

SMWC celebrates Ring Day with two ceremonies

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College held two ring ceremonies in the Harvey Auditorium in the Conservatory of Music on Saturday for Ring Day 2024.

There were a record 147 ring recipients between the two ceremonies, the college said in a release. The theme of this year's ceremony was "Grow your roots, Extend your branches."

Hope McGuire, junior class president, said, "It has been exciting to see the growth at The Woods, which resulted in a record number of rings being distributed this year. Being a part of the very first Ring Day ceremony in the historic Harvey Auditorium made for a great experience to celebrate the day with our friends and family."

After the ceremony, recipients presented flowers to family members or friends in attendance to express their appreciation for support during their journey as students.

Lillie Gendel, a mathematics major at SMWC, was thrilled to take the next step in her Woods journey by receiving the Woods Ring that belonged to her great-aunt, the late Jeanne Knoerle, SP, '49, emerita president of SMWC, who served as president of the College from 1968-1983. "It was a very emotional and special day. The weight of the ring is a reminder of my aunt's presence here with me."

Trent Deckard, a member of the first Ph.D. cohort to receive their Woods Ring, shared that it will forever be a treasured memory of his time at The Woods. "The day was breathtaking, and it resonated with every part of my



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Interim President Brennan J. Randolph presents Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College junior class president Hope McGuire with her Woods Ring on Saturday.

experience. I have never felt such a connection to my learning in my life," Deckard said.

Interim President Brennan J. Randolph, MBA, commented about Ring Day, "It is so rewarding to present these students with this iconic symbol of academic achievement. I am blessed to be a part of the biggest Ring Day in the history of the college and to award rings to this group of very deserving recipients."

Students Margaret Williams Mead, class of 1922, and Dorothy Helm Geisel, class of 1923, designed the ring in 1922.

The students partnered with Herff Jones Jewelers to create the perfect ring. It was first given to seniors in 1922 and in 1928, juniors were granted the opportunity to receive a ring. Since the ring was intertwined with academic achievement, students wore caps and gowns to receive their rings and continue to do so to this day.

This was provided to the Tribune-Star by Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College.