Threatening clouds held back their downpours to accommodate the university’s 47th annual Commencement ceremony on the morning of May 16. With balloons, flowers, bursts of applause, and shouts of congratulation, thousands of parents, grandparents, friends, and other well-wishers celebrated the graduating Class of 2004. Howie the Hawk brought smiles to the faces of young and old as he greeted attendees and posed for photographs.
On a more serious note, the approximately 1,200 graduates and their guests listened to U.S. Rep. John B. Larson (D-Conn.), who told the class that “a world full of paradox and challenge” needs their new ideas. Larson was presented with an honorary Doctor of Laws at the main ceremony.

“Congratulations graduates, the world awaits you, and what a world it is,” Larson said. “The world before you is a paradox of great promise and great hope on one hand and threats and challenges on the other. While the world is shrinking because of technology, it is also becoming more violent. We are fighting a war on terrorism in which the first victim could be our own Constitution. We produce the most advanced medicine in the world, and 44 million people [in this country] have no health insurance,” he added.

“These challenges and threats are problems that all democratic societies face. Some say that terrorism is our nation’s greatest threat. But I submit that the greatest threat to our freedom and our nation is an environment where the outspoken will be deemed unpatriotic—where an atmosphere of fear will suppress the forthright from speaking their minds and registering their votes—where the press won’t ask the hard questions of those in authority and where scientists’ work is censored,” Larson said.

“Your nation needs you,” Larson told the graduates. “It needs your thoughtful deliberation, and most importantly, it needs your voice.”

Also receiving honorary degrees were Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Edward Albee; acclaimed architect Robert A. M. Stern; poet and short-story writer Tess Gallagher; world-renowned classical guitarist Oscar Ghiglia; and outgoing Saint Joseph College President Winifred E. Coleman.

Four faculty members were honored at the ceremony for exceptional accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, service, and contributions to the All-University Curriculum. J. Holden Camp, associate professor of history and chair of the Department of Humanities at Hillyer College, received the Roy E. Larsen Award for Excellence in Teaching. Bharat R. Kolluri, professor of economics and chair of the Department of Economics, Finance, and Insurance in the Barney School of Business, was the recipient of the James E. and Frances W. Bent Award for Scholarly and/or Artistic Creativity.

Leo T. Smith, associate professor of mechanical engineering in the College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture, was recognized with the Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Award for Service to the University. Paul G. Bugl, associate professor of mathematics in the College of Arts and Sciences, received the Donald W. Davis All-University Curriculum Award. Bugl has been teaching the Epidemics and AIDS course in the All-University Curriculum (AUC) for the past six years.

The recipient of the 2004 Belle K. Ribicoff Prize was Jacqlyn M. Tumolo, a psychology major in the College of Arts and Sciences. The Ribicoff Prize is awarded each year to a graduating student who has taken on leadership roles and been active in many extracurricular activities while maintaining an excellent academic record. Cassi B. Polk, a philosophy major in the College of Arts and Sciences, received the John G. Lee Medal. The Lee Medal recognizes a graduating student who has excelled academically at the university while being deeply involved in community service.

The 2004 John G. Martin Scholar is Nicole L. Saad, a chemistry/biology major in the College of Arts and Sciences. The Martin scholarship provides tuition, room and board, supplies,