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**Senator Al Franken to Serve as 2013 Commencement Speaker**

*Summary: United States Senator Al Franken will serve as the 2013 Commencement speaker at the University of Minnesota, Morris.*

(February 20, 2013)-United States Senator Al Franken will serve as the 2013 Commencement speaker at the University of Minnesota, Morris on Saturday, May 11. This year marks the University's 50th Commencement exercise.

Senator Franken was elected to the United States Senate in 2008 as a member of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) Party from Minnesota. He currently sits on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee, the Judiciary Committee, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and the Committee on Indian Affairs. Senator Franken is a long-time advocate for affordable, accessible health care, an economy that works for the middle class, the protection of a secure retirement, the promise of a twenty-first century education for children, and the creation of a green economy that creates jobs and improves the environment.

Prior to his election, Senator Franken spent 37 years as a comedy writer, author, and radio talk show host. He has taken part in seven United Service Organizations (USO) tours, visiting American troops overseas in Germany, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Uzbekistan—in addition to visiting Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait four times.

"I am honored that Senator Franken has accepted our invitation to serve as this year's commencement speaker," says Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson. "His reputation as an excellent speaker precedes him, and we are fortunate to have such a distinguished Minnesotan and member of the United States Congress joining us for this important occasion."

Each year students in the junior class suggest potential speakers, who are then reviewed by the Functions and Awards Committee. A final list is forwarded to the chancellor, who ultimately invites the Commencement speaker.

Morris's 50th Commencement exercise will be held on the campus mall (rain site is the P.E. Center) at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 11, 2013. The public is invited to attend the ceremony, to watch the event streamed [online](#), or to listen on KMRS/KKOK radio.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at [morris.umn.edu](http://morris.umn.edu) or call 888-866-3382.