

# 850 Niagara students receive diplomas



By Ron Wolf  
Staff Writer

Niagara College celebrated its 28th convocation from June 13 to 15 with about 850 students receiving diplomas.

The graduation celebrations were held at Centennial Secondary School on Thorold Road in Welland.

Niagara College President John Saso said graduation ceremonies are "never stressful."

Graduations are the "best things" that happen, he said adding, awards of excellence and other related awards are the "best part" of the year.

"It's the exact opposite of stress," he said.

Saso's message to the graduates is similar every year. He challenges the students to be "the very best" they can be. If they do their best they will succeed, if they don't their chances of success "will greatly demise," he said, adding he still has students call and talk to him from when he was a teacher years ago.

"The ones from Niagara College seem to do very well."

Saso said he has met former Niagara students in Disneyland and in Hong Kong. "They're all over the place."

This is the first year convocation ceremonies have been held on weeknights, said Alan Vaughan, Niagara College registrar.

"We got very positive feedback on the decision to go to weeknights as opposed to Saturday in the past," said Vaughan.

"We got lucky on the weather that it wasn't in the heat wave. All speakers were excellent and it was nice to see the president going out of his way to personalize each student," said Vaughan.

On June 15, about 300 students graduated from 18 programs including Journalism-Print, Broadcasting-Radio, Television and Film and Mechanical Engineering Technology.

On June 13 about 240 students graduated from 22 programs including Business-Accounting and Financial Management and on June 14, about 305 students graduated from nine program.

David Schleich, the college's vice-president academic, gave a speech on June 15 about how "it's a confusing world" and that it can change at

any time.

His speech was directed to the students that they can learn something about life through their parents and grandparents.

In closing, he told the graduating class of '95 to "keep learning," go find a job and "pay some income tax."

Mike Mucaki, 23, from Windsor, Ont., who graduated from the Journalism-Print program on June 15, said the course was well worth his time.

"It (the Journalism-Print program) did what I was looking for. It came in handy in the real world."

Mucaki works part time at The Tribune in Welland as a news reporter, mostly covering local sports.

Mucaki would like to see himself as "the editor of a newspaper in the future."

"It's been five years of different programs. I'm ecstatic," said Mucaki.

"Niagara College accepted me right away. I applied late in the year so I was 25th on the waiting list at St. Clair College (in Windsor)," said Mucaki on why he chose Niagara.

Ted Mucaki, Mike's father, said he's "very proud" of him, what he's doing is OK.

Aaron Reeves, 29, from Fenwick, Ont., a graduate of the Mechanical Engineering Technology program, said he feels "relieved."

He said it has been a long four years for him. Although he isn't working in his chosen profession, his future goal is to be self employed.

Reeves said the course is "hard, stick to it, face it head on."

Sylvia Reeves, Aaron's mother, said she's "very proud of him."

"I'm deeply moved and it was quite an achievement for him."

He stayed out of school for a few years; it's not as easy as it sounds (returning to school), said Reeves.

Jay Tipping, 21, a graduate from Broadcasting-Radio, Television and Film, said he felt "relieved and sweaty."

Although Tipping isn't working in the film industry, he would like to some day.

In giving advice to future film students, he told them to "be devoted, have a passion, and learn new things."

During the three convocation ceremonies, Terry Dyson and Allen Spencer played the Scottish bagpipes.

The graduation celebration ended with the singing of O Canada.

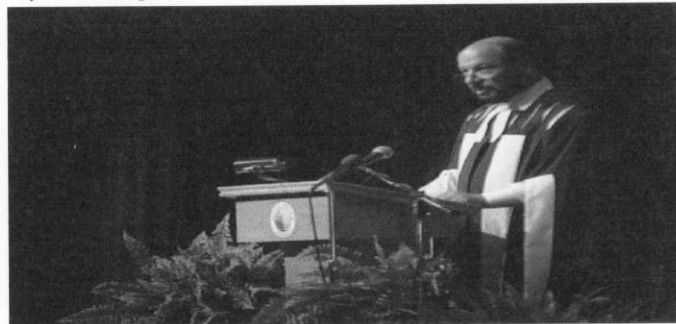
A reception for parents and guests was held at After Hours.

Carol Boettcher, the college's vice-president of student life and human resources, said in an interview she was "very pleased" with the graduation ceremonies.

"Speakers were excellent and it was good that it wasn't in the middle of the heat wave," she said.

The future of graduation night for Niagara College might be different in two years when the Glendale campus in Niagara-on-the Lake opens.

Boettcher said the ceremonies "might" be held outside at the new facility. Still, all graduates won't be able to attend at once.



Niagara College President John Saso gives his speech to the graduating class of '95 in early June.

Photo by Ron Wolf