

**Grads bid GW adieu**

The sights of Commencement Weekend 2003 p. 7



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# Students graduate on Ellipse despite rain

■ Keynote offers advice to graduates, shares GW memories  
**by Mosheh Oinounou**  
*Editor in Chief*

Virginia Governor Mark Warner stressed the importance of perseverance, respect for others and taking the time to thank one's parents in a conversational keynote address during Sunday's Commencement on the Ellipse.

Warner, a GW alumnus with a self-made fortune of \$200 million, recalled memories from his time at GW in addition to sharing advice with the more than 20,000 graduates, University officials and guests.

"Perhaps you'll remember this speech 20 years from now, or 20 minutes from now...what I hope you will remember, though, is the foundation that this university has built for you," Warner said.

Warner, who graduated from GW in 1977 where he was the student speaker at the Commencement ceremony, shared "three beliefs" he said he wished somebody would have given him 26 years ago. He mentioned the importance of learning from failures, treating people with respect and thanking family members for their support.

He told the more than 4,000 graduates that they should not be afraid to fail, citing his early business defeats and eventual success.

He said he lost his life savings of \$5,000 in his first business venture, with the company going broke in six weeks. He said he continued to experience failures before starting a cellular company "based on a little known technology about putting telephones in cars."

Warner went on to be a founding partner of the Columbia Capital Corporation, a venture capital fund that has helped start more than 65 businesses. A Democrat, Warner was elected as governor of Virginia in 2001 and presented a balanced budget last year amidst a severe budget crisis.

Warner also gave commencement addresses at George Mason University, the Virginia Military Institute and Radford University – all in Virginia – but said in an interview last week he would personalize his GW address because of his connection to the University.

In his speech Sunday, he also emphasized the importance of treating people respectfully and taking the time to meet with people face to face.

"Things move so fast today that we often ignore how we treat other people," he said, noting that people don't look at each other "eye to eye," when they talk to one another and dismiss opinions of those with whom they don't agree.

"I've made a pretty good living off of cellular telephones, but there comes a time when it's time

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Andrew Snow/photo editor

Senior Brian Kirrane yells in jubilation as officials confirm Columbian College of Arts and Sciences graduates during Sunday's shortened Commencement ceremony on the Ellipse.

■ Dreary weather marks shortened Commencement  
**by Julie Gordon**  
*Managing Editor*

The class of 2003 experienced a shortened Commencement ceremony Sunday, as graduates celebrated on the Ellipse despite damp, 50-degree weather. Rain stopped falling about 20 minutes before graduation, but University officials said they used an abbreviated version of the ceremony because parents and students were cold.

About 20,000 faculty members,

graduates and guests attended the hour-long ceremony. Some attendees wore clear, plastic GW ponchos while sitting in the folding chairs that lined the Ellipse. About 2,000 chairs were empty, organizers said. Green, soggy floor covers protected some guests' shoes from mud.

Although the University secured the MCI Center as an alternative indoor site, officials said students prefer having graduation outside, and would only change locations because of "life-threatening" circumstances.

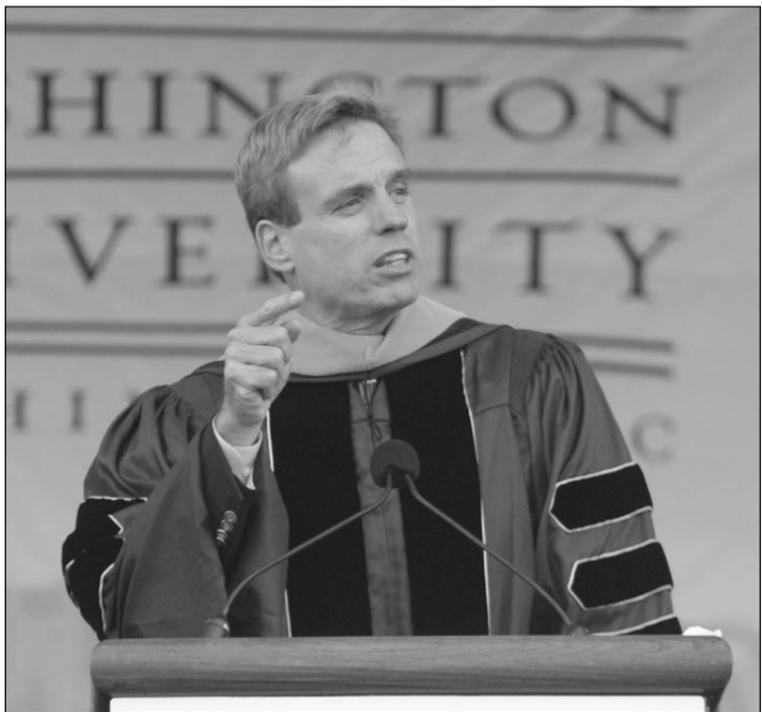
"I can't believe (the weather). I thought God would never let it rain on a GW Commencement,"

University Marshal Jill Kasle said after the graduation exercises. "(Since the rain) stopped 20 minutes before, I guess we can say it never did."

Kasle said the ceremony would have lasted about 20 minutes longer if the weather would have been better. A speech by Board of Trustees Chair Charles Manatt and a tribute to emeritus professors by Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Donald Lehman were both cut.

University President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg also said he spoke for a shorter amount of time because people "were cold and

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Andrew Snow/photo editor

Virginia Governor Mark Warner emphasizes the importance of thanking family members for their support Sunday on the Ellipse.

# University cancels plan to purchase Gallery

■ GW to go ahead with construction of residence hall adjacent to FSK  
**by Michael Barnett**  
*Metro Editor*

GW opted out of an agreement last week to buy The Gallery, a luxury apartment building in Rosslyn, Va., forcing the University to find alternative housing for 97 students who had signed up to live there this fall. University officials said they did not receive enough interest in the building to go through with the deal.

Administrators attributed the lack of interest to the building's location in northern Virginia and the short amount of time GW had to market the housing option.

University President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg said the building, which included a putting green and Jacuzzi along with plush rooms, would have been the "most luxurious student housing...on the planet."

Robert Chernak, senior vice president for Student and Academic Support Services, said if 200 students had reserved spots in The Gallery, the University would have purchased the building. GW

originally slated 125 units for students, with the remaining units going to faculty, staff and outside renters, Chernak said.

"With that amount of vacancy, it was too much deficit for the University to carry," Chernak said. Trachtenberg said it wasn't worth losing "a couple of million dollars."

Chernak said GW signed an initial agreement to buy The Gallery April 16, but had a 30-day period where it could back out of the deal without incurring any financial penalties. He said GW decided not to buy The Gallery Wednesday – one day before the

deadline – during a meeting with Trachtenberg and other senior University officials.

Dean of Students Linda Donnels said the number of units leased to students as of Wednesday would not have adequately covered the cost of the building, but she would not disclose the cost.

Chernak has said the building would have cost "tens of millions" of dollars.

"Interest wasn't in the level we would have liked to have seen," Donnels said. "We couldn't get enough people for our needs."

GW announced the purchase

of The Gallery 10 days before the housing lottery, leaving little time to publicize the building. Housing selection was originally scheduled for the end of February, but was postponed until April while the University scrambled to find additional housing, which included The Gallery.

The University first expressed interest in buying the Rosslyn building in November, when it was determined that GW didn't have enough beds for about 500 students on campus, Chernak said.

After on-campus housing was

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