



UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH

CONNECTICUT

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UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH TO AWARD THREE HONORARY DEGREES AT MAY 12 COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

WEST HARTFORD, Conn. (April 30, 2018) – The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) will award three honorary degrees at its 83rd Commencement ceremonies on Saturday, May 12, 2018. This year's honorary degree recipients are: James Brett, MPA, president and chief executive officer of the New England Council; Peter G. Kelly, J.D., founder and principal of Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C.; and Mandy La Fleur, M'10, RN, a nurse educator who works with the Pan American Health Organization of the World Health Organization. Kelly and La Fleur will speak at the undergraduate ceremony, while Brett will receive his degree and make remarks at the graduate ceremony.

“These three inspiring individuals represent the values of compassion and service upon which this University was founded. We are proud to recognize them for their significant accomplishments and to have them as models for the types of lives and careers we hope our graduates will pursue,” said University President Rhona Free, Ph.D.

James Brett has dedicated his life to serving and advocating for individuals with disabilities at the state, regional, and national levels, including service on the Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission, the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, and the National Council on Disability. He has devoted time and energy to educational institutions and organizations that address societal needs, like affordable housing and food security. His life-changing work has earned him a variety of honors, including a community home for adults with disabilities named for him, and the James T. Brett Chair in Disability and Workforce Development at the University of Massachusetts in Boston.

Peter G. Kelly is a visionary architect of U.S. private sector initiatives on democratization around the world. He has helped forge democratic electoral systems in developing nations, giving these countries the opportunity to have free and fair elections. He has also maintained a strong focus on community service; throughout his career, Kelly has served on more than three dozen civic boards at the local, national, and international levels. In Connecticut, he played a leadership role in establishing the Malta House of Care Mobile Medical Clinic in 2006, which now annually serves approximately 2,500 individuals.

Mandy La Fleur has dedicated her life and work to improving health and wellness, specifically through education programs and by improving family care in her home country of Guyana. Her leadership has contributed to community access for numerous critical clinical services, including more effective prenatal and maternal health programs. Equipped with a University of Saint Joseph master's degree, La Fleur has established herself as a trusted professional and advocate, built a strong network of medical professionals, and fostered a culture in which health care is recognized and practiced as a social value and human right for all people. Through her diligent work, she has advanced the expertise of nurses globally and has markedly improved the lives of the individuals she serves.

This year's Commencement, divided into two events, includes the undergraduate ceremony at 10 a.m. and the graduate ceremony at 3 p.m. Both events will be held in front of McDonough Hall on the University's West Hartford campus, located at 1678 Asylum Avenue.

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The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) offers a wide range of coeducational undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs that combine a professional and liberal arts education with opportunities for mentored research, community service, clinical field work, and internships. Programs are taught on the University's two campuses in West Hartford and Hartford, Connecticut; at off-campus locations throughout the state; and online. Founded in 1932 by the Sisters of Mercy, the University of Saint Joseph offers degrees with value and values. To learn more, view our website at www.usj.edu.

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