

60th Graduation Celebrations Planned for OAC's Ridgetown Campus

The 60th Spring Convocation at the University of Guelph's Ridgetown Campus will be held on Friday, June 1, 2012 with former Ridgetown Campus Director Don Taylor as the graduation speaker.

The 264 graduates from diploma or certificate programs in Agriculture, Horticulture, Environmental Management, Veterinary Technology, Performance Horse Handler, and Veterinary Office Administration will be gathering in the Rudy H. Brown Rural Development Centre to celebrate with family, classmates and friends.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to personally congratulate these students as I meet them on the stage to present their diploma or certificate, and even more excited about the contributions they will make to the communities in which they will live and work," notes Rob Gordon, dean of OAC. "I see graduation day as a milestone celebration as these young folks move from students to alumni, and begin to make their mark wherever they may be headed," stated Ken McEwan, Interim Campus Director.

Don Taylor, graduation guest speaker had a 32-year distinguished career with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and was the Director of Ridgetown Campus from 1984-1994. In retirement, Don stays keenly involved in Ontario agriculture as the appointed Chairman of the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG).

The Class of 2012 has much to celebrate, and Mitchell Pool, Ridgetown, ON has been selected by his classmates to deliver the valedictorian address. Pool is an Agriculture Diploma graduate now employed at Sun Ridge Enterprises Ltd., a diversified cash crop farm also offering grain elevator and commodity trucking services.

During the graduation program, Ridgetown Campus alumnus Don Pestell, Class of 1962, will be recognized for his life-time contributions to global agribusiness, his stellar support to campus growth, and his keen interest to help those less fortunate.

Prior to the 2:00 PM convocation ceremonies, a special Donor Appreciation Luncheon will be hosted to celebrate the on-going support of graduation award donors. Awards for academic proficiency and student leadership will be presented to a number of graduates. "We are very fortunate to have the financial support from our alumni, community friends and businesses, including a few supporters that have been with us for the entire 60 years, says McEwan. "This year, over \$26,850 in cash and gifts will be awarded."

Established in 1874, OAC is Canada's largest and most comprehensive institution for teaching, research and extension service in food, agriculture, communities and the environment. The OAC academic programs offered at Ridgetown Campus provide students with valuable experiential learning opportunities, and the chance to learn from world class researchers, professors and lecturers, developing important career and life skills.

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