

Historical Record of UW-Madison Commencement Speakers

Date	Speaker
May 2025	Jason Gay '92 - sports and humor columnist for Wall Street Journal
December 2024	Dan Jacobs, Top Chef Season 21 Runner Up
May 2024	Meghan Duggan '11 Olympian and former Badger hockey player
December 2023	Michael Finley '14 former NBA player
May 2023	Eric H. Holder Jr. former United States Attorney General
December 2022	Charlie Berens, '09 comedian and journalist
May 2022	Linda Thomas-Greenfield, '75 United States Ambassador to the United Nations
December 2021	Manu Raju, '02 CNN's chief congressional correspondent
Class of 2020 Graduation Celebration held on September 18, 2021	Pat Connaughton, NBA player for the Milwaukee Bucks
May 2021	Bachelor Ceremony - André De Shields, '70 actor, singer, dancer, director and choreographer
	Graduate Ceremony - Dr. John Gottman, '67 and '71 mathematician, professor and author
December 2020	Rose Lavelle - professional soccer player who has also played for the U.S. national team and former UW-Madison soccer player
May 2020	James Patterson - author and philanthropist
December 2019	Jason Gay '92 - sports and humor columnist for Wall Street Journal
May 2019	J.J. Watt - former UW-Madison football player and professional football player
December 2018	Commissioner Emeritus for MBL, Allan "Bud" Selig
May 2018	David Muir, journalist and ABC World News Tonight anchor
December 2017	Adam Horowitz and Edward Kitsis, creators of the show Once Upon a Time
May 2017	Steve Levitan, co-creator and executive producer of Modern Family
December 2016	Captain James A. Lovell Jr., Astronaut
May 2016	Russell Wilson, former UW-Madison Quarterback, Seattle Seahawks Quarterback
December 2015	Zoë Timms, Founder, Women's Education Project
May 2015	Katie Couric, journalist, Yahoo global anchor
December 2014	Benjamin Deutsch, vice president for corporate communications, The Coca-Cola Company
May 2014	Jon Huntsman, Jr., former Governor of Utah and Presidential candidate
December 2013	Donald Downs, Alexander Meiklejohn Professor of Political Science, Law, and Journalism at UW-Madison
May 2013	Anders Holm, comedy writer and actor
December 2012	Pat Richter, former UW-Madison athletic director
May 2012	Carol Bartz, former CEO, Yahoo! and Autodesk
December 2011	Jacob Wood, president and co-founder, Team Rubicon
May 2011	John P. Morgridge, emeritus CEO and chairman, Cisco Systems Tashia F. Morgridge, retired educator and author
December 2010	Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (Ohio), U.S. House of Representatives
May 2010	Arne Duncan, U.S. secretary of education
	James Kass, founder and executive director, Youth Speaks
December 2009	Neil Willenson, CEO and founder, One Heartland
May 2009	Allan (Bud) Selig, commissioner of Major League Baseball
December 2008	Ben Schumaker, founder of the Memory Project
May 2008	Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson, Wisconsin Supreme Court
	Kay Koplovitz, chair and CEO, Koplovitz and Co.; founder, USA Network
December 2007	Scott Van Pelt, ESPN sports anchor

May 2007	André De Shields, award-winning actor, director and educator
December 2006	Benjamin Karlin, executive producer, The Daily Show and The Colbert Report
May 2006	Florence Chenoweth, executive director, UN Food and Agriculture Organization Odessa Piper, advocate for sustainable agriculture
December 2005	John Morgridge, chairman of Cisco Systems
May 2005	Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin
December 2004	Gaddi Vasquez, director, United States Peace Corps
May 2004	Bradley Whitford, Actor
December 2003	Chief Justice Shirley S. Abrahamson, Wisconsin Supreme Court
May 2003	Jerry Zucker, movie producer
December 2002	Jonathan Wolman, senior vice president, Associated Press
May 2002	Louis Holland, President/CEO Holland Capital Management (alumnus) Thomas Pyle, president of Pyle Group, former CEO of Rayovac (alumnus)
December 2001	Charles Trotter, chef, restaurateur, author, PBS television show
May 2001	Charlene Barshefsky, US/China trade ambassador under Clinton Admin (Sat.) George Schaller, environmentalist and honorary degree recipient (Sun am) Pratima Kale, humanitarian and honorary degree recipient (Sun pm)
December 2000	William Cronon, UW Madison Professor of History
May 2000	Uta Hagen, Honorary degree recipient, Saturday morning and afternoon Harvey K. Littleton, Honorary degree recipient, Sunday morning Ernest Micek, Honorary degree recipient, Sunday afternoon
December 1999	Shirley Abrahamson, chief justice, Wisconsin Supreme Court
May 1999	Nadine Strossen, Professor of Law and New York Law School and president of the ACLU (L&S Ceremonies) Elzie Higginbottom, President, CEO East Lake Development and Management, Chicago (Sun am ceremony) Jim Berbee, President, Berbee Information Networks, Sunday PM ceremony
December 1998	David Maraniss, author; writer for the Washington Post
May 1998	Greta Van Susteren, CNN Legal Correspondent (L&S) Gloria Ladson Billings, UW Madison, School of Educ Prof (Educ) David Walsh, Attorney, Foley & Lardner (Business)
December 1997	Doris Meissner, Commissioner, Immigration & Naturalization Service
May 1997	Rita Braver, CBS News Correspondent (L&S) Oscar Boldt, Chairman of the The Boldt Group (Engr) Martin F. Stein, Chairman of Stein Optical (Pharm)
December 1996	Stephen Ambrose, Visiting UW Prof History Dept, Prof U of New Orleans
May 1996	Brewster Shaw, astronaut, Director, Rockwell International (L&S) Jere Fluno, Vice President, Grainger, Inc. (Business) Colin Rees, World Bank (IES)
December 1995	Dean Virginia Hinshaw (Graduate School)
May 1995	John Paulos, Professor of Mathematics at Temple University (L&S) Alice McPherson, Clinical Professor of Ophthalmology, Baylor College of Medicine (Medical School) Jan VerHagen, President-CEO-Director of United Dominion Ind (Engr)
December 1994	No speaker
May 1994	Gro Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway (L&S) Lawrence Eagleburger, former Secretary of State (L&S) David Wilhelm, chair, Democratic National Committee (L&S) C. Eugene Allen, vice president, University of Minnesota (CALS) Stephen Marcus, chair and CEO, Marcus Corporation Theatre (Business)
December 1993	Winston Brill (Grad School)
May 1993	Professor Harold Scheub (L&S) Richard Sauer, 4-H (FRCS) Carl Marschke (Engr)
December 1992	No speaker
May 1992	Jeff Greenfield, ABC News (L&S) Joy Caulkin, Vice President and Provost, University of Calgary (Nursing) Steven Bornstein, President and CEO of ESPN (Business)
December 1991	Professor Melvin Croan
May 1991	John Darnton, New York Times (L&S) James Crow, Emeritus Professor (Educ) Herbert Kohler, Alumni (Engr)

December 1990	Robert Kastenmeier
May 1990	No speaker
December 1989	David Ward
May 1989	Eleanor Holmes Norton
December 1988	Bernard Cohen
May 1988	No Keynote Speaker
December 1987	No Keynote Speaker
May 1987	No Keynote Speaker
December 1986	No Keynote Speaker
May 1986	No Keynote Speaker
December 1985	No Keynote Speaker
May 1985	No Keynote Speaker
December 1984	No Keynote Speaker
May 1984	No Keynote Speaker
December 1983	No Keynote Speaker
May 1983	Martha Peterson
December 1982	No Keynote Speaker
May 1982	No Keynote Speaker
December 1981	No Keynote Speaker
May 1981	No Keynote Speaker
December 1980	No Keynote Speaker
May 1980	No Keynote Speaker
December 1979	No Keynote Speaker
May 1979	The Honorable Walter F. Mondale, Vice President of the United States
December 1978	No Keynote Speaker
May 1978	No Keynote Speaker
December 1977	No Keynote Speaker
May 1977	No Keynote Speaker
December 1976	No Keynote Speaker
May 1976	No Keynote Speaker
December 1975	No Keynote Speaker
May 1975	No Keynote Speaker
December 1974	No Keynote Speaker
May 1974	No Keynote Speaker
December 1973	No Keynote Speaker
May 1973	No Keynote Speaker
January 1972	President John C. Weaver
June 1971	Fred W. Friendly, Edward R. Murrow; professor of Broadcast Journalism, Columbia University
January 1971	President John C. Weaver
June 1970	Stewart L. Udall, Former Secretary of Interior
January 1970	President Fred Harvey Harrington
June 1969	President Fred Harvey Harrington
January 1969	President Fred Harvey Harrington
June 1968	President Fred Harvey Harrington
January 1968	President Fred Harvey Harrington
June 1967	President Fred Harvey Harrington
January 1967	President Fred Harvey Harrington
June 1966	President Fred Harvey Harrington
January 1966	President Fred Harvey Harrington
June 1965	President Fred Harvey Harrington

January 1965	President Fred Harvey Harrington
June 1964	President Fred Harvey Harrington
June 1963	President Fred Harvey Harrington
June 1962	President Conrad A. Elvehjem
June 1961	President Conrad A. Elvehjem
June 1960	President Conrad A. Elvehjem
June 1959	President Conrad A. Elvehjem
June 1958	President Edwin B. Fred
June 1957	President Edwin B. Fred
June 1956	President Edwin B. Fred
June 1955	President Edwin B. Fred
June 1954	President Edwin B. Fred
June 1953	President Edwin B. Fred
June 1952	President Edwin B. Fred
June 1951	President Edwin B. Fred
June 1950	President Edwin Broun Fred
June 1949	President Edwin Broun Fred
June 1948	President Edwin Broun Fred
June 1947	President Edwin Broun Fred
June 1946	President Edwin Broun Fred
June 1945	President Edwin Broun Fred
June 1944	President Clarence Addison Dykstra
June 1943	President Clarence Addison Dykstra
June 1942	President Clarence Addison Dykstra
June 1941	President Clarence Addison Dykstra
June 1940	President Clarence Addison Dykstra
June 1939	President Clarence Addison Dykstra
June 1938	President Clarence Addison Dykstra
June 1937	President Clarence Addison Dykstra
June 1936	President Glenn Frank
June 1935	President Glenn Frank
June 1934	President Glenn Frank
June 1933	President Glenn Frank
June 1932	President Glenn Frank
June 1931	President Glenn Frank
June 1930	President Glenn Frank
June 1929	President Glenn Frank
June 1928	President Glenn Frank
June 1927	President Glenn Frank
June 1926	President Glenn Frank
June 1925	President Edward A. Birge
June 1924	President Edward A. Birge
June 1923	President Edward A. Birge
June 1922	President Edward A. Birge
June 1921	President Edward A. Birge
June 1920	President Edward A. Birge
June 1919	President Edward A. Birge
June 1918	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1917	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1916	President Charles R. Van Hise

June 1915	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1914	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1913	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1912	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1911	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1910	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1909	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1908	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1907	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1906	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1905	President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1904	Dr. Thomas C. Chamberlin (Former President of the University), Dr. William Peterson (Principal of McGill University), President Charles R. Van Hise
June 1903	Acting President Edward A. Birge
June 1902	Acting President Edward A. Birge
June 1901	Acting President Edward A. Birge
June 1900	President Charles Kendall Adams
June 1899	President Charles Kendall Adams
June 1898	President Charles Kendall Adams
June 1897	President Charles Kendall Adams
June 1896	President Charles Kendall Adams
June 1895	President Charles Kendall Adams
June 1894	President Charles Kendall Adams
June 1893	President Cyrus Northrop, LL. D., University of Minnesota
June 1892	Major J. W. Powell, Director of U.S. Geological Survey
June 1891	Daniel C. Gilman, President of John Hopkins University
June 1890	E.B. Andrews, President of Brown University
June 1889	No Keynote Speaker
June 1888	No Keynote Speaker
June 1887	No Keynote Speaker
June 1886	No Keynote Speaker
June 1885	No Keynote Speaker
June 1884	No Keynote Speaker
June 1883	No Keynote Speaker
June 1882	No Keynote Speaker
June 1881	No Keynote Speaker
June 1880	No Keynote Speaker
June 1879	No Keynote Speaker
June 1878	No Keynote Speaker
June 1877	No Keynote Speaker
June 1876	No Keynote Speaker
June 1875	No Keynote Speaker
June 1874	No Keynote Speaker
June 1873	No Keynote Speaker
June 1872	No Keynote Speaker
June 1871	No Keynote Speaker
June 1870	No Keynote Speaker
June 1869	No Keynote Speaker
June 1868	No Keynote Speaker
June 1867	No Keynote Speaker
June 1866	No Keynote Speaker

June 1865	No Keynote Speaker
June 1864	No Keynote Speaker
June 1862	No Keynote Speaker
June 1861	No Keynote Speaker
July 1860	No Keynote Speaker
July 1859	No Keynote Speaker
July 1858	No Keynote Speaker
July 1857	"By the chancellor"
July 1856	"By the chancellor"