

# MOUNT MARTY UNIVERSITY



## COMMENCEMENT

APRIL 26, 2025

10:00 A.M.

WATERTOWN, SOUTH DAKOTA

# 2025 COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

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## **PROCESSIONAL**

Brian Ries, Organist

Led by Dr. Nicholas Shudak  
Dean of Undergraduate Studies

## **MASTER OF CEREMONIES**

Heidi Schooley '07

Interim Director

## **NATIONAL ANTHEM**

"The Star Spangled Banner"

by Francis Scott Key

## **INVOCATION**

Chayla Vig '25

## **WELCOME AND STUDENT AWARDS**

Heidi Schooley

## **COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS**

Dr. Mitch Reed

Superintendent, Elementary  
Principal, Special Education  
Director, Florence School District

## **STUDENT SPEAKER**

Kylee Thue '25

## **PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES**

Dr. Nicholas Shudak

## **CONFERRING OF DEGREES**

Dr. William Miller

Provost

## **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WELCOME**

Dr. April Moen '98

Adjunct Faculty

## **BENEDICTION**

Sister Adrienne Kaufmann

## **RECESSIONAL**

Brian Ries

Led by Dr. Nicholas Shudak

*It is customary for the audience to stand during the Processional, National Anthem, Invocation, Benediction and Recessional.*

# MOUNT MARTY PRAYER

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O God,

Creator of all things and source of wisdom and knowledge, send your Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts, words, and actions so that everything we do will begin with your inspiration and continue with your guidance and blessing. Help us to speak and act with integrity so that we may uphold the values of Mount Marty University. May we use our talents and abilities in the best ways possible so that You may be glorified and our neighbor served.

We pray these things through Jesus, your Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**AMEN.**

# COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

## by Dr. Mitch Reed

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Mitch Reed grew up in Brentford, South Dakota, and attended Northwestern High School in Mellette, where he met his wife, Shari. After high school, Reed attended Dakota Wesleyan University, where he played basketball and majored in history education. Reed graduated with his bachelor's degree in 2012 and later obtained his master's in principalship from Northern State University, Aberdeen, in 2015. He then began teaching at Waverly-South Shore. He taught there for five years and created a lasting impact on his sociology students.

In 2016, while teaching at Waverly-South Shore, Reed created a project for his students titled Cardboard Confessionals, where students answered six questions and thought deeply about their daily lives and what they desired for the future — the good and the bad. These thoughts were written down on slips of paper and placed in a cardboard box in the lunchroom. The answers were then shared anonymously in Reed's class, where his students discussed empathy and the respect of others. This project has impacted many students and Reed's life significantly, and Cardboard Confessionals has been adopted by many other educators since. Reed published "Cardboard Confessionals" as a book in 2018. On April 3, 2019, Reed was presented with a South Dakota Hall of Fame Acts of Excellence award for "Cardboard Confessionals" on the Northern State University campus.

Reed received his specialist in superintendency from the University of Sioux Falls in 2017, and after teaching at Waverly-South Shore, became the principal at Deubrook Elementary School before accepting the positions of director of special education, elementary school principal, and superintendent of schools in Florence. Reed has been working in Florence for the last seven years, but he commutes from Watertown each day for work as he, his wife, and three children have been living in Watertown for the last 13 years. They fell in love with the community and never left.

Reed recently received his doctorate in educational leadership from Arkansas State University in 2024. Between his duties as superintendent of schools and his many presentations across the country on "Cardboard Confessionals," Reed coaches girls' basketball, co-hosts his podcast titled "The Little Things" with his old college buddy, and is the practicum and field experience director for Mount Marty University-Watertown as well as adjunct professor of their marriage and family class.

# BACHELOR OF ARTS

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**MARIA K. ANDERSON\***

Elementary Education

Webster, SD

**BENJAMIN ALEX BYER**

Accounting

Watertown, SD

*Summa Cum Laude*

**JACKLYN DEVOSS**

Human Service

Aberdeen, SD

*Magna Cum Laude*

**NAOMI MARIE LANGDEAUX**

Elementary Education

Hayti, SD

**HEIDI MEYER\***

Human Service

Reville, SD

*Magna Cum Laude*

**SIERRA A. NGUYEN**

Accounting

Sioux Falls, SD

*Cum Laude*

**KYLEE THUE**

Elementary Education

Hayti, SD

*Summa Cum Laude*

**CHAYLA JANE VIG\***

Elementary Education

Willow Lake, SD

*Summa Cum Laude*

# GRADUATION HONORS AND NOTES

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Graduation honors are awarded to students earning bachelor degrees in recognition of superior scholarship. Latin honors are based on December grade point average.

**Summa Cum Laude** is the honorary title used to signify those with a cumulative grade point average of 3.9 and is recognized by navy/gold honor cords.

**Magna Cum Laude** is the honorary title used to signify those with a cumulative grade point average of 3.7 and is recognized by gold/white honor cords.

**Cum Laude** is the honorary title used to signify those with a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 and is recognized by navy/white honor cords.

**\* INDICATES DECEMBER 2024 GRADUATE**

**^ INDICATES AUGUST 2025 CANDIDATE**

*Names listed in this publication and participation in the commencement exercises may not be construed as documentation of completion of degree requirements. Certification of the conferral of a degree is by official transcript noting degree completion.*

# ACADEMIC REGALIA

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The tradition of academic costume has a history of nearly eight centuries. In medieval Europe, all townsmen wore long flowing robes or gowns. The materials and colors varied greatly, according to wealth and rank of the individual and were governed by royal decree. Gradually, distinctive gowns developed for the various professions, trades and guilds. This tradition survives today in gowns of religious orders, the judiciary and the academic regalia.

The gowns worn by the recipients of the various degrees vary somewhat in design. The sleeves of the gown worn by recipients of the baccalaureate degree are long and pointed, while the sleeves of the gown worn by the master's degree recipients are square at one end with a slit at the elbow. The doctor's gown has flowing sleeves with three bars of velvet and a facing of velvet down the front of the gown.

Most distinctive of the academic regalia is the hood, which identifies the graduate degree and the institution where the degree was awarded. The hood is lined with silk in the official colors of the institution. The velvet edging indicates the degree as follows:

**Arts, Letters, Humanities:** White  
**Commerce, Accountancy, Business:** Drab  
**Education:** Light Blue  
**Fine Arts:** Brown  
**Music:** Pink  
**Nursing:** Apricot  
**Philosophy:** Dark Blue  
**Physical Education:** Sage Green  
**Science:** Golden Yellow  
**Theology:** Scarlet

## MOUNT MARTY UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

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Mount Marty University, an academic community in the Catholic Benedictine liberal arts tradition, prepares students for a contemporary world of work, service to the human community and personal growth.

# MOUNT MARTY UNIVERSITY

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Mount Marty University is a Catholic, Benedictine institution of higher learning founded in 1936 by the Sisters of Saint Benedict of Yankton, South Dakota. The institution is named in memory of Martin Marty, a Swiss monk, who came to the Dakota Territory in 1876 and became the territory's first Catholic bishop. As bishop, he invited the Benedictine Sisters to establish a religious community in South Dakota.

The university functioned as a junior college for women for 15 years; in 1951 it awarded its first Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees. In 1969, the college became coeducational. Associate of Arts degree programs were introduced in 1975 in areas compatible with already existing programs. Graduate study came to the institution with the first Master of Science degree being awarded in 1983, followed by the first Master of Art degree in 1999. The first doctorate in Nurse Anesthesia Practice was approved in 2016. Mount Marty University is the first private university in South Dakota to offer doctoral degrees.

Mount Marty University's main campus is located in Yankton, SD. There are two additional locations in Watertown, SD, and Sioux Falls, SD.

Mount Marty University-Watertown has been serving northeast South Dakota since 1972 and offers numerous undergraduate degrees in non-traditional formats. This non-residential learning environment offers flexible options that cater to all students and working professionals looking to enhance their lives and further their careers through higher education.

Sioux Falls is home to the Mount Marty Doctorate of Nurse Anesthesia Practice graduate program, a program that has been producing successful nurse anesthetists for more than 75 years. This 36-month program prepares the next generation of advanced practice nursing professionals for commitment to excellence in clinical care, advancing the profession and service to the human community. The Sioux Falls location is also home to Mount Marty University's new Master of Science in Biotechnology degree, the first such degree in the state.

In keeping with the Benedictine tradition, the university exists as a community of learners. Primary emphasis is placed on the development of each person as a complete human being with intellectual competence; professional and personal skills; and a composite of moral, spiritual and social values.



# **BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2024 - 2025**

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