



# COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM

## CLASS OF 2026



# COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

**FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2026**

Crystal Coast Civic Center

## Processional

<b>Presentation of Colors</b>	Scout Troop 8986
<b>National Anthem</b>	Janiyah Godette
<b>Invocation</b>	Chaplain Jim Daub, USCG Auxiliary
<b>Welcome &amp; Introduction</b>	Dr. Tracy Mancini, President <i>Carteret Community College</i>
<b>Special Remarks</b>	Dr. Wrenn Johnson, Chair <i>Board of Trustees</i>
<b>Commencement Address</b>	Mike Ciprari <i>Loyal to the Craft</i>
<b>Address to Fellow Graduates</b>	Marley Ward, SGA President <i>Class of 2026</i>
<b>Presentation of Candidates for Degrees, Diplomas, &amp; Certificates</b>	Dr. Maggie Brown, Vice President <i>Instruction &amp; Student Support</i>
<b>Aquaculture Technology &amp; Research</b>	David Cerino, <i>Director</i>
<b>Arts, Sciences, &amp; Academic Success</b>	Doree Hill, <i>Dean</i>
<b>Business &amp; Commercial Enterprise</b>	Dr. Nicole Thompson, <i>Dean</i>
<b>Culinary Arts, Horticulture, &amp; Special Programs</b>	Shana Olmstead, <i>Director</i>
<b>Health Sciences &amp; Healthcare</b>	Laurie Freshwater, <i>Dean</i>
<b>Marine Trades</b>	Scott Leahy, <i>Director</i>
<b>Public Safety</b>	Perry Harker, <i>Vice President Workforce Continuing Education</i>
<b>Spa Services</b>	Sharell Allen, <i>Director</i>
<b>Trades &amp; Industry</b>	Michael Litaker, <i>Director</i>
<b>Closing Remarks &amp; Turning of the Tassel</b>	President Mancini & Marley Ward

## Recessional

## CARTERET'S MISSION

Carteret Community College serves and empowers our students and coastal community by providing high-quality education, workforce training, and lifelong enrichment in an innovative and inclusive learning environment.





# MESSAGE TO THE GRADUATES

Dear Graduates, Family Members, Friends, and Loved Ones,

Welcome to Carteret Community College's 62nd Commencement Exercises. The word "commencement" could not be more appropriate for this day, when you, our graduates, are about to commence upon a new beginning, a new career, and for some a new institution as you continue your academic pursuits. You are leaving Carteret Community College changed for the better, outfitted with both the positive relationships you have formed and the valuable credentials you have earned during your time here.

On behalf of the faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees of Carteret Community College, I extend sincere congratulations. We invite you to continue making use of the resources and opportunities available at the College and to get involved with our Alumni Network. Whether it is another certificate or degree, continuing education to stay current in your field, life enrichment to explore new interests, or events that allow you to connect with our campus and the greater community, we welcome your ongoing involvement and participation.

Thank you for allowing Carteret Community College to be part of your life's journey.

Wishing you fair winds and following seas,

*Tracy Mancini*

President

## COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

# MIKE CIPRARI

### *Loyal to the Craft*

Mike Ciprari is a cultural architect, community builder, and creative entrepreneur on a mission to reshape how the next generation connects, creates, and finds purpose.

As co-founder of SJC Custom Drums, starting the brand out of his Grandmother's basement when he was 15, Mike transformed a DIY startup into a globally recognized brand, personally collaborating with and representing artists while designing instruments for some of his own heroes and the most influential acts in modern music, including Green Day, Twenty One Pilots, Panic! at the Disco, Slipknot, and Imagine Dragons. His work helped bridge the gap between artist vision and product innovation, building lasting relationships at the highest level of music culture.

Today, Mike is the founder of Loyal to the Craft (LTTC), a next-generation media and event platform built to combat youth disconnection through real-world experiences, storytelling, and creative empowerment. LTTC lives at the intersection of culture, education, and impact, bringing artists, brands, and communities together to create meaningful, life-shaping moments.

Mike has played a key role in bringing organizations like School of Rock into major cultural spaces such as Vans Warped Tour, creating opportunities for young musicians to step onto real stages, connect with professional artists, and experience the power of community firsthand. His work consistently blends large-scale cultural activations with grassroots giveback efforts, ensuring impact is felt both on stage and beyond it.

Whether building brands, designing products, or creating platforms that outlive him, Mike's work is grounded in a simple belief: in a disconnected world, real human connection, through music, creativity, and shared experience, can change the trajectory of a life.



STUDENT  
SPEAKER

# MARLEY WARD SGA PRESIDENT

*Class of 2026* | Associate in Arts

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Success doesn't have one timeline, it doesn't follow one path. And there's no one person it belongs to... it belongs to anyone with the passion and excitement to keep going.

— Marley

Marley Ward is a student in the Associate in Arts program at Carteret Community College. She currently serves as Student Government Association President, where she represents the student body, organizes campus initiatives, and presents to the Board of Trustees. In this role, she has demonstrated a strong commitment to advocacy, leadership, and fostering a sense of community across campus.

Marley is a member of Phi Theta Kappa and the SAGA club, and she regularly participates in both campus and community engagement efforts. Through these experiences, she has contributed to creating inclusive spaces and supporting initiatives that encourage student involvement and connection.

After earning her GED, Marley entered college as a first-generation student and has since demonstrated remarkable academic dedication and perseverance. Her journey reflects a deep commitment to personal growth, education, and making the most of every opportunity available to her.

Following graduation, Marley plans to transfer to North Carolina State University to pursue a degree in psychology, with the goal of becoming a clinical psychologist. She is especially passionate about mental health, personal development, and helping others navigate their own paths, and she hopes to use her education to make a meaningful impact in the lives of others.



## COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees shall promote the sound development of its institution within the functions prescribed for it, helping to serve the people of Carteret County in a way that will complement the activities of other community partners and aiding it to perform at a high level in every area of endeavor. The board shall speak with one voice and act as a link between Carteret and the residents of the Carteret service area. Trustees shall contribute time and energy toward legislative impact concerning the well-being and advancement of the institution.

**Dr. Wrenn Johnson, Chair**  
**Doug Brady, Vice Chair**  
**Mort Congelton**  
**Bill Henderson**  
**Doug Starcke**  
**Will Rogers**  
**Bill Henderson**

**Penny Hooper**  
**Rosa Langston**  
**Dee Meshaw**  
**Kelly Marek**  
**Catherine Parker**  
**Melodie Darden**  
**Marley Ward, Student Trustee**

## FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Carteret Community College Foundation seeks and secures funding to support Carteret Community College. Through continuous efforts, the Carteret Foundation supports student scholarships and provides funds for innovative faculty and staff projects, staff and faculty professional development, program equipment, and capital purchases. The Foundation is governed by an independent board of directors.

**Jillian Lister, Chair**  
**Mary Prager, Vice Chair**  
**Dr. Tracy Mancini, Secretary**  
**Linda Gould, Treasurer**  
**Dr. Irene Barrow**  
**Wanda Bennett**  
**Eduardo Ciliendo**  
**Jeremy Dickinson**  
**Ron DuPuis, Ph.D.**  
**Sheila Glazewski**  
**Dr. Stephen Gooden**

**Thomas Hemby**  
**Thomas Howell**  
**John Humphries**  
**Averi Linderman**  
**Sherrill Moraven**  
**Booth Parker**  
**Charlotte Post**  
**Heather Sanderson**  
**Mark Suber**  
**Denise Warren**  
**Mort Congleton, Trustee Liaison**

## STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

**Marley Ward**  
2025-2026  
*President*

**Noah Thammavongsa**  
2025-2026  
*Vice President*

**Von Straight**  
2025-2026  
*Secretary*

**Estrella Maldonado-Castro**  
2025-2026  
*Public Information Officer*

## COMMENCEMENT MARSHALS

**Student Marshals** are distinguished by their blue robes and gold ribbon sashes. They are honor students who have completed 24 or more credit hours with a 3.5 GPA or higher and have been selected by their faculty for the honor of escorting the graduates during the processional and recessional exercises of the commencement ceremony.

**Madison Pinaula**  
**Cyndi Thurman**  
**Heather Lamp**

**Caeleigh Torrence**  
**Annaka Lowry**  
**Ameila Mroch**

**Faculty Marshals** are distinguished by their bronze medallions and the blue and gray stoles worn over their gowns. Faculty marshals have been elected by their peers for the honor of escorting the stage party, faculty, and staff during the processional and recessional exercises of the commencement ceremony.

**Kimberly Cole**  
2026 Excellence in Teaching Recipient

**Andrea Cole**  
Faculty Executive Committee Chair



# KEY TO ACADEMIC HONORS & REGALIA

## HONORS

- \*** Student is graduating "With Honors". They wear a gold cord and have achieved a 3.5 GPA or higher in their major.
- Φ** Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society — Graduate wears blue and gold cord and/or tassel. Members must have a 3.5 GPA or higher and a commitment to scholarly endeavors for membership.
- Σ** Sigma Kappa Delta | National English Honor Society, Delta Delta Chapter — Graduate wears green and yellow cord. Members must have 12 or more college semester hours, earned a B or higher in ENG-111, and a 3.0 GPA or higher.

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

- +** Student is graduating with multiple associate degrees, diplomas, and/or certificates.
- #** Career and College Promise — Student is dually enrolled in both high school and Carteret Community College.
- €** Carolina Student Transfer Excellence Program (C-STEP) — Graduate wears Carolina blue stole and has guaranteed admissions to UNC Chapel Hill. Graduate must complete an AA or AS degree with a 3.2 GPA or higher.
- S** Pathways — Graduate wears teal and gold cord and has guaranteed admissions to UNC Wilmington. Graduate must complete an approved associate degree with a 2.4 GPA or higher.
- ¶** Pirate Promise — Graduate wears gold and purple tassel and has guaranteed admissions to East Carolina University. Graduate must complete an approved associate degree with a 2.5 GPA or higher.
- ~** SkillsUSA Competitor — Graduate wears red and white cords. SkillsUSA promotes educational programs, events, and competitions that support career and technical education (CTE) in the nation's classrooms with the goal of ensuring a skilled workforce.

## REGALIA

- H** Black History Honor — Graduate wears the Kente cloth stole in honor of their African heritage and pride. The colors of the cloth each hold symbolism: gold=status/serenity, yellow=fertility, green=renewal, blue=pure spirit/harmony, red=passion, and black=union with ancestors/spiritual awareness.
- V** Military Veteran — Graduate wears red, white, and blue cords and is a current or former member of the Armed Forces of the United States who served on active duty.
- ♥** Sexuality and Gender Alliance (S.A.G.A) — Graduate wears a white stole with pride colors and cord. SAGA's mission is to empower and support Carteret students that identify as members or allies of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Δ** Student Government Association Officer — Graduate wear white stole with blue trim. The SGA serves as a voice to the student body with its officers sitting as the executive board.
- T** TRIO Scholar — Graduate wears red cord reflecting their sustained commitment to academic growth and personal development during their time in the TRIO Student Support Services program.
- A** Ambassador — Graduate wears white stoles with blue trim. Ambassadors serve as student leaders who represent the college through campus tours, events, and student engagement while promoting professionalism, school spirit, leadership, and a welcoming campus environment.



## COLLEGE MACE

The Carteret Community College Ceremonial Mace is carried by the recipient of the Excellence in Teaching Award, a peer-nominated honor recognizing outstanding full-time faculty. It leads the academic procession at commencement, symbolizing the significance of the ceremony and the academic tradition it represents.

Designed and handcrafted in 2018 by Trustee Emeritus Matthew L. Zettl, following a suggestion from Trustee Emeritus Michael G. Curtis, the mace features four distinct components: the shaft, head, college seal, and finial. The shaft is made from reclaimed rosewood, stored for over 50 years in a Jones County barn, and accented with hand-turned pommele sapele rings—an African wood known for its striking, raindrop-like grain.

The tulipwood head holds the college seal, which is cast from a metalized resin and finished with a bronzed patina to convey historical depth. Atop the mace sits an ebony finial, completing the elegant design.

When not in use, the mace is housed in a custom sapele display cabinet, also crafted by Trustee Zettl.



## COLLEGE ALMA MATER

Set by the vast and boundless sea  
Empowering Carteret since '63  
Serving students and their community  
With learning and opportunity

Through tumultuous, roaring seas we rise  
The Kraken's fiery gaze our guide  
Knowledge and wisdom the treasure we seek  
By Kraken; 'tis truth and honor we keep

Life enrichment and work-force training  
Successfully sustaining and navigating  
Krankens attain a sound education  
And maintain an excellent coastal reputation



# CARTERET

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

[www.carteret.edu](http://www.carteret.edu)



Honor your graduate with a personalized engraved paver in Celebration Square, located in front of the College's historic Camp Glenn Building. Pavers may be purchased to honor/ recognize or memorialize students, graduates, alumni, donors, college employees, retirees, and community members. Engrave a name or leave a message, the option is yours! Scan the QR code to download the Order Form or contact a staff member at the Foundation at (252) 222-6268 for more information.

Carteret Community College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates. For questions regarding accreditation contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500.