



News release

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**Keynote: Gateway grads, know that you are entering a world
where you are respected, needed and valued**

Commencement keynote speaker Nicholas Galich told Gateway Technical College graduates that, more than ever, industry needs workers with the ability to “solve problems, communicate, work hard and continue learning. In other words, people like you.”

In his stirring speech, Galich talked about the dignity and necessity of the careers Gateway graduates will soon enter and that for “too long, our culture has underestimated the value of practical education and skilled work.”

“But let me tell you something I have learned over the years: There is incredible dignity in work that serves others,” Galich said. “The nurse comforting a patient at two in the morning matters. The first responder arriving on someone’s worst day matters. These are not ‘backup careers.’ These are essential careers and our communities do not function without people willing to do the meaningful work well.

“You are entering the workforce at a time when your skills are needed, respected and valued. And that should give you confidence.”

Galich spoke to the graduates about the education they received and told them that in today’s world, those who continue to learn are those who continue to thrive.

Said Galich: “One of the things I admire most about Gateway Technical College is that it represents something incredibly important in our society: Opportunity.

“Not theoretical opportunity but real opportunity. The kind that changes the direction of a family. The kind that creates economic mobility. The kind that turns uncertainty into stability. The kind that helps someone move from surviving to building a future – and that is powerful.

“And the truth is what you learned here matters far beyond this campus. As someone who works in health care leadership, I can tell you there is a tremendous need right now for skilled, dependable and adaptable people. Not someday – right now.”

Galich spoke at the School of Health, School of Liberal Arts and Sciences and School of Protective and Human Services commencement ceremony, one of two this week to recognize an estimated total of 1,636 Gateway graduates from the Summer 2025, Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 semesters who will complete their programs. A record number of 604 graduates will participate in the two ceremonies.

Gateway Technical College Interim President and CEO Morgan Phillips congratulated the graduates, noting while people often talk about graduation as “the end,” he said “in 2026, there is no end to learning.” He then gave credit to the group being honored, noting that “tonight, we have a room full of people who are the heart and soul of our community.”

“We have nurses, paramedics and respiratory therapists who will be there for us on our hardest days. We have the firefighters and criminal justice professionals who keep our neighborhoods safe. We have the teachers and early childhood educators who are shaping the minds of tomorrow. We have the dental assistants, surgical techs and

veterinary technicians who provide essential care for us and our pets. We also have the creators and service experts, the culinary artists, cosmetologists and interior designers who bring beauty and comfort to our lives ... you are the professionals who walk with us every stage of life,” said Phillips.

Galich serves as vice president at Froedtert South, where he provides strategic leadership for Human Resources, Medical Staff Services and Marketing. In this role, he partners closely with executive and senior leadership to align workforce, provider and brand strategies with the organization’s mission, operational priorities and long-term growth initiatives. He holds degrees from Milwaukee School of Engineering and Loyola University Chicago and is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. He also holds SHRM-SCP, CPMSM and CPCS certifications.

Student Responder Mikayla Brown told graduates that being at Gateway gave her a sense of purpose and changed her life for the better – and that she knew she wasn’t the only graduate who felt that way.

“Today is a day we’ve all been working toward for a long time. It’s not just about receiving a diploma or degree, it’s about everything it took to get here,” said Brown.

“When I made the decision to come back to school, I didn’t know exactly what to expect. But what I found here at Gateway was more than just an education. I found support, encouragement and a place that welcomed me with open arms. Gateway didn’t just help me learn, it helped change my life for the better.”

Brown earned a Liberal Arts associate degree.

The college honored 2026 Gateway Technical College Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Veronica King. She is a Human Services instructor at Waukesha County Technical College, where she prepares students for careers in helping professions. She is also licensed in Wisconsin as a social worker, clinical substance abuse counselor and independent clinical supervisor.

King's nominator says she "has been a longtime community leader in Kenosha and continues to give of her time and talents to boards and organizations ... and is not afraid to speak at county board meetings and city council meetings to make elected officials aware of the struggles citizens in our community are facing."

King earned a Gateway Technical College Associate of Science degree in Supervisory Management in 2001, as well as returning to the college in 2011 when she earned an Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse certificate.

Archived videos of the ceremonies will be available in the next few days on Gateway's website at www.gtc.edu/commencement-ceremonies.

Gateway Technical College's mission is to deliver industry-focused education that is flexible, accessible and affordable for our diverse community. The college collaborates with communities in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties to ensure economic growth and viability by providing education, training, leadership and technological resources to meet the changing needs of students, employers and communities.

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