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**RAMAPO COLLEGE CELEBRATES LARGEST COMMENCEMENT**

*1,526 Graduates Process at the Prudential Center*

(MAHWAH, NJ) --- Ramapo College of New Jersey today celebrated its largest commencement ceremony as 1,526 graduates received diplomas.

President Peter P. Mercer welcomed the crowd of cheering family and friends and noted that 360 of the graduates received Latin Honors, 28 completed the College's Honors Program, and another 250 were members of the College's 40-plus academic honor societies.

"Graduates may you continue to push your own boundaries and may you continue to excel in all of your personal and professional pursuits," said President Mercer. "And may you be richly blessed in the years to come. Congratulations."

Emmy Award winning CBS 2 News anchor Chris Wragge, the keynote speaker, urged the Class of 2012 to follow their instincts and to act from a place of purpose.

"Move in the direction that interests you, that you are naturally drawn to, even if it not the dream job at first," he said. "Put yourself in an environment where you are surrounded by your passion – and great opportunity will follow. I promise. It's not easy, trust me, but nothing worthwhile is."

Graduating Class Speaker Gregory Allen, 42, of Ringwood, NJ, an Environmental Studies major, delivered remarks on behalf of the Class. Allen is the fourth member of his family to graduate from Ramapo College. Began his studies in 1991, stopped in 1995 to begin raising a family, and returned in 2010 and began taking courses on nights and weekends.

"A wise man once said: 'If opportunity doesn't knock, then build the door,' " Allen said. "Our professors have not only taught us how to open those doors of opportunity, but if need be, to build the opportunities, not only for ourselves, but for others as well."

Allen said his 13-year-old son gave him a card that read: "Dad, you taught me to finish what you start. I am proud of you and congrats."

The President's Award of Merit was presented to Aijaz "Jazz" Tobaccowalla '90, senior vice president, Worldwide Biopharmaceutical and Commercial Business Technology for Pfizer, Inc. The award recognizes distinguished accomplishments by Ramapo College alumni. He graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science with a minor in Mathematics. In 2005, he earned his MBA from New York University. He first discovered

Ramapo College on a visit from his home in India and has become a global leader who has lived and worked in the United States, Europe and Asia.

Ramapo also honored College supporters and friends, Lawrence and Theresa Salameno of Allendale, NJ, with Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degrees for their support, generosity and friendship over the past decade.

“Theresa and I were both pleased and honored by the decision of the Ramapo College Board of Trustees to confer these degrees upon on,” said Mr. Salameno

In 2006, the couple provided a Challenge Grant to name the Salameno Spiritual Center, which led to the opening of the non-denominational sanctuary for reflection, meditation and dialogue that has become an integral part of community life. And more recently their generous capital campaign gift to support renovation of the A and B wings of the Academic Complex, to endow a Center for Excellence in British Studies and to establish a Dean’s Scholarship Fund in the School of American and International Studies led the Board of Trustees to name the school in their honor.

For photos from the Commencement Ceremony please visit:  
[http://ramapocollege.smugmug.com/Events/Commencement-2012/23029260\\_kSjHTR#!i=1852498236&k=zDbcWDP](http://ramapocollege.smugmug.com/Events/Commencement-2012/23029260_kSjHTR#!i=1852498236&k=zDbcWDP)

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Ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as fifth in the Best Regional Universities North category for public institutions, Ramapo College of New Jersey is sometimes mistaken for a private college. This is, in part, due to its unique interdisciplinary academic structure, its size of approximately 6,008 students and its pastoral setting in the foothills of the Ramapo Mountains on the New Jersey/New York border.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include nursing and social work. In addition, Ramapo College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels. The College also offers six graduate programs as well as articulated programs with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New York Chiropractic College, New York University College of Dentistry, SUNY State College of Optometry and New York College of Podiatric Medicine.