Welliver
Landscape Artist
Date: Saturday, May 8
Time: 1 p.m.
Location: UMFK SportsCenter
Contact: Jason Parent (207-834-7558)

University of Maine at Machias

Speaker: Roxanne Quimby
Founder
Burt's Bees
Date: Saturday, May 8
Time: 2 p.m.
Location: Reynolds Center
Contact: Sue Palmer (207-255-1327)

University of Maine at Presque Isle

Speakers: John Hatch
Founder
The Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA)
Date: Saturday, May 15
Time: 10:30 a.m.
Location: Wieden Gymnasium
Contact: Erin Benson (207-768-9453)

University of Southern Maine

Speaker: Ray C. Anderson
Founder, Chairman, and CEO
Interface, Inc.
Date: Saturday, May 15
Time: 9 a.m.
Location: Cumberland County Civic Center
Contact: Judie O'Malley (207-780-