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Minnesota Rep. Cy Thao will give graduation address at UMM

Summary:

(May 2, 2005)-Minnesota State Representative and UMM alumnus Cy Thao will provide the graduation address and Sara Kloek, UMM graduating senior from Stillwater, will speak on behalf of the graduating class during the 42nd Commencement ceremony at the University of Minnesota, Morris. The event will begin at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, May 14, on the campus mall. In the event of inclement weather, the ceremony will be held in the gymnasium of the campus P. E. Center.

A pre-Commencement Concert will be performed by the UMM Concert Band, under the direction of John Stanley Ross, assistant professor of music. Alyssa Herzog '07, UMM student from Montgomery, will provide the narration for the band selection of "America the Beautiful."

Terri Jo Schuft '07, a UMM student from Stewart, will conduct the band for the selection, "Procession of Nobles," followed by the band's rendition of the traditional "Pomp and Circumstance."

The Commencement procession will be led by Student Color Guards: Katie Haberkorn '06, Aitkin and Katherine Hunt '07, Ghent. Barrie McQuarrie, assistant professor of mathematics, will serve as the Mace Bearer. Student Marshals will be Zarah Campion '06, Minneapolis and Emily Loehr '07, Savage. Faculty marshal will be Janet Schrunk Ericksen, associate professor of English.

Angela Adam '06, North St. Paul will lead the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner." UMM Chancellor Sam Schuman will provide the welcome. The Honorable University of Minnesota Regent Patricia Simmons will speak, followed by the introduction of Sara Kloek who is the recipient of the Curtis H. Larson Award. Established in honor of the late Curtis H. Larson, the award is conferred upon the graduate chosen as senior class speaker. The selection is made by the faculty and the graduating seniors. Curtis Larson, UMM's first class speaker in 1964, died in an accident while serving with the Peace Corps in Ecuador following his graduation.

Representative Cy Thao, who will give the graduation address, graduated from UMM in 1995 with a bachelor's degree in political science and studio art. When Thao was elected to Minnesota's House of Representatives in 2002, he became the state's first Hmong representative, and the second Hmong to be elected to the Minnesota Legislature.

Thao was born in Laos and lived in refugee camps in Thailand for five years before coming to the United States. He went on to become an award-winning artist and actor. He also taught in the Minneapolis Public Schools and was the first executive director of the Center of Hmong Arts and Talent in St. Paul.

An exhibit featuring Thao's paintings - "The Hmong Migration: Fifty Paintings" - was included in the 2004 HFA Gallery's exhibit schedule at UMM.

Following the graduation address, the Iron Bull Singers will present "Honor Song" in recognition of the campus' origin as an American Indian boarding school.

John F. Schwaller, vice chancellor for academic affairs and dean, will present the student candidates for degrees. Regent Patricia Simmons will confer the degrees. Juli Yauch Wagner '92, will provide a welcome to the new graduates on behalf of the UMM Alumni Association.

A musical selection will also be performed by the UMM Concert Choir, under the direction of Ken Hodgson, associate professor of music. Commencement attendees will be invited to sing the "UMM Hymn," composed by Ralph Williams, UMM professor emeritus of music.

Following the Commencement ceremony, graduates, their families and friends are cordially invited to enjoy a reception, hosted by Chancellor Schuman, in Oyate Hall.

Earlier in the day, academic division receptions will be held, beginning at 11 a.m. in Oyate Hall of the UMM Student Center. The Science and Mathematics Division reception will be held in the Science building Atrium.

The Humanities Fine Arts Gallery features the 2005 Senior Student Exhibition and is open to visitors before and after the Commencement ceremony.

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 or call 888-866-3382.