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2015 Saint Mary's Graduation Day

By Cathy Dausman



Saint Mary's College president James A. Donahue with commencement speaker, Chris Matthews, at the podium. Photos Cathy Dausman

admitted he was initially "terrified of public speaking," from high school he knew he wanted to "argue politics" as a living.

"It's not who you know, but who you get to know," he said, urging graduates to "never say no to yourself," and to start work by simply showing up.

Many of the new graduates continued their celebration with a catered meal under a sea of white canopies on the college grounds, a proud Saint Mary's tradition.

Approximately 500 post-baccalaureate degrees were conferred May 24 at the same site. Two of those graduates, Lamorinda Weekly contributing writers Amanda Kuehn Carroll and Ryan McKinley, earned their MFA degrees from the SMC Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing Program.

To date, more than 350 students have received degrees from the MFA program at Saint Mary's College, according to the SMC website. Alumni have published numerous books and have had work published in numerous journals and periodicals, and they've also won many distinguished literary prizes.

Information technology executive Monika Fahlbusch, senior vice president and chief people and administrative officer for the \$2 billion firm BMC Software and a Saint Mary's alum, gave the graduate and professional programs commencement address on May 24.

It was sweater weather May 23 when more than 700 Saint Mary's College students received their undergraduate degrees during an outdoor stadium ceremony as parents, family, friends, college staff and dignitaries looked on.

Andrew Nguyen, 22, who received his diploma from the college's Integral Program, was selected as class valedictorian. He follows in the footsteps of his Vietnamese grandfather, a teacher who founded a school in Saigon, by enrolling in a University of Notre Dame graduate teaching program that begins this summer.

Political analyst and MSNBC talk show host Chris Matthews prepared the graduates to meet the first hardball life tosses their way when "you don't know what's coming next."

The former San Francisco Examiner columnist, speechwriter to the president of the United States and Washington D.C. bureau chief chronicled his long list of jobs for the new grads, starting with his days as altar boy and paperboy. Although Matthews



Smiling SMC graduates queue up May 23 to receive their diplomas.

Reach the reporter at: cathy.d@lamorindaweekly.com

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