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### Four-hundred-forty Students set to Graduate during Taylor Commencement

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# Four-hundred-forty Students set to Graduate during Taylor Commencement

PUBLISHED: May 14, 2018 10 am



Four-hundred-forty students are expected to receive degrees during Taylor University's 2018 Commencement ceremonies at 10 am, Saturday, May 19, in the Kesler Student Activities Center on the Taylor campus.

Norm Miller, chairman of Interstate Batteries, is the featured speaker for the event, and Chuck Surack, founder and president of Sweetwater in Fort Wayne, Indiana, will receive an honorary doctorate.

Miller began his career with Interstate shortly after graduating from North Texas State University (now University of North Texas) in 1962. In the past 56 years, he has moved through the company's ranks—from his father's Tennessee distributorship, to the National Field Sales team at Dallas, Texas, corporate headquarters, and on to the helm of Interstate's Executive Management Team.

Since Miller assumed the roles of President and Chairman in 1978, Interstate has become the number one replacement battery in North America, with a network of more than 200 retail battery centers, 300 distributors and 200,000 dealers across the U.S., Canada, Central and South America. Unit battery sales have steadily improved from the 1965 total of 250,000 to a world record of more than 18 million replacement battery sales for a twelve month period ending this past fiscal year. In 1991, Miller relinquished the Presidency to spend more time focusing on other strategies and issues facing the company.

Additionally, Miller led the company in the founding of the Interstate Batteries Great American Race in 1983 and it became the world's richest old car race and American's premier vintage car event. In 1989, he pioneered Interstate's entry into NASCAR racing. Teaming up with Joe Gibbs Racing in 1992, Interstate won the Daytona 500 in 1993, the Winston Cup Championship in 2000, and the Sprint Cup Championship in 2015.

Surack founded the Sweetwater enterprise in 1979 as Sweetwater Sound—a four-track recording studio that was housed in the back of his Volkswagen bus. A few years later, Surack created the Kurzweil K250—one of the music industry's first keyboard samplers. Surack gained a national reputation for his skills while providing custom sound design and recording studio consulting to many well-known artists. Today, Sweetwater is the number one online retailer of music instruments and pro-audio equipment in the United States, employing over 1,300 team members who are focused on serving Sweetwater's more than one million customers each year. In addition to Sweetwater, Surack has translated his commitment to "always do the right thing" into ownership of 10 other businesses including SweetCars, Sweet Aviation, Sweet Helicopters and Longe Optical in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and All Pro Sound in Pensacola, Florida.

Additionally, Surack and his wife Lisa are deeply involved in the Fort Wayne community and are considered among the leading philanthropists in Northeast Indiana, where they have served in numerous volunteer roles and regularly give to over 600 organizations annually, including numerous music-related organizations, the Rescue Mission, Boys and Girls Clubs of Fort Wayne, and Easter Seals Arc of Northeast Indiana.

Four-hundred-forty graduates comprise Taylor University's graduating class of 2018.

- 247 are women and 193 are men;
- 17 should receive Master of Arts degrees in Higher Education and Student Development;
- 5 should receive Master of Business Administration degrees;
- 223 should receive Bachelor of Arts degrees;
- 189 should receive Bachelor of Science degrees;
- 6 should receive Bachelor of Music degrees; and
- 1 should receive a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.
- 1 graduate is completing the requirements for two Bachelor degrees;
- 21 Bachelor degree recipients are completing the requirements for at least two majors.

They come from:

- 30 states in the United States;
- 26 foreign countries including: Bahamas, Bolivia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Jamaica, Japan, Malaysia, Moldova, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela.

240 Baccalaureate degree recipients have earned graduation honors:

- 63 have attained Summa Cum Laude;
- 105 have achieved Magna Cum Laude;
- 72 have earned Cum Laude.
- 5 undergraduates could graduate with a perfect 4.0 grade point average during their years at Taylor: Leah RenŽe Draper, Ryley Jordan Hoekert, Si Hyun Kim, Rebecca Elizabeth Robb, and Melody Lynne White.

Additionally, 68 percent of this year’s Taylor graduates have had at least one overseas study experience.

The graduates of the class of 2018 will join 24,185 previous graduates of Taylor University.



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