



For Immediate Release  
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### Salus University's 121<sup>st</sup> Commencement Ceremony Went Virtual



*Salus University President Dr. Michael Mittelman (Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy, retired) and State Sen. Art Haywood.*

**Elkins Park, Pa.** — Despite graduating in the unique era of social distancing, Salus University still feted their graduates virtually during the school's 121<sup>st</sup> commencement ceremony Tuesday afternoon.

While the University's commencement ceremony has been traditionally held at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia, the fall ceremony was the second commencement moved online due to the coronavirus pandemic. In true COVID-19 fashion, the event featured prerecorded speeches from school officials. Among them was Salus President **Michael Mittelman, OD '80, MPH, MBA, FAAO, FACHE**; Dean of Student Affairs **James Caldwell, OD '89, Resident '90, FAAO, EdM**; Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs **Barry Eckert, PhD**; and Alumni Association President **Amanda Marchegiani, AuD '10**.

Professors shared their well wishes via social media using the #SalusGrad hashtag while family and friends interacted on the livestream chat, praising the graduates as a slideshow displayed a photo of each one with their name.

State Sen. Art Haywood, the commencement speaker for the Class of 2020 and honorary Doctor of Laws degree recipient, who represents the 4th District, including parts of Montgomery and Philadelphia counties, emphasized the current challenges the U.S. is facing – especially those caused by the global pandemic and racial injustice. Haywood also noted that the students are the future healthcare providers who will help lead the world out of the pandemic.

“I believe that the students here at Salus are a core part of our future and will provide the hope, leadership and energy that we need to take us to the next step,” Haywood said. “Our young people have so many tremendous ideas, and I have a lot of confidence in their innovation. And, that’s the way we’re going to be able to solve problems like we have today, whether it’s this pandemic or a future one.”

Ashley Senss, MMS ‘20, a Havertown native who graduated among the top of her class with a Master of Medical Science (MMS) degree from the University’s Physician Assistant (PA) Studies program, expressed her gratitude to her classmates who she now calls “sisters” and the faculty who she described as “therapists” and “role models,” advocating for their students, especially in the throes of a worldwide pandemic.

“Our time at Salus has taught us many things. I have learned that we are all capable of more than we think,” Senss said. “Learning through COVID-19, especially, has taught us how to be resilient and how to find creative solutions to new problems. COVID-19 has made our scope of practice more complex, but Salus has given us a good foundation. It is now our job to get out there and build on it – to continue to question and learn for the welfare of our patients and clients.”

To watch a recording of the ceremony, visit the University’s website [salus.edu/commencement](https://salus.edu/commencement). Read the full story about fall commencement at [salus.edu/FallCommencement2020](https://salus.edu/FallCommencement2020).

### **About Salus University**

Salus University, founded as the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1919, today is a diversified, globally recognized professional academic center of learning that offers a wide range of degree programs in the professions of Optometry, Audiology, Physician Assistant, Blindness and Low Vision Studies, Biomedicine, Occupational Therapy and Speech-Language Pathology. Salus operates four clinical facilities in Philadelphia and Montgomery counties that provide highly specialized vision, hearing and balance, and speech-language pathology services. The University has more than 1,200 students, and more than 14,000 alumni worldwide. For more information, please visit [www.salus.edu](https://www.salus.edu).