

# Kindness is key, Oscar winner tells Miami grads

University awards 4,056 degrees during graduation ceremony.

By Amanda Seltz  
Staff Writer

OXFORD — Oscar-winning actor Forest Whitaker urged Miami University's graduating class to perform acts of kindness — no matter how big or small — once they leave the Oxford college.

Whitaker, who was the keynote speaker for Miami's spring commencement ceremony Saturday, told students they could potentially change the world when they simply treat others with compassion. The actor drew inspiration from the university's Latin motto, *Prodesse Quam Conspici*, which means "to accomplish without being conspicuous."

ous."

"Our day-to-day lives are shaped by the sum of countless inconspicuous acts; acts of sacrifices from generations of anonymous heroes who came before us, acts of love from our parents, acts of kindness from random strangers," Whitaker told students. "Behind every worthwhile human achievement, big or small, there is, at least, one small act of kindness."

Earlier predictions of severe weather for Saturday didn't come to fruition during the commencement exercises. Instead students, many draped in red robes, packed the school's Yager Stadium under sun-filled skies and cool temperatures that reached a high of 58 degrees.

The university awarded 4,056 degrees on Saturday, including 56 certificates, 99 as-

sociate's, 3,453 bachelor's degrees, 419 master's and 29 doctorate's degrees.

But Whitaker, the winner of an Academy Award from his performance in the 2006 film "The Last King of Scotland," told those accomplished students their work is far from over.

"Your education is a lifelong process," Whitaker said. "So, stay curious, keep your eyes and your ears open. You never know when you'll hear something, something that might change you."

Following his speech, Miami awarded Whitaker with an honorary doctorate degree in fine arts.

Miami University President Hodge and the student body's elected president, Charlie Schreiber, also spoke to the

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thousands of students, faculty and family members who packed the stands Saturday afternoon.

Karen Dawisha, the university's Walter E. Havighurst Professor of Political Science, received Miami's prestigious Benjamin Harrison Medallion.

### Divisional graduation

Miami University's fast-growing Hamilton and Middletown satellite campuses hosted the first divisional graduation ceremony at Miami University Middletown Saturday to recognize 270 students graduating with two year or four-year degrees from

the College of Professional Studies and Applied Sciences.

Interest in the satellite campuses has grown in recent years, with four

new bachelor's degree programs added within the last five years and two

more being offered this fall, said Perry Richardson, spokesman for the campuses. Both regional campuses opened roughly 50 years ago, but Saturday was the first time a formal ceremony has been held to honor students' achievements, he said.

"These students are very proud Miamians," Richardson said.

Contact this reporter at 513-483-5223



# COMPLETE COVERAGE OXFORD



mi University held its graduation ceremony Saturday at Yager Stadium and awarded 4,056 degrees. ist Whitaker, the Oscar-winning actor, was featured speaker during the ceremony. LISA POWELL/STAFF



Forest Whitaker, the Oscar-winning actor (left), and Miami University President Dr. David Hodge (right) enter Yager Stadium for graduation ceremony Saturday. LISA POWELL/STAFF