

Stockton University Graduates to Receive Degrees at Dec. 20 Commencement Ceremony

***For Immediate Release; Coverage invited.
With list of graduates attached and editor's note at bottom;
photo of Reid-Merritt attached.***

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Galloway, NJ - President Harvey Kesselman will preside over a Baccalaureate Commencement ceremony at Stockton University on **Sunday, Dec. 20, 2015**, which will include a keynote address by Patricia Reid-Merritt, Distinguished Professor of Social Work and Africana Studies, long-time faculty member and a respected author, scholar, community activist and performing artist.

Reid-Merritt has served as a Ford Fellow with the National Council for Black Studies at the University of Ghana and on the Board of Directors of the National Council for Black Studies.

She chaired the committee that successfully advocated for the creation and 2012 installation of a statue to honor civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer in Ruleville, Miss., and continues to chair Stockton's annual Fannie Lou Hamer Human and Civil Rights Symposium. Reid-Merritt is the recipient of numerous awards including the NAACP Freedom Award, Stockton's Council of Black Faculty and Staff Annual Achievement Award, and the Mary McLeod Bethune and Carter G. Woodson 2014 award for the most significant contribution to the promotion of Africana Studies. At Sunday's ceremony, she will receive Stockton's Distinguished Service Award.

As of today, about 800 summer and fall baccalaureate candidates are slated to receive degrees this month. The ceremony begins at 11 a.m. in the Sports Center on the main Galloway campus. Master's and doctoral degree candidates will participate in a spring Commencement ceremony in May.

The ceremony will introduce a re-interpreted alma mater, "Ospreys on Parade." The project was **-more-**

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initiated by Beverly Vaughn, professor of Music and developed by a committee of faculty, staff and alumni including Dean Lisa Honaker of the School of Arts and Humanities. The committee was chaired by Lynne Kesselman, Stockton alumna and wife of President Kesselman. Bud Noble, a Hollywood Hall of Fame composer and adjunct instructor, wrote a new melody while the original lyrics by Stephen Dunn, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Creative Writing and a Pulitzer Prize winner for Poetry, were adapted with Dunn's blessing by Joseph Sramaty, a 2015 Vocal Music graduate and member of the university staff.

Carl Archut Jr., president of the Student Senate and a senior from Paulsboro, N.J., will give the student address. Archut is pursuing a degree in Liberal Studies with concentrations in Leadership, Communication Studies and Hospitality Management. He is also very involved with the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, Relay for Life, Omicron Delta Kappa: The National Leadership Honor Society and several university-wide committees on enhancing campus life. He contributes to the community in significant ways as a Resident Assistant and student assistant in the Office of the Dean of Students. With his extensive experience in campus life, he is considering a career in Student Affairs and plans to pursue a Master's degree in Higher Education Administration upon graduating in May 2016.

Wendel White, Distinguished Professor of Art, author/photographer and recipient of a Guggenheim fellowship in photography, will be the faculty grand marshal. For more than 25 years White has been engaged with a series of photographic projects addressing the African American historical narrative. The projects include "Small Towns, Black Lives"; "Village of Peace: An African American Community in Israel"; "Schools for the Colored"; "7 Steps to Freedom"; and "Manifest." Selections from "Manifest," a collection of photographs of historical artifacts which speak to the struggle for freedom and equality as well as the ordinary lives of African Americans, were exhibited this year at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton.

Editor's Note: *It is recommended that the following language be published with the list of graduates.*

The names in this list are those of degree candidates as of November 12, 2015, not those who have been graduated officially. Not every individual who is listed has received a degree from Stockton University, and there may be omissions of graduates, as well.

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