

HPU plans outdoor ceremonies

BY PAUL B. JOHNSON
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

HIGH POINT — Leaders of High Point University plan to hold back-to-back outdoor commencement ceremonies for the classes of 2020 and 2021 in May, a year after having to stage a virtual graduation because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The graduation services will take place May 7-8. The ceremony for the undergraduate class of 2020 will be held May 7, with the commencement service for the undergraduate class of 2021 on May 8.



Dr. Mae Jemison

The keynote speaker will be NASA astronaut Dr. Mae Jemison, an engineer and physician who became the first woman of color to travel to space. Jemison was supposed to serve as keynote speaker last May when the pandemic compelled a remote HPU graduation service.

Jemison will serve as keynote speaker for both commencements in May.

Graduates can bring up to six guests to their commencement service. Each graduate's guests will be seated together, with distance provided between each group.

Both commencement ceremonies will be held along HPU's Innovation Corridor, which provides more than 204,000-square-feet of space, the university said in a statement to The High Point Enterprise.

Face coverings will be required, and hand sanitation stations will set up in the graduation area.

"We are excited to safely honor and celebrate our graduates and their families this year," the university told The Enterprise.

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In a message to students and parents, university leaders cautioned that plans could shift depending on the direction of the pandemic and changes in COVID-19 emergency orders.

“We appreciate your continued patience during an unprecedented time, and will continue to keep you informed about details and any necessary changes as conditions change,” according to the message to students and parents.

The commencements on May 7 and 8 will be designated for certain graduating classes.

The May 7 service will include doctorate and master’s graduates in the December 2020 and May 2021 classes, as well as doctorate, master’s and bachelor’s graduates from the May 2020 class.

The May 8 service will include bachelor’s graduates from the December 2020 and May 2021 classes.

pjohnson@hpenews.com | 336-888-3528 | @HPEpaul