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# Koop's address highlights UMB's 21st Commencement

Outgoing U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop called for sweeping changes in the American health care system during the keynote address before 8,000 graduates, family, friends and onlookers at UMass/Boston's 21st Commencement on The Plaza at the Harbor Campus.

Koop, who will leave his post as the nation's chief health care official July 13, called upon the Administration to establish a presidential commission to investigate and address the inequities in the delivery of health care.

He said a panel of physicians, legislators, and insurance industry representatives should explore solutions to the current system, which, he said, has divided the population along economic lines.

"We need statesmen," Koop added. "There are a few left."

He urged Americans to look past the ongoing federal budget woes as a root cause of the health care problem.

"I've listened to these (budget) debates for eight years," Koop said. "Today, I'm more convinced than ever that our health care system needs to be studied with an eye toward making some very major corrections."

"I can hear my critics saying 'Wait a minute, Dr. Koop, the system ain't broke, don't fix it.'

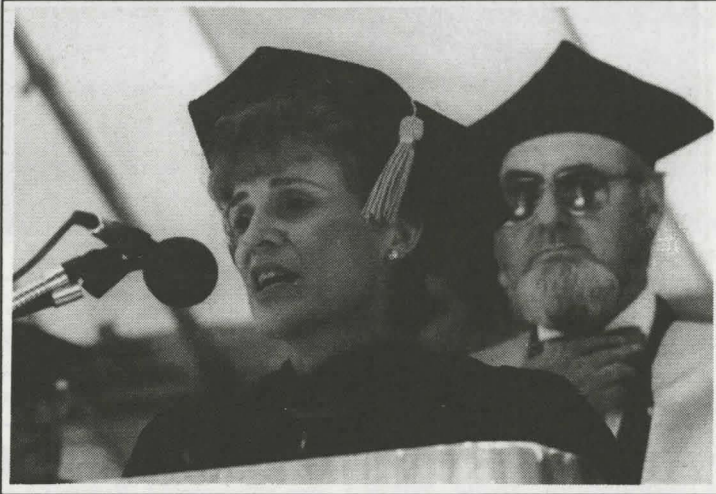
"But I would reply 'you're wrong.' The system is badly broken. It must be fixed."

Koop criticized the health care system for its failure to produce better care despite rising costs.

"I say there's something terribly wrong with a system that spends more and more money to serve fewer and fewer people."

While professing his support for a free market system, Koop stressed the need for moderating controls that would benefit the health consumer.

"In most other areas of our



Chancellor Sherry H. Penney addresses her first UMass/Boston Commencement audience. In background: U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop.

economy," the Surgeon General said, "the market place does exercise some control over arbitrary rises in charges to the consumer. There really is competition. It does provide some assurance that an ineffective, high-cost, low-quality business will fail.

"Try as they might, I do not see

the medical profession achieving much success in self-regulation."

Describing the three tiers of care, Koop said 37 million Americans "fall through the cracks" and have no health care coverage at all.

A second group of citizens, he said, are covered by Medicare and Medicaid but often end up paying

too heavily out of their own pockets. The most fortunate group pays only 10-15 percent of health costs, Koop said.

Koop said the latter group, which negotiates its coverage through unions and other groups, effectively raises the cost of health care for other sectors of the population.

"The health care system today is a heavy moral burden for our society to bear in that the system does not respond at all to 15 percent of our population," the surgeon general said. "But it is a terrible economic burden as well for society to bear in that the system satisfies its own uncontrolled needs at the expense of society."

"We need more than a little change here and a little change there," he added. "We need to bring about a profound change in the way we make medical and health care available to all of our citizens."

Koop said enacting the necessary changes would take an effort similar to the social movements

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UMass/Boston honorary degree recipients posed for a formal photo. Left to right: Boston Pops conductor John Williams; Dr. Ernest L. Boyer, President, Carnegie Foundation; Philip W. Johnston, Mass. Secretary of Human Services; UMass President David C. Knapp; UMass/Boston Chancellor Sherry H. Penney; U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy; MIT Professor and Nobel Prize-winner Robert M. Solow; Charlayne Hunter-Gault, correspondent, MacNeill/Lehrer NewsHour, and the Commencement speaker, U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop.



# Mary Wilhelmi shows age is no barrier to a UMB degree

Few members of the Boston Girl's High School Class of 1937 suffered much angst trying to decide which college to attend. When the diplomas were handed out, the vast majority marched dutifully into the work force.

So self-evident was the need to earn a buck that no alternative even merited discussion, says Mary Wilhelmi, who considered herself blessed to have a clerical position waiting for her at the credit offices of Sears, Roebuck and Company.

"I remember two girls got scholarships," she recalls. "And everybody was asking, 'What's a scholarship?'"

Nearly a half-century and several social movements later, Wilhelmi earned a scholarship of her own, a \$1,000 elderly scholar award by UMass/Boston.

In June, she laid claim to an even more rarified possession—a bachelor's degree in English at age 69.

Wilhelmi, who nine years ago enrolled in her first course at the Harbor Campus, received her degree at this year's commencement exercises while her husband, daughter's family—grandchildren included—and other relatives looked on.

"I'm a lucky lady," she said during a lull at the circulation desk inside UMB's Healey Library, where she has worked fulltime since it opened in 1974. "Where else can you get a job at age 53?"

At UMass/Boston, Wilhelmi got more than a job. She also gained entrance to a world where ideas flowed freely and age mattered little.

"At first," she admits, "some of the students would look at me as if to say, 'What are you doing here?' But after a while I fit right in. I have a lot to give, and I love going to class."

Wilhelmi's energy in the classroom helped bridge the generation gap, and she developed friendships with youthful classmates much the same way she did with patrons of the Brighton donut shop her family operated during the 1960s.



Mary Wilhelmi, Healey Librarian

Endowed with a working class spirit, Wilhelmi has come to appreciate firsthand the notion of sacrifice.

"UMass/Boston has a lot to be proud of," she says. "There are a lot of students who have to work 40 hours a week and attend class."

As a final step toward her English degree, Wilhelmi wrote an anecdotal collection of her life's memories, from the days when she earned \$17 a week shuffling papers, to her past 40 years in the seacoast community of Hull, where she and her husband, Julius, are enraptured by the sights and sounds of the ocean. "It's the right place for me," she explains.

Wilhelmi says her degree will have little effect on her routine, other than to allow her more free time with Julius. She will remain at her library perch for now.

"Everyone asks, 'What are you going to do?'" she says. Her response is that she'll probably do nothing differently. Why tamper with a good thing?

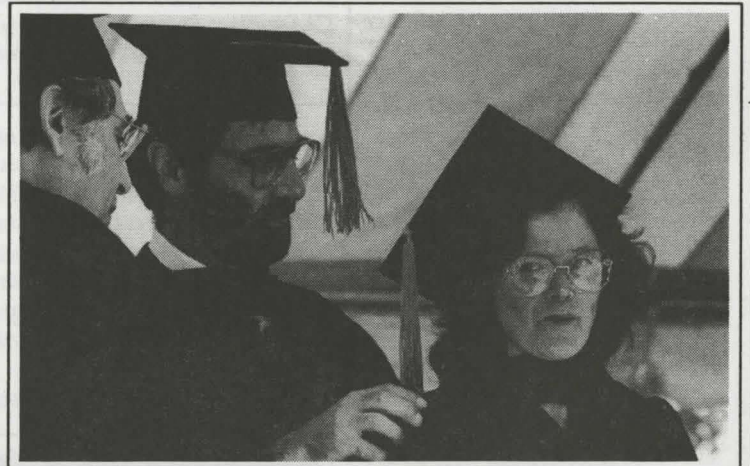
## Andrea Rex's career leads to a UMB Ph.D.

Andrea Rex doesn't want to sound like an alarmist to anyone who has ever paid \$25 for a half-dozen jumbo shrimp, but having completed her doctoral dissertation on a bacteria known as vibrio parahaemolyticus, she'll abstain from eating raw shellfish.

Even though her research determined the strain of the bacteria commonly found in cholera victims is not identical to the one prevalent in marine environments, Rex has concluded there is reason to believe the latter is making people sick, too.

Rex graduated from UMass/Boston's Ph.D. program in Environmental Science. Prior to enrolling at the Harbor Campus, she worked 11 years in various medical areas such as microbiology, epidemiology and infection control. In 1982, while in the employ of Massachusetts General Hospital, she took a couple of undergraduate courses at UMB. She quit her job in medicine and began pursuing a Ph.D. in environmental science.

Since September, Rex has worked as a Harbor Monitoring Coordinator for the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority, the state agency entrusted with overseeing the \$7 billion Boston Harbor cleanup plan. Her task is



Andrea Rex received her Ph.D. in Environmental Science from Dr. Michael Shiaris. At left is Dean of Graduate Studies Fuad Safwat.

to measure the success of the cleanup efforts by comparing data collected before and after the construction of numerous treatment facilities now being erected.

Rex shares credit for the Ph.D. with UMB's Dr. Michael Shiaris, whom she says "was very important in giving me scientific and moral support" in preparing her 200 page dissertation.

Shiaris was instrumental in obtaining a \$40,000 grant for Rex's research from the Massachusetts Centers for Excellence, a state program which fosters relationships between corporate and academic entities.

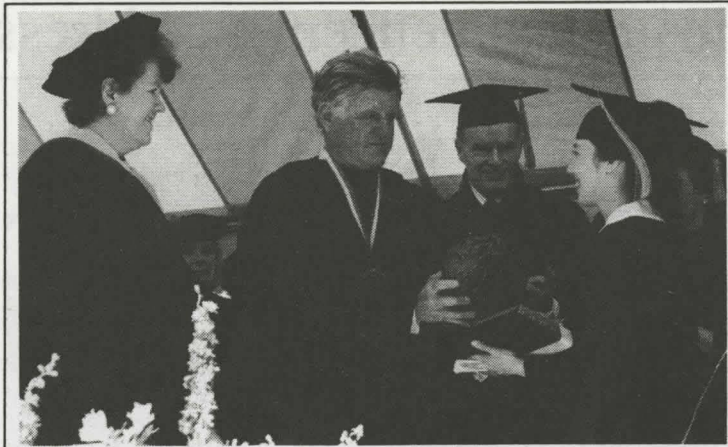
Rex also cites the unyielding support of her husband, Michael, a biology professor at the Harbor Campus, whom she met one summer in the late 1960s at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Falmouth while she was an undergraduate and he was a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard.

"It was a lot of hard work," she says. "I couldn't have made it without Michael."

The Rex's and their two children live in Milton.

A second Ph.D. recipient in Environmental Science was Diane Myrick Gould of Brookline, who also was honored.





JFK Award winner Lisa Bevilacqua of Cambridge accepts bust of John F. Kennedy from Senator Edward M. Kennedy at Commencement exercises. Looking on are Chairman of the UMass Trustees Gordon N. Oakes, Jr., and, left, Vice Chancellor Jean M. MacCormack.

## Lisa Bevilacqua earns JFK Award as UMB's top grad

The majesty of the moment was heavy, and Lisa Bevilacqua, feeling a tad overwhelmed, needed a gentle shove in the back to get started. When she reached the podium, she clasped hands with U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy and Surgeon General C. Edward Koop, then hoisted the bronze bust of John F. Kennedy, awarded her as UMB's top graduate.

It was a long journey from Wilton, Ct. to UMass/Boston for the rebellious little girl who, a decade earlier, had stunned family and friends by eschewing college for a spot on the picket lines.

"I was very nervous," Bevilacqua admits, "especially with Kennedy and Koop there."

But her soft smile helped break the tension, as did her words to the 2,200 commencement day graduates and 6,000 onlookers.

In the speech, Bevilacqua, a College of Nursing graduate, lauded the diversity and drive of students who perform what she called the "UMass Shuffle"—balancing jobs, families, check-books, and chemistry equations while driving on the Southeast Expressway. She talked more seriously about budget cuts, and expressed hope for the University's future.

Bevilacqua is an idealist, more interested in actions than words. She moved to Boston after high

school to join the rank-and-file of the Clamshell Alliance, the anti-nuclear activist group which spearheaded opposition to the nuclear power plant in Seabrook, N.H.

Bevilacqua held various jobs related to her favorite social causes. She worked in daycare and even served as a natural foods cook before growing weary of low-paying jobs which discouraged independent thinking and afforded little respect.

Seven years after leaving high school, Bevilacqua's perspective had changed.

"I had rejected education for fear of becoming a member of a 'privileged' class," she wrote in a personal statement for the JFK Award selection committee, "but I came to realize that I was benefiting no one by living in self-imposed under-employment."

Caring for her terminally-ill grandfather introduced Bevilacqua to nursing. "I saw how important nurses are," she said.

Bevilacqua plans on working in a Boston area hospital. She's mindful of the conflicting forces within the industry: hospitals trying to reconcile shrunken budgets with a nursing shortage.

"It's a stressful job," she says. "The heaviest stress right now is being understaffed.

"But there are a lot of rewards."

## Masters degrees from UMB run in the Dumas family

In the fragile world of parent-child relationships, it's the stuff of nightmares. On the first day of school you enter the classroom and observe a familiar, older-looking woman, with sharpened pencils and rigid posture, seated in the second row. You move closer for inspection, until your discovery sends you scurrying for a back row seat, a horror realized.

It's your mother.

"We'd sit as far away from each other as possible," Marie Dumas says, talking about herself and her mother, Jeanne. "Neither of us wanted anyone to know we were related."

On June 3, the truth happily became known, as mother and daughter each received a master's degree during UMass/Boston's 21st commencement.

Their more perceptive classmates had probably figured it out already.

"We got in an argument one day over my sister's wedding," laughs Marie, "and you know that tone of voice you use when you're talking to your parents, well..."

Jeanne Dumas was awarded an M.Ed. in Education, an expansion of the bachelor's degree she earned from Boston State College in 1953, several years before she gave birth to Marie, the first of her six children.

Marie accepted her M.Ed. in Instructional Design, the same program her mother, Jeanne, will complete next January for her second masters.

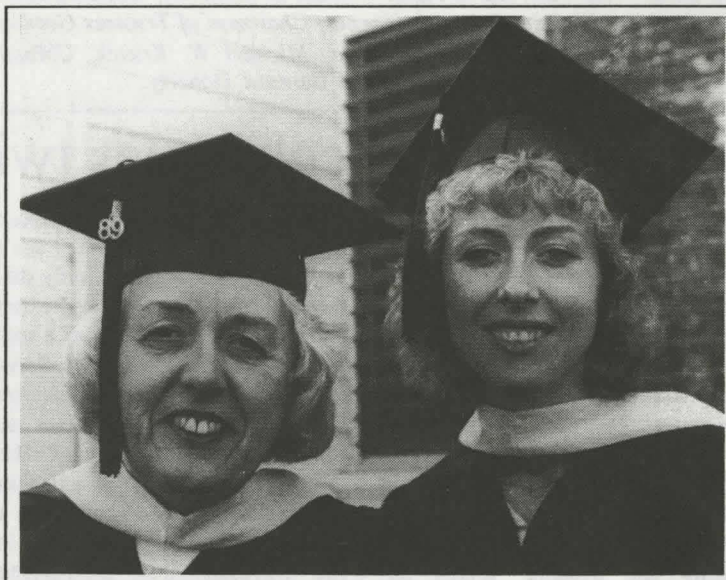
That Jeanne Dumas and her daughter have chosen a similar course might seem unlikely, given the independent vein each has demonstrated.

Maurice Dumas is a retired Navy and Coast Guard career man whose assignments brought his family to ports on both sides of mainland America. Jeanne was a school teacher in Providence when the couple met. Navy life landed the newlyweds in Port Lyautey, Morocco, where they stayed only a couple of years, long enough for Marie to be born.

When Marie was six months old, Maurice was ordered to Boston. The family settled in Dorchester, where young Marie attended parochial school, and Jeanne gained a son and three more daughters, before the clan received its next assignment in suburban Washington, D.C.

Marie finished high school in the nation's capital before matriculating at nearby Catholic University. After her freshman year, Maurice was commissioned to head the Coast Guard's West Coast Reserve Training Depart-

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Mother Jeanne Dumas and daughter Marie



# Koop calls for health care reform in Commencement address

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that brought about social security and school desegregation.

"Let us finally say what we've hesitated to say for too many years. Our system of health care is not fair, it is not just, and, therefore, it is not the morally-strong system this country deserves."

Koop's speech was the second strongly-worded statement he has made in recent weeks. The 72-year old retired pediatric surgeon assailed the liquor and beer industry during a press conference May 2 in Washington, D.C., chastising the proliferation of advertising, which he said "tells youth that alcohol consumption leads to athletic, social, and sexual success."

He demanded tighter restrictions on advertising, and called on the liquor industry to subsidize a public awareness campaign warn-

ing people on the dangers of alcohol consumption. He also suggested that states lower the minimum blood-alcohol level in drunk driving cases.

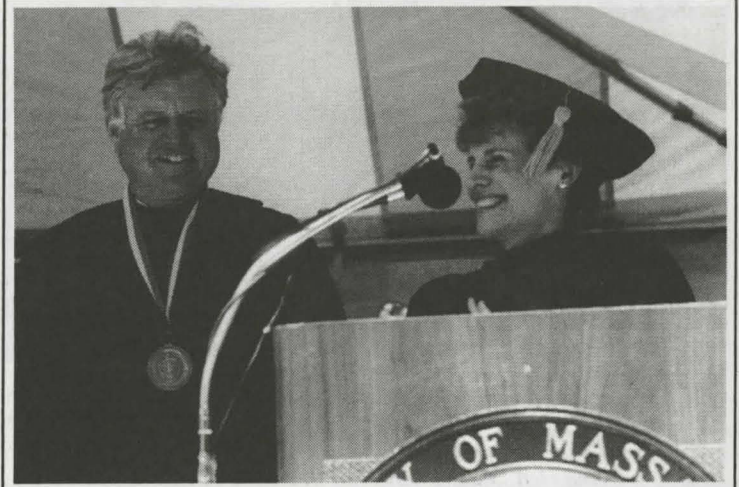
Koop, who was been awarded 17 honorary doctorates, has in the past been an outspoken leader on topics such as AIDS, smoking, and violence against women.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, who introduced Koop, credited the surgeon general for showing courage by taking a stand on controversial public health issues, especially AIDS and abortion.

"He has put his own ideology aside to depoliticize the issue of abortion and show both sides the true facts of life," Kennedy said.

Others to receive honorary degrees were:

• Ernest L. Boyer, President, The Carnegie Foundation and one



Chancellor's Medal was presented to Senator Edward M. Kennedy by Chancellor Sherry H. Penney.



University trustees on hand at UMB's 21st Commencement included, front, left to right: Stephanie M. Orefice, UMass/Amherst student; Thalia P. Zervas; Chancellor Sherry H. Penney; Mary L Reed; Judith A. Baker; rear row, left to right: William L. Mahoney; UMass/Boston student Alex Walker; Robert J. Haynes; Chairman of Trustees Gordon N. Oakes, Jr.; Lawrence S. DiCara; Michael W. Kruzek, UMass/ Medical School; James O'Leary and Bernard Doherty.

of the nation's foremost educators.

• Charlayne Hunter-Gault, the New York-based national correspondent for the McNeil/Lehrer NewsHour, America's highly-respected televised hour of national news.

• Philip W. Johnston, Massachusetts Secretary of Human Services, who oversees the state's 17 health, social service, and criminal justice agencies.

• MIT economic professor Robert M. Solow, winner of the Nobel Prize in 1987.

• Boston Pops conductor John Williams, famed composer of music for over 65 motion pictures.

Earlier in the week, at the graduation ceremonies of the Gerontology Program, an Honorary Degree was awarded to Mar-

garet E. "Maggie" Kuhn, founder of the Gray Panthers.

Included in the 2,235 degrees bestowed were 494 Masters degrees and two Ph.D. degrees awarded by UMass/Boston's Environmental Science doctoral program.

Receiving the prestigious John F. Kennedy Award recognizing the top scholar was Lisa Bevilacqua, a nursing student from Cambridge.

Senator Kennedy gave Bevilacqua a bronze bust of his late brother. The Senator was presented the Chancellor's Medal by Chancellor Sherry H. Penney.

Two faculty members, Richard A. Horsley of Religious Studies and Nicholas E. Tawa of the Music Department, were presented Distinguished Scholarship Awards by Chancellor Penney.

## Dumas family celebrates twin masters • continued from page 3

ment. While Mom and the rest of the clan went west to Alameda, and later south to New Orleans, Marie headed north, enrolling at Framingham State College, where she was graduated with a bachelor's degree in food and nutrition.

Eager for adventure, she joined a friend who was relocating in Holland and took a job in a Leiden hospital. She learned Dutch fluently and became "totally absorbed in the culture."

Five years later, after concluding that "life in Holland wasn't any better or any worse, only different," Marie returned to Boston and went to work briefly as a secretary for the National Park Service. She moved on to a position training adults on software at Shawmut Bank. She says the teaching aspect of the job was exhilarating and provided a framework for her enrollment in the UMass/Boston Instruction Design program.

Jeanne, meanwhile, was tending to the chores of motherhood. Permanently situated in Quincy after Maurice's retirement, her long-awaited classroom re-awakening started three years ago when her youngest child began high school. Jeanne says academia proved therapeutic, and she plans on re-entering the work force fulltime when she receives her second masters degree from UMB next winter.

"She'll do well," predicts

Marie. "My mother's a smart cookie."

Marie has sped through the three-year graduate program in two years and in January, having completed her coursework, won a job developing training programs for the Alexander and Alexander Consulting Group, an international insurance brokerage firm. She recently moved to South Berwick, Maine, a 40-minute commute from her company's offices in Newburyport.