

For Immediate Release

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Environmental Advocate Regina (Gina) McCarthy and Human Rights Leader Darren Walker to Speak at 2017 Simmons College Commencement May 19

BOSTON (March 16, 2017) – Simmons College is proud to announce that nationally recognized environmentalist Regina (Gina) McCarthy and leading social justice advocate Darren Walker will serve as keynote speakers during its 112th Commencement ceremonies Friday, May 19 at the Blue Hills Bank Pavilion in Boston.

McCarthy is the speaker for the undergraduate ceremony at 9:30 a.m. Walker is the speaker for the afternoon ceremony for master's and doctoral students at 2:30 p.m.

“Regina McCarthy and Darren Walker’s work has had a profound impact on our nation’s landscape from the protection of our vast prairies and pristine water ways to the transformation of our ever-evolving cities,” said Simmons College President Helen Drinan. “This year’s speakers have dedicated themselves to preserving our natural environment, rebuilding communities, and helping to shape a safer, more hopeful world for many thousands of people.”

The college will be live tweeting from the ceremony at @SimmonsCollege #SIMS17.

McCarthy’s 30-year career in public service has been dedicated to environmental protection and public health. As Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under President Barack Obama, she was the nation’s leading advocate for common-sense strategies to protect public health and the environment, including efforts to address the challenge of climate change and ensure the protection of the country’s water resources. Her leadership led to significant federal, state, and local actions on critical issues related to the environment, economic growth, energy, and transportation. McCarthy is currently a fellow at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government’s Institute of Politics and the Menschel Senior Leadership Fellow at Harvard’s T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Walker has been making a seismic difference in the lives of others as a leader in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. After establishing a successful career in banking and law, Mr. Walker transitioned his professional life, becoming one of the nation’s leading advocates for human rights and social justice in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. Through his leadership at the Ford and the Rockefeller Foundations, he helped resolve Detroit’s historic bankruptcy crisis and managed the Rebuilding New Orleans initiative after Hurricane Katrina. Walker also serves on the boards of numerous nonprofit organizations dedicated to urban development, the arts, alleviating poverty, and creating economic opportunity.

(more)

Both McCarthy and Walker will receive honorary degrees from Simmons.

Also receiving an honorary degree is Masayo Kodama, a distinguished humanitarian, prodigious author, stalwart feminist, and international activist for the past 37 years. Kodama is the Founder and President of the Reborn Kyoto Project, a Japanese-based nonprofit organization that nurtures the economic independence of women and young men in developing countries through the instruction of dressmaking and textile technology. By repurposing traditional Japanese kimonos into Western style clothes, Reborn Kyoto raises funds for some of the world's most impoverished and underserved communities.

Simmons College (www.simmons.edu) is a nationally recognized private university located in the heart of Boston, and is the preeminent authority on women's leadership. Founded in 1899, Simmons is the only undergraduate women's college in Boston, and maintains a history of visionary thinking and a focus on social responsibility. The college offers world-class coeducational graduate programs in nursing and health sciences, including physical therapy and nutrition; education; behavior analysis; library and information science; management; and social work. Follow Simmons on Twitter at [@SimmonsCollege](https://twitter.com/SimmonsCollege) and [@SimmonsNews](https://twitter.com/SimmonsNews).