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## HE HAD TO FALL TO RISE AGAIN



MICHAEL PUFFER REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Wilson Rosado II, 30, of Watertown, earned an advanced manufacturing certificate from Naugatuck Valley Community College in Waterbury. He enjoyed the accomplishment with his wife, Kristina Rosado, and their 1-year-old son, Rafael, following a ceremony at the Palace Theater on Thursday.

## Naval school failure becomes valedictorian at NVCC

BY MICHAEL PUFFER  
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

**N**ICHOLAS SCHEER had been a decent student in Brewster High School in New York. He was smart enough to graduate with a B average without much effort. That changed after Scheer entered the U.S. Navy nu-

**RA** Visit rep-am.com to view a photo gallery from the Naugatuck Valley Community College graduation.

clear engineering school. The school crams an advanced degree curriculum into six months, Scheer said. For him, it was academic hell. Forty hours of classwork. Thirty more of homework.

And at the end — failure. He did not become a nuclear technician.

About 18 years later, Scheer, now 37, graduated as valedictorian of Naugatuck Valley Community College's Class of 2015. Taking the speaker's lectern inside the packed Palace Theater, Scheer spoke about his great failure and the need to risk failure to meet success.

"If we are not challenged, are we really trying? Are we living life to the fullest?" Scheer said.

Scheer had not been idle since his Navy discharge at age 20. He has worked a variety of technical jobs, leading to a position managing a lab for an electric battery design company in Oxford. Even

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CHRISTOPHER MASSA REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Alexa Grenier of Wolcott shows off her decorated cap during Naugatuck Valley Community College's commencement exercises at the Palace Theater in Waterbury on Thursday.

## GRADUATES: Hard work pays off at NVCC

with his accomplishments, Scheer described his latest as banishing the demon of his first big failure.

He graduates with an associate's degree in mechanical engineering. He'll continue taking courses at Naugatuck Valley Community College and begin Central Connecticut State University this fall. He plans to get bachelor's degrees in mechanical and electrical engineering, perhaps even going on for master's degrees.

"Our lives and challenges do not stop here," Scheer told classmates. "They begin here."

NVCC graduated about 1,055 students Thursday. They ranged in age from 17 to 77. The college is filled with students from varied backgrounds, sharing a common aim of improving their lives.

Wilson Rosado II was working a handful of hours weekly, traveling from his Watertown home to Bridgeport to teach three-dimensional animation at an after-school program. His wife was pregnant with their first son. His father-in-law, Jose Morales, said Rosado needed to buckle down, and suggest-

ed NVCC's advanced manufacturing program. Morales had read a story about the program in the Republican-American.

Rosado, 30, held his year-old son, Rafael Rosado, in the foyer of the ornate downtown theater following Thursday's ceremony. Both were beaming, with Rafael reflecting his father's happiness. Rosado starts a manufacturing job in Waterbury at \$13 per hour Monday, but says he can move up to \$28 per hour following apprenticeship and a lot of hard work.

"It feels great," Rosado said of his accomplishment. "As a first-time father, going to school full time is tough. I had to juggle homework and the baby."

Rex E. Lowe, 52, of Naugatuck graduated with his wife, Jannine, and their 20-year-old daughter Cheyenne. It's Jannine's third degree, this time pursuing her passion with an arts degree.

Cheyenne wants to pursue alternative medicine. Lowe got a business degree, looking for advancement in his job with a local manufacturer.

"You know how it is, you need that piece of paper," Rex Lowe said.

## THE SMILE OF SUCCESS AT NVCC



CHRISTOPHER MASSA REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Sandra Martinez of Danbury smiles before receiving her degree from Naugatuck Valley Community College on Thursday at the Palace Theater in Waterbury. The college graduated about 1,055 students, ranging age from 17 to 77. Story on Page 1B and photos at rep-am.com.

## NVCC Celebrates 50th Commencement, More Than 1,000 Graduates



**WATERBURY, Conn.** – Naugatuck Valley Community College celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Commencement on May 28 at the Palace Theater in Waterbury. For the fourth year in a row, the College boasted a graduating class of more than 1,000.

While total graduates and awards will continue to be calculated throughout the summer as students complete their coursework, there are 1,055 graduates thus far, including 305 students who received multiple degrees and certificates. Of these graduates, 190 graduated cum laude, 72 graduated magna cum laude and 29 graduated summa cum laude.

“It has been a challenging year for the College, but as I stand here before you and look out at all of you, our graduates, the rewards far outweigh the challenges of managing difficult budgets,” said NVCC President Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Ph.D. “Together, we have moved ahead in so many wonderful directions.”

Members of NVCC’s Class of 2015 range in age from 17 to 77 and hail from 80 cities and towns across Connecticut and seven states in total. The largest field of study was General Studies, in which 350 associate degrees were awarded.

Dr. Robert Hartmann McNamara, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate College at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, delivered the commencement address, urging graduates to “be happy, be humble, be grateful.” McNamara is a 1984 graduate of Mattatuck Community College—one of the institutions which would later become NVCC.

Other special speakers included The Honorable Neil M. O’Leary, Mayor of Waterbury and Chairman Nicholas Donofrio of the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education.

The College conferred an honorary Associate of Arts Degree to Samuel Gold, Executive Director of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments. President De Filippis thanked Gold for being a strong advocate for NVCC and Waterbury through countless acts, including his support of the College’s pursuit of sidewalks along Chase Parkway and for helping to restore evening bus service to the city. “He truly helped change lives,” she noted.

Nicholas Scheer, NVCC’s 2015 Valedictorian, graduated with a perfect 4.0 grade point average and associate degrees in Engineering Technology—Mechanical Engineering and General Studies.

“We have worked hard, studied and succeeded. We have faced our fears and conquered them,” Scheer told his fellow graduates. “We have learned how to surmount any obstacle—and that is critical. Our lives and our challenges do not stop here. They begin here.”