

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

General University of Maine Publications

University of Maine Publications

5-19-2001

UMaine Names Valedictorians and Salutatorian

Joe Car

University of Maine, Division of Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/univ_publications



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [History Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Car, Joe, "UMaine Names Valedictorians and Salutatorian" (2001). *General University of Maine Publications*. 1191.

https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/univ_publications/1191

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in General University of Maine Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.



University of Maine News

UMaine Names Valedictorians and Salutatorian

May 9, 2001

Contact: [Joe Carr](#) at (207) 581-3571

ORONO -- Four valedictorians and a salutatorian will represent the Class of 2001 in the 198th Commencement of the University of Maine.

The valedictorians, three Maine students and one international student, all achieved 4.0 grade point averages during their years at UMaine. The salutatorian has a 3.99 gpa.

This year's valedictorians are Kristi Carver of Beals Island, a landscape horticulture major; engineering physics major Scott Cookson of Glenburn; Jill Fuller of Dixfield, who is majoring in communication sciences and disorders; and Gerti Pellumbi of Tirana, Albania, business administration major. Salutatorian Rebecca Rozario of Bangor is a mathematics major.

Kristi Carver is a co-valedictorian and the Outstanding Graduating Student in the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture.

Carver, a landscape horticulture major, was valedictorian of Jonesport-Beals High School. There she played volleyball, basketball, softball and soccer.

Carver knew UMaine through its basketball camps, and through the experiences of her older sister, Sandi. Sandi, salutatorian of her high school class, is a 1998 UMaine graduate and former member of the Women's Basketball team. She is now a nurse in the adolescent unit of Acadia Hospital.

Carver's younger sister, Tricia, also a valedictorian of Jonesport-Beals High School, is in her first year at UMaine majoring in secondary education with a concentration in history.

"I didn't consider any other colleges," says Carver. "I knew I wanted to go to a land-grant university because it is far more diverse (in its academic offerings) than the other colleges around."

With an interest in fitness and nutrition, Carver enrolled at UMaine to study food science, but found herself drawn to landscape horticulture. However, she did maintain her interest in athletics as a founding member and co-captain of UMaine's Volleyball Team. She received this year's Dean Smith Award for exemplary academic and athletic achievement.

Most recently, Carver received the Heart and Soul Award from the UMaine Volleyball Program. After this year, the award will be renamed the Kristi Carver Award.

"Landscaping is such a diverse field and can provide a continual education throughout your life," she says. "I've always been drawn to the earth and to nature. It's where I feel most at

peace with myself.”

During her years at UMaine, Carver gained field experience on and off campus. In the Littlefield Trials Garden, she helped expand and maintain the plant collection. For the past two summers, Carver has worked in the gardens of the Rockefeller estate in Seal Harbor.

When she graduates, Carver will return to Beals Island to start her landscape horticulture business. She already has a number of contracts for residential landscaping design, installation and maintenance. Carver's clients appreciate her signature designs that are in keeping with the natural landscape.

Carver also has a commercial lobster fishing license, and could get as many as 400 traps in the water this year. Carver learned the profession from her father, who has been hauling lobsters since he was 10.

Carver also will follow in her father's footsteps May 27 when she becomes an ordained minister in the Community of Christ Church. Her father served many years as pastor of the island church, where he is now an elder and her uncle the pastor. Carver will begin her duties this summer by expanding her work with the youth of the church.

Scott Cookson is a co-valedictorian and the Outstanding Graduating Student in the College of Engineering.

Cookson, the salutatorian of John Bapst High School, came to UMaine as an undeclared major. After three semesters, he combined his passion for mathematics and science into a major in engineering physics, with a concentration in electrical engineering and a minor in math.

“I looked at schools in Boston, but this is a nice campus and I received two full-tuition scholarships,” says Cookson, who also was accepted at Tufts and Brandeis. “I had been on campus as a junior in a Pulp and Paper Foundation summer program, and in high school, I did research papers in the library.

“This is a fun place to be, a great environment for learning and living. You can get out and be as active as possible, especially with Acadia to the south and Baxter to the north.”

During his years at UMaine, Cookson had four internships. He was an NSF-REU undergraduate research assistant in the Laboratory for Surface Science and Technology for one summer and worked at International Paper in Jay as part of a Pulp and Paper Foundation Scholarship for the next two. Last summer, he accepted an internship at MIT's Lincoln Laboratory, where he worked as a research intern in the National Missile Defense group.

Cookson says he learned about the importance of hard work, honesty and modesty from his parents. “I don't work hard to impress people but to prove to myself that I can do it,” he says. “I have a drive to do the best I can at anything I do. That can be both good and bad, but it's gotten me where I am today.”

Cookson's parents, Deborah and Richard Cookson, are UMaine alumni, and a younger brother, Jason, is a junior in electrical engineering. A second younger brother, Christopher, currently attends John Bapst.

This spring, Cookson accepted a job offer at MIT Lincoln Laboratory working in the Ballistic Missile Defense Systems and Analysis group. He plans to pursue graduate school and eventually have a career in the space program. But first, he is headed to Europe to backpack for two and a half months.

Jill Fuller, a communication sciences and disorders major, is a co-valedictorian and a first-generation college student.

Fuller was valedictorian of Dirigo High School and recipient of a Top Scholar Award, which she says helped her make the decision to come to UMaine. She chose audiology as her field of study because of her interest in scientific problem-solving and her desire to work with children. Fuller has a minor in child development.

Since high school, Fuller has held part-time jobs caring for children. She also is an active United Way volunteer and, this semester, returned home on her days off to work as a substitute teacher. Her clinical experience as part of her academic program included two years working at the Warren Center, providing assistance as a speech aide for people of all ages. In addition, she observed newborn audiology screening at Eastern Maine Medical Center.

Fuller plans to specialize in pediatric audiology. She was accepted into graduate programs at the University of Florida and Towson, but she chose the clinical doctoral program in audiology at Central Michigan University.

Soon after graduation, she will travel to Michigan, accompanied by Ed Haynes, who graduated from UMaine in 1999 with a degree in secondary education. Fuller will spend the summer working at a daycamp for children. Last summer, she was a ranger at Mt. Blue State Park.

As part of her preparation to spend the next four years in graduate school, Fuller has lived this semester with her grandparents in Canton, a two-hour commute to campus. Her grandparents are among her mentors.

“My parents have always been there for me. Dad has given me the ability to know when to relax and take it easy, whereas Mom is the one who taught me to be assertive. She is the person you don't want to get a call from if you've done something wrong.”

“My other mentor is Amy Booth. She has such a love of audiology. Her enthusiasm is contagious, and that's how I want to be (as an audiologist). Someday when I have a practice, I want kids to come into my office and find me wearing a clown nose and a shirt with Disney characters for the most fun audiology test they've ever had. I never pictured audiology that way until I met Amy. It's that kind of optimism that makes life worth living.”

Gerti Pellumbi is a co-valedictorian and the Outstanding Graduating Student in the College of Business, Public Policy and Health.

Pellumbi is a business major with a double concentration in finance and management information systems. He came to Maine six years ago to complete his senior year of high school. He then enrolled at UMaine.

Pellumbi followed his brother, Elvis, who was the college's 1996 Outstanding Graduating Student and is now an investment banker in London.

Pellumbi decided to pursue a career in business because of his brother's positive academic experience at UMaine, as well as the opportunities in the field.

“The business profession allows you to move around the world, and I like to travel,” Pellumbi says. “I really enjoyed my classes in the Business School. Initially, it looks and feels like a big school, but by your senior year, you feel much closer to professors and it takes on more of a small college atmosphere.”

During his years at UMaine, Pellumbi has worked closely with Business School faculty on a number of projects. For three years, he has worked as a research assistant for Associate Dean for External Relations Sheila Pechinski. In that capacity, Pellumbi has been involved in student recruitment and contributing to columns in newsletters and publications.

For the past two years, Pellumbi also has been involved in SPIFFY, the University of Maine Student Portfolio Investment Fund established by the University of Maine Foundation. He also served as a senator in Student Government.

Last semester, Pellumbi accepted a job offer with Circuit City. After graduation, he will work in the company's financial management program in Richmond, Va. He hopes to begin work on an MBA within three years.

Pellumbi notes that he was able to pursue his aspirations in the U.S. with the help of former State Sen. Michael Pearson. "Without his help, I probably would have not been able to go to the University of Maine, or be able to go to college in the United States, for that matter."

Mathematics major Rebecca Rozario is this year's salutatorian. Rozario, the valedictorian of Bangor Christian School, first took UMaine courses in math as a high school senior. She enrolled at UMaine in 1997.

Rozario's sister, Suzanna, graduated from UMaine in 1999 with a degree in biology.

In addition to her courses in mathematics, Rozario has studied history as a minor, developing a strong interest in Irish history. Her honors thesis focuses on abstract algebra.

Rozario cites her participation in the Honors Program as being a benchmark in her academic career. "You get to explore and discuss issues unlike you do in any other class," she says. "What is justice? What does it mean to have a soul? I am very interested in philosophy and the big questions in the world. I find myself continuing to explore the questions raised in my honors classes."

After graduation, Rozario plans to spend the next academic year taking computer science classes. She hopes to pursue a master's degree in computer science.