

May 9, 2008

USC GRADUATION

3 HAD LONG ROAD TO FINISH LINE

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Michelle and Morgan Toole learned early that when life gives you lemons, you better learn to make lemonade.

As they were nearing the end of high school and anticipating going to college, their father, Mike Toole, died, leaving their widowed mother to figure out how to put the twins and their older sister, Jennifer, through college.

This weekend, Diane Toole sees their experience together as a life-affirming journey. Her daughters will be among the thousands to receive degrees.

The Columbia campus will award more than 3,400 baccalaureate and graduate degrees, including eight associate degrees, 2,320 baccalaureate degrees, 204 law degrees, 107 pharmacy degrees, 19 graduate certificates, 942 master's degrees and 44

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specialist degrees.

Jennifer, 22, who will receive a degree in early childhood education, has a job lined up teaching second grade at Wood Elementary School, and will be married in June.

Michelle, 21, will receive her degree in nursing. She already has a job lined up at Providence Hospital. Morgan will receive a degree in biology, has a job lined up, and hopes to go to medical school in a year.

As Diane and her three daughters tried to figure out how to pay for three college educations, the twins learned about the **Horatio Alger** Foundation, a private, non-profit foundation that gives two scholarships each year in each state. Each wrote an essay about her experience dealing with adversity. They became South Carolina's two winners, each receiving \$10,000 from the foundation.

In addition, the three received other scholarships and grants. Michelle ended up funding her education with grants. Morgan and Jennifer contributed substantially

to cover their costs. And all worked to earn additional money.

They lived at their West Columbia home with their mother and had side-by-side parking spaces on campus. They were close, giving each other emotional support and meeting for lunch. They were in it together.

On Thursday, Diane Toole had a very broad smile on her face as she watched Michelle in her graduation garb, laughing and celebrating with her sisters.

Kathy Miller, an adjunct teacher in the nursing school and a nurse at Providence, stopped briefly to hug Michelle, and tell her she looked forward to working with her.

"She was an extraordinary student, so extraordinary that I had to recruit her for my own hospital," Miller said.

Michelle was part of an extraordinary class, said Dean Peggy Hewlett of the College of Nursing. About 49 percent, or 39 students, from this class of new nurses graduated with honors. Hewlett said that is a record for the school.

Diane Toole and her girls have overcome the adversity of losing their husband and their father, and the 52-year-old dental technician said she could not be happier with her children.

"It's been a ride, a lot of fun. They've worked hard," Toole said. "I've made it, they've made it. At this point, I can handle anything."

S.C. STATE UNIVERSITY

Amani Abeid Karume, president of Zanzibar, will deliver the commencement address to more than 450 S.C. State University students at 6 p.m. today at the **Oliver Dawson Stadium in Orangeburg**.

About Karume: A son of Abeid Amani Karume, leader of the freedom movement in Zanzibar

Nation and later Tanzania, he was elected a member of Zanzibar's House of Representatives. He was appointed a cabinet minister in the Zanzibar government leading the Trade, Industry and Marketing portfolio. At the same time, he was nominated as a member of the Tanzania Parliament. In his second term as a representative, he was appointed minister for communications and transport. He was elected president of Zanzibar in 2000 and re-elected to another five-year term in 2006. As president, his focus is on economic and social development.

Accomplishments: Under his administration, Zanzibar has adopted a universal primary education policy whereby 100 percent of school-going children are enrolled in the first primary classes. Zanzibar's economy and infrastructure development, including road network and telecommunication have surpassed many countries in Africa, south of the Sahara.

Other involvement: Vice chairman of the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi; chancellor of the State University of Zanzibar; and an honorary fellow of the Institute of Engineers of Tanzania.

SOURCE: S.C. State University

THE CEREMONIES

USC will hold commencement exercises for bachelor's and master's recipients at its Columbia campus today and Saturday.

TODAY

When: 3 p.m.

Where: Colonial Center

Speaker: President Andrew Sorensen; Pete Dye, the "father of modern golf architecture," will receive an honorary doctorate.

Receiving degrees: Graduates of the Moore School of Business, the College of Mass Communications and Information Studies, the College of Nursing, the S.C. College of Pharmacy and the Arnold School of Public Health

Other ceremonies today:

9:30 a.m.: School of Law

12:30 p.m.: School of Medicine

SATURDAY

Where: Colonial Center

Speaker: Barbara McConnell Danell, U.S. ambassador to Finland, will address both undergraduate ceremonies

When: 9:30 a.m.

Receiving degrees: Graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Honors College

When: 4 p.m.

Receiving degrees: Graduates of the College of Education; the College of Engineering and Computing; the College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sport Management; the Fort Jackson Military Base Program; Interdisciplinary Programs; the School of Music; and the College of Social Work

Other ceremonies

Where: Koger Center

TODAY

9:30 a.m., School of Law

12:30 p.m., School of Medicine

Saturday

1 p.m., doctoral degrees



Morgan Toole helps her twin sister, Michelle, put on her mortarboard at the Koger Center on Thursday.

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Diane Toole takes a photo Thursday of her daughters, Jennifer, center, and identical twins Morgan and Michelle at USC's Koger Center. The Toole sisters graduate this week.

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