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Distinguished Spartan alumni Demmer, Cousins and Whitmer featured at commencements in May

Michigan State University will host multiple commencement ceremonies for thousands of Spartan graduates from May 3-5.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer will speak at MSU’s advanced degree graduation ceremony, Friday, May 3, at 3:30 p.m., in the Breslin Center and receive an honorary Doctor of Laws degree. Reimund Neugebauer, president of German research organization Fraunhofer-Gelleschaft, will receive an honorary Doctor of Engineering degree at the 3:30 p.m. ceremony.

Former Spartan quarterback Kirk Cousins, now with the NFL’s Minnesota Vikings, will receive an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree and speak at the undergraduate convocation, Friday, May 3, at 1 p.m. in the Breslin Center.

Also at the 1 p.m. ceremony, engineering graduate and long-time friend William Demmer, CEO of Demmer Holdings Inc., will receive an honorary Doctor of Business degree.

“Michigan State is proud to welcome home distinguished alumni who personify the cherished Spartan qualities of service and leadership in their respective fields,” said MSU Acting President Satish Udpa. “Gov. Whitmer and Kirk Cousins have earned national acknowledgment of those qualities and are sure to be inspirational speakers for our graduates.”

For Engineering graduates:

Advanced degrees -- The advanced degree commencement is Friday, May 3, at 3:30 p.m. in the Breslin Center. The ceremony is 2 1/2 hours long. There are no admission tickets required. The Breslin Center has a policy of no bags, purses, umbrellas, or bottled water allowed. Cameras and camcorders are permitted, but cases are prohibited.

Undergraduates -- The College of Engineering will host undergraduate commencement services on Sunday, May 5, at 12:30 p.m. in the Breslin Center. The ceremony is two hours long. There are no admission tickets required. The Breslin Center has a policy of no bags, purses, umbrellas, or bottled water allowed. Cameras and camcorders are permitted, but cases are prohibited.
No food or beverages — including bottled water — will be allowed, and this applies to graduates, guests and faculty. A limited concessions menu is available during the ceremonies.

The Breslin Center is a smoke-free facility. Metal detectors will screen all attendees, so please plan accordingly.

Commencement ceremonies will be live-streamed and can be watched via MSU Commencements. View the Spring 2019 Commencement Schedule. Twitter users: #MSUGrad19.

Biographies of the speakers and honorary degree recipients are below.

**Kirk Cousins**
Cousins is the starting quarterback of the NFL's Minnesota Vikings. He was drafted to the NFL in 2012 after playing on MSU's football team from 2009-11. Born in Barrington, Ill., Cousins earned an undergraduate degree from MSU.

**William Demmer**
Demmer is the president and CEO of Demmer Holdings Inc., a manufacturing business headquartered in Lansing. The company was founded by his father in 1951 to design and build tools, dies and special machinery for the auto and aerospace industries. Demmer led the company’s diversification into the defense industry, developing and manufacturing protective heavy armor systems.

Demmer earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the MSU College of Engineering in 1970. He is a recipient of the Claude E. Erickson Distinguished Alumni Award as well as an Honorary Alumnus Award from the College of Natural Resources.
Reimund Neugebauer
Neugebauer became president of Fraunhofer-Gelleschaft in 2012. A founding member of the company, he previously served as director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Machine Tools and Form Technology. Neugebauer was the dean of mechanical engineering and director of the Institute of Machine Tools and Production Processes at Technische Universitat Chemnitz.

Born in Thuringia, Germany, Neugebauer earned an undergraduate degree and doctorate in mechanical engineering from Technische Universitat Dresden.

Gretchen Whitmer
Whitmer was elected Michigan’s 49th governor in November 2018. A Democrat, she served as a Michigan state representative from 2001-06 and a Michigan state senator from 2006-15. She also was interim Ingham County Prosecutor in 2016.

Whitmer has taught at MSU and the University of Michigan. Born in Grand Rapids, she earned an undergraduate degree from MSU and is a graduate of the MSU College of Law, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude.

Related Website: Story courtesy of MSUToday. Communications contact: Patricia Mroczek

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