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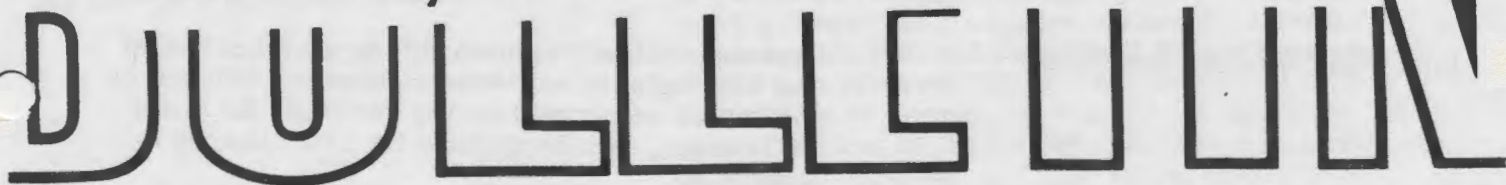
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U University of Massachusetts at Boston



VOL. IV No. 39

June 5, 1973

Fifth Commencement

Some 850 students will be candidates for Bachelor of Arts degrees at the Fifth Commencement of the University of Massachusetts at Boston on Thursday, June 7, at the John B. Hynes Memorial Auditorium.

President Robert Wood will extend the greetings of the University. Acting Chancellor William R. Hamilton, Jr., will deliver the address.

It is customary at UMass/Boston that student speakers are a major part of the program. This year there are three. Judythe Evans, speaking for the Honors Society, Ellen Kelly and Victor Coombs for the student body.

Each student demonstrates the vitality of this institution.

Judythe Evans is 30; she has been attending college classes since 1961 at such places as Boston State, Ithaca College, Boston University, art courses in Brooklyn, and at the Sorbonne. Her story is one of academic perseverance, for she also holds a full time job as an administrative assistant to a dean of Harvard Medical School.

"If it were not for an institution as UMass/Boston, I never would have been able to earn my degree," she says.

Ellen Kelly has served with distinction as a University Trustee. She has been a positive activist at this university and has shown insights and interest in academic and student affairs.

Victor Coombs has been described by associates as "terrific"; "one of the nicest people you ever met," and "in love with life." He has been accepted for medical studies in Jamaica.

Commencement is a great day in the lives of the graduates, their families and friends, and for the men and women who guided them through the thickets of academe.

(continued)

Fifth Commencement (continued)

Professor Alfred Ferguson will be the mace bearer and will begin the academic procession, followed by the capped and gowned faculty and staff, the Board of Trustees, and the students for whom the day is dedicated.

A Grandmother Grad

Theresa Borelli is a youthful 49, who has kept in touch with youth as student at UMass/Boston, gathering in all "A's" as a student here. She is the mother of eight children, ranging in age from 26 to 7, and an inspiration to the study habits of her own children and her classmates. As a student and mother, she says a "woman can do both -- being a wife and enjoying a certain independence." Her daily schedule included classwork, three or four hours of study and doing housework between times. She plans to continue graduate studies in English. Robert Frost is her favorite poet; her favorite writer is Ralph Waldo Emerson. Perhaps that's because she lives in Lexington.

More on Graduation

Our warmest congratulations to Doctor Berton Fliegel (Action Program). He will receive his Ph. D. in advanced social studies from the Florence Heller Graduate School of Social Studies at Brandeis University on June 10. He will be the school marshal at the ceremonies, so designated by his fellow doctoral candidates.

Globe Profile

The in-depth profile by Richard Weintraub in the May 27 Boston Globe Magazine on Robert C. Wood is, of course must reading for the UMass community. Weintraub penned the best in the series of college president profiles, with the possible exception of Arnold Beichman's opening stanza on Mt. Holyoke's president last fall.

"To head a large and expanding state university into the real world, to make it both a place of educational excitement and an instrument of change, takes a man of imagination and much resolution summarizes the Globe story on Dr. Wood.

Ecologist

Denise Martin, UMass/Boston junior, is the new chairman of the Peabody Environmental Control Commission. She has served as a member of the Commission for nearly three years as chairman of the aesthetics, publicity and education committees.

Basis

Bette Davis (Advising) has been elected to the executive committee of a new organization -- BASIS -- which is concerned with advising foreign students in local colleges and universities. Some 31 institutions have membership in the new group.

Trustees Meeting

The June meeting of the Board of Trustees of the University of Massachusetts will be at the Statler Hilton at 2:00P. M., June 6. Under discussion will be the report of the Campus Impact Study Group.

Dr. Richard Ekman, Assistant to the Provost, is moving forward in his academic career. He will be joining the National Endowment for the Humanities in July as a program officer. His duties will include supervision of several programs in the Education area sponsored by the Endowment. Dr. Ekman will be based in Washington, D. C. He received his doctorate in History at Harvard University during the past year, and has been teaching Religious Studies here in addition to his many duties for Dean Dorothy Marshall.

Elliot Norton *UMass Group Hopes To Take Over Strand*

After a year or more of trying, some good people at the University of Massachusetts in Boston are making progress in their push to take over an old Dorchester movie house as an arts center which would be a memorial to Harriet McCormack, late wife of former Speaker of the House John W. McCormack.

The theater is the Strand, in Uphams Corner, which was opened in 1918 as one of the first "de-luxe" movie houses. It has 1700 seats, the same number as the Colonial and the Shubert, a stage and dressing rooms and it is only a mile or two away from Columbia Point where UMass Boston will open next September.

Robert Evans, a professional actor who is now Associate Professor of Theater Arts at UMass, is a prime mover in the drive to make the Strand into the M. Harriet McCormack Center for the Performing Arts. He and his associates now have some support from the University, some from the Dorchester community and some from theater buffs who would like to see the old house made available to the living theater.

UMass does not have a playhouse. Dorchester might well use one if the University were to restore and share it. Mr. Evans' dream is to make the McCormack Center useful to the University and available to the community, too.



The University is going to make a considerable impact on Dorchester when it moves in with its thousands of students. If it can serve Dorchester by turning the old theatrical landmark into a new cultural center, that could help to ease some of the tensions.

Prof. Evans, who has been a member of professional acting companies here and in other cities would like to organize one to put on plays at the McCormack Center. He would bring in actors and actresses as "artists in residence" at the University, engaging them to act and also to teach. Other colleges, among them Brandeis, follow this system.

The company would produce American classics for the students and for the community, too, and might take its productions from the McCormack Center on tours to other colleges.

The Strand Theater was not built for drama, but for films. Like most of the cinemas of its time, it has a stage and dressing rooms and facilities for production, but the stage is shallow, designed for vaudeville.

Vaudeville acts, most of them, were usually presented right on the lip of the stage. Some worked in front of the first drop curtain, or "in one," to use the technical term. Full stage acts there were, but "full stage" to vaudeville performers was not like full stage for a musical at the Colonial or the Shubert.

Prof. Evans says the Strand stage will have to be extended out into the auditorium, over the old orchestra pit, to provide room for the proper presentation of plays. This should not be too difficult. Sarah Caldwell and her designers do it every time they put on an opera in the Aquarius, the old Orpheum Theater, which was also a vaudeville house and has the same kind of stage.

The Strand seems to be in good shape. It hasn't been used lately, but it was solidly built.

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It was put up by Nathan Gordon, who erected and ran other cinemas in and around Boston, among them Gordon's Olympia (now the Pilgrim) on Washington st. near Essex, and the Scollay sq. Olympia, one of several theaters which were razed when the city planners bulldozed Scollay sq. and the streets around it.

It was one of thousands of "picture palaces" which came into being after World War I, when the movies were just becoming respectable and were attracting the largest popular audience of any entertainment form in history.

Before the war, films had been shown in legitimate theaters, or in store fronts, or small halls. "The Birth of a Nation," the first successful American feature film, was presented in Boston at the Tremont (now the Astor), then a playhouse. In Dorchester, across the street from the Strand, was an upstairs movie house called Winthrop Hall. The Strands and others like them replaced the Tremonts and supplanted the Winthrop Halls.

In the downtown areas, these first film theaters compete presently with enormous movie houses like the Metropolitan (now the Music Hall) which seats 4300 and the Keith Memorial (now the Savoy) and Loew's State (later the Back Bay Theater, which was bulldozed) which accommodated 3000 pleasure seekers.

The Strand was never one of the great theaters, but it was a good one and, if it can be reasonably financed and supported as the McCormack Center, could be made attractive.