

NEWSROOM

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [2024](#) / [May](#) / Commencement '24: Pomp, Circumstance and Personalization!COMMENCEMENT '24: POMP, CIRCUMSTANCE AND
PERSONALIZATION!

A UNIQUE CEREMONY FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY CLASS

by [Kelley McGee](#) | May 2, 2024*Read time: about 2 min*

[Commencement](#) will be especially meaningful for the Class of 2024, since many students missed the opportunity to experience a traditional high school graduation in 2020. Due to the pandemic, there were no high school senior week events, and in most cases, no graduation ceremonies to unite them with their classmates one final time.

To ensure this class has the celebration it truly deserves, Christopher Newport solicited feedback from seniors and used it to design a new Commencement Day experience that will be everything this resilient class deserves. It's one of many events, some new and some traditional, that will provide CNU's array of graduates with an unforgettable week.

For the Class of 2024, the new format combines the cherished elements of traditional cap-and-gown pomp and circumstance with all the personalized traditions our Captains treasure to create a meaningful and memorable graduation experience that honors the journey of each student and brings our community together to celebrate their achievements.

“Christopher Newport has never held a Commencement quite like this, with a mix of the formal and the personal,” said President William Kelly in a letter to the graduates. “For many of you, this is your first graduation with pomp and tradition because the pandemic disrupted your senior year of high school. For us, this is our first graduation as your President and First Lady. For that and so many other reasons, you will always hold a special place in our hearts and in our memories.”

The day will begin with the Baccalaureate Degree Conferral Ceremony on the Great Lawn, featuring a grand processional, formalities of degree conferral, addresses from President Kelly and Board of Visitors Rector [Lindsey Carney Smith, Esq. '01](#), and the singing of the [alma mater](#). The ceremony will conclude with a grand recessional featuring the faculty gauntlet, a cherished tradition where the faculty depart first and then form a line on either side of the pathway that the graduates walk through. Graduates' names will not be called during the Conferral Ceremony nor will they walk across the stage, as that will happen later during The Grad Walk, one of the most exciting new additions to Christopher Newport's Commencement.

The Grad Walk, separated into college blocks, allows grads and their guests to walk up to the stage *together*. At an appointed time, the graduate will join the Grad Walk Queue with their guests, proceed through graduate hooding and arrive at the stage to have their name read and receive their diploma cover. As the graduate walks onto the stage they will be greeted by First Lady Angie Kelly and other dignitaries. Meanwhile, their guests will be ushered to a prime spot right in front of the stage for a clear view of this important moment.

As the graduate comes off the stage and follows the path out, they will be reunited with their family members and guests.

For those with mobility restrictions, there will be a special seating area in front of the stage where they can wait until their group arrives. For those joining from afar, the Conferral Ceremony and the Grad Walk will be [livestreamed](#).

Following the Degree Conferral Ceremony and Grad Walk, graduates will have time to reunite with family and friends to enjoy treasured Christopher Newport [traditions](#), including the penny toss, visiting the Alumni House, departmental receptions, and ringing the bell. Graduates are welcome to bring as many guests as they like, and there will be plenty of activities and celebrations on campus for graduates and guests to participate in together.

Additionally, there will be a Multicultural Graduation Celebration on May 7th at 2 p.m. in Gaines Theatre, recognizing students of color for their resilience and their significant contributions to campus.

On May 8th the Lavender Ceremony will take place at 12:30 p.m. in Gaines to honor graduating LGBTQIA+ students, a recognition of their achievements and contributions to the University community.

A special Athletics Commencement Ceremony for spring season athletes unable to attend Commencement due to a competition will be held May 8th at 2 p.m. and will be [live streamed](#).

The Class of '74 50th Reunion will be held Thursday, May 9th that includes a golf club tour from 3-5 p.m. from the Gregory P. Klich Alumni House and a Cocktail Reception & Dinner in the evening from 5-8 p.m. in the Peebles Lobby.

The Graduate Studies Commencement Ceremony will take place May 10th at 2 p.m. at the Diamonstein Concert Hall. You can watch the ceremony live on [YouTube](#).

The Latin Honors Ceremony will be held May 10th at 10 a.m. and will be [live-streamed](#).

Find relevant contact information, frequently asked questions, lyrics to the alma mater and more on the [Commencement website](#).