



News advisory

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**Keynote tells Gateway class they're
historic and the foundation of our communities**

This year's Gateway Technical College graduates will be marked in history as the first class at the college to be members of a virtual commencement – but also as a group that made its communities stronger.

So said keynote speaker Patrick Booth at the college's first virtual commencement ceremony which went live at 5 p.m. May 19. The ceremony and the list of graduates will be available for public viewing and social media sharing until June 19.

"You are a historymaker," Booth told graduates in his keynote address. "This is something that no one can take away from you. You chose to go all the way through and finish. And yes, right now we are facing some challenging times with COVID-19 restrictions and feeling we are just not in a normal place of life.

"But let me reassure you, we will come through this stronger. Your hearts and your commitment and your perseverance gives me inspiration and hope — to know that as long as we keep fighting, we can finish anything.

"Our communities need you now more than ever. Our businesses need you. So, as you graduate with your degree, I want you to know you will make an impact in this world. You are an inspiration to many of those around you."

Booth is president and CEO of Racine's leading business IT services provider, CCB Technology. After serving in five different roles in the company, he became president of the family business in 2013 and purchased the company from his parents in 2019.

The commencement recognized 1,576 prospective candidates for graduation from Summer 2019, Fall 2019, Spring 2020 and Summer 2020 semesters.

Crystal Shaw, a 2020 Veterinary Technician associate degree program graduate, spoke as the student responder.

Said Shaw: "Theodore Roosevelt once said that nothing worth having comes easy. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, I truly feel that this fits our class perfectly. Regardless of anything that might have been thrown at us, we demonstrated persistence and determination to succeed. But through all of this, we have gained so much wisdom, and this is one of many gifts we can bring to the workforce.

"As we get through this uncertain time with our country, I am certain of one thing: The 2020 Gateway Red Hawk graduates will use all of our talents and skills to make our communities stronger."

The virtual ceremony included a special video of commencement speakers and each graduate was recognized individually. Graduates had the opportunity to share a photo, quote and other details to be included in the ceremony. Gateway will also host an in-person celebration for the Class of 2020 in the future.

This year's commencement was held online because of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

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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