



Ex-Iraq ambassador to speak at Whitman graduation

Updated: Friday, April 17, 2009 1:01 PM PDT

WALLA WALLA -- Whitman College commencement ceremonies May 24 will honor about 350 graduating seniors, and feature a commencement address by former ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker, a 1971 Whitman graduate.

Ceremonies, which begin at 11 a.m. on Memorial lawn, next to Boyer Avenue, will include the traditional pomp and circumstance, colorful academic regalia, announcement of teaching awards, and a senior speaker elected by classmates to represent them at the podium.

Crocker received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor a U.S. president can bestow, in January from then-President George W. Bush, who referred to him as "one of the finest Foreign Services officers in American history." The majority of Crocker's 38-year career was spent in the Middle East. "His understanding of the region is unmatched," said President Bush.

Crocker, who lives in Spokane, will receive an honorary degree, as will Othal Hawthorne Lakey '57, presiding prelate of the Sixth Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgia, and Bill Priedhorsky '73, a laboratory fellow at the Los Alamos National Laboratory and chief scientist in the International, Space, and Response Division as well as the chief scientist for Los Alamos' new Threat Reduction Science Institute.

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