

WKU confers degrees to 1,009

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WKU conferred degrees to 1,009 students Saturday (Dec. 13) during its 164th Commencement.

WKU awarded 86 associate's degrees, 722 baccalaureate, 197 master's and four recipients of the doctoral degree offered cooperatively by WKU and University of Louisville. About 800 students participated in the ceremony at Diddle Arena.

President Gary Ransdell told the new graduates that they've been part of a well-defined transformation as WKU becomes a leading American university with international reach. "All of you entered WKU with great expectations of us – and of yourself," Dr. Ransdell said. "As you leave this Hill, you take with you years of memories and experiences. Your life has been shaped by your WKU experience, and WKU has been shaped by your influence."

Kristina Schmucker of Franklin was recognized as the Ogden Foundation Scholar, the top academic award presented to one graduating baccalaureate degree senior who has demonstrated exceptional academic achievement and outstanding university and civic engagement.

[Schmucker](#), who completed her undergraduate degree in health care administration in August with a 4.0 grade-point average, also was named scholar of the College of Health and Human Services. Her sister, Sharon, was one of the scholars in the Gordon Ford College of Business.

WKU recognized 10 Scholars of the College, who had the highest GPAs in their colleges while completing at least 64 credit hours at WKU.

Recipients by college are as follows:

Potter College of Arts & Letters: **Renee Davidson** of Murfreesboro, Tenn., an English major and daughter of Thomas and Carolyn Davidson; **Amanda Tuscan** of Godfrey, Ill., a visual arts major and daughter of Christopher and Jeanne Tuscan.

College of Education and Behavioral Sciences: **Elizabeth Murray** of Burkesville, a psychology major and daughter of James and Sharon Murray; **Cassie Neace** of Hebron, an elementary education major and daughter of Robert and Trish Neace; **Nichole Rivera** of Bowling Green, a business and marketing education major and daughter of Cindy Freeze and George Little.

University College: **Bradley Stinson** of Leitchfield, a computer information technology major and son of Roger and Mimi Stinson.

College of Health and Human Services: **Kristina Schmucker** of Franklin, a healthcare administration major and daughter of Esther and Dan Schmucker.

Ogden College of Science and Engineering: **Erika Crider** of Greenville, a mathematics and economics major and daughter of David and Debbie Gilmore.

Gordon Ford College of Business: **Amber Ryan Bell** of Summer Shade, an accounting major and daughter of Bruce and Kathy Bell; **Sharon Schmucker** of Franklin, an accounting major and daughter of Esther and Dan Schmucker.

Commencement notes

*Recipients of the doctoral degree offered cooperatively by WKU and University of Louisville were **Gary W. Houchens** of Bowling Green, **Janet Clark Hurt** of Woodburn, **Jana Vaughn Kirchner** of Bowling Green and

James Darren Smith of Smiths Grove.

*Three graduates of the Hilltopper Army Reserve Officer Training Corps – **Jay Finn** of Bowling Green, **Brian Hodges** of Glasgow and **Eric Yates** of Rineyville – were commissioned as second lieutenants. WKU also recognized all military veterans and those currently serving in the armed forces.

***Jeremiah M. Bush**, a music major from Sunfish in Edmonson County, was the first graduate of WKU's Honors College. Bush, whose father is a faculty member at WKU's Bowling Green Community College, was valedictorian at Edmonson County High School in 2004.

*The graduates included 62 students from 18 countries. Flags from those nations were carried in the opening grand march.

* The ceremony will be rebroadcast on [WKYU-PBS](#) at 1 p.m. Monday (Dec. 15).