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EDITOR'S PICK

FEATURED

WKU-Glasgow hosts Fall 2018 Graduand Ceremony

BY WILL PERKINS wperkins@glasgowdailytimes.com Dec 14, 2018

Rebecca Woosley, who is graduating with a bachelor of arts in psychology, left, smiles after Melanie Asriel, instructor of psychological sciences, right, placed a graduation stole on her during the Fall 2018 Graduand Ceremony on Thursday evening at Western Kentucky University-Glasgow.

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GLASGOW — Students who are about to graduate from Western Kentucky University-Glasgow were honored during the Fall 2018 Graduand Ceremony on Thursday evening at WKU-Glasgow.

“This evening is primarily a celebration of the December class for 2018,” said Beth Laves, associate vice president of the Division of Extending Learning and Outreach at WKU. “But it’s also a celebration of the support the graduates have received from the families and friends who have assembled with us today.”

Laves said this ceremony is also a celebration of the faculty, “who have taught and learned with the graduates,” and the campus staff, “who have provided support and encouragement, as well as the members of our community who have worked with this wonderful class.”

“Tonight’s a celebration of the campus itself,” Laves continued. “The Glasgow campus serves as a critical role in stewarding WKU’s heart in the economic vitality and the relevancy of our 10-county service area in southcentral Kentucky.

“The Glasgow campus has been extremely successful in providing educational access to our students in our region.”

Melanie Asriel, instructor of psychological sciences, gave a greeting from the WKU-Glasgow faculty.

“Congratulations, graduates,” she said. “I’m so very proud of you.

“Our graduates are accepted into graduate school. Our graduates get hired.”

Asriel asked an instructor with the campus’ elementary education program what the hiring rate is for their graduates — and the response: “100 percent.”

“We are thrilled to write recommendations for our students. Thrilled when they get a job,” Asriel said, though a university education “is not, and should not be workforce development.”

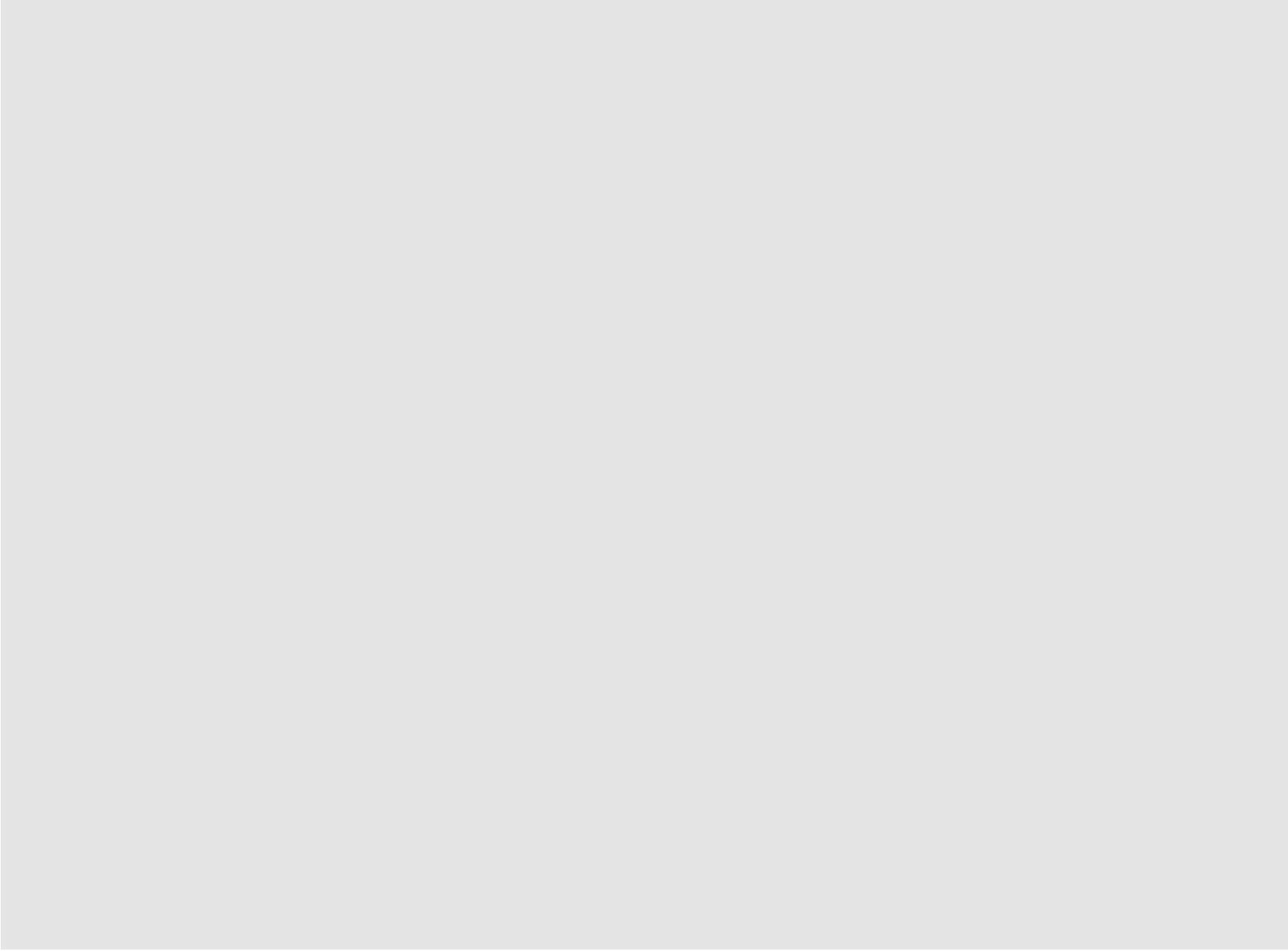
“A university education is life-force development,” she said, adding that graduates have a broad foundation that prepares them to succeed. “My students, or students who have studied psychological sciences, have learned about themselves, how their brains function, how they learn and remember, how to be a successful parent, how to find reliable news sources, how to critically evaluate research, to use evidence for argument.

“They are prepared to be thoughtful and intelligent members of society. For decades, research has shown that people with a college education are happier, wealthier and healthier than those without.”

Laves introduced the keynote speaker — graduating senior Thomas Bratcher, who has earned a bachelor of science in biology — and described him as a non-traditional student who will be graduating this Saturday after beginning his collegiate education at WKU more than 20 years ago.

“Like many of you here tonight, Thomas overcame many hurdles to achieve this milestone,” Laves said. “After two decades in the medical field, Thomas lost his job and knew it was time to make a change for himself, his wife and his son.

“Not only did he overcome these hurdles, he surpassed even his own expectations. As a Fall 2018 WKU graduate, he’s been offered opportunities to attend both medical and law school.”



Thomas Bratcher, who is graduating with a bachelor of science in biology, was the keynote speaker during the Fall 2018 Graduation Ceremony on Thursday evening at Western Kentucky University-Glasgow.

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Bratcher said the faculty and staff at WKU-Glasgow have meant so much to him and his success.

“Because of their encouragement and belief in me, I’ve been able to get this far, and I am forever grateful and in debt to the staff here,” he said. “If you are a student here, your expectations in regard to your education should not be anything short of your dream.

“When I stopped making excuses for myself is really when I thrived.”

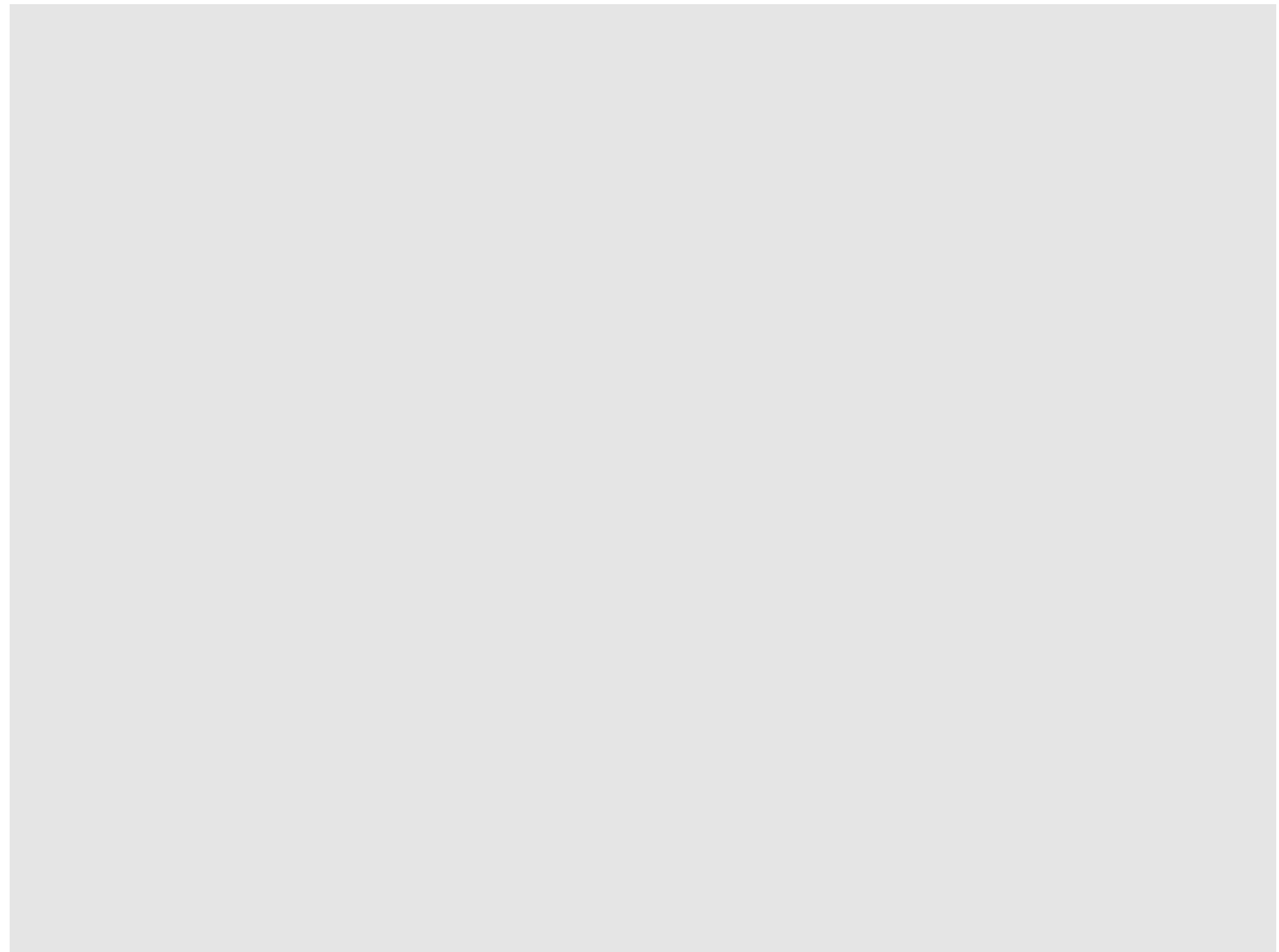
Bratcher said he completed 105 credit hours in the last two academic years, including winter and summer terms, “and that’s in addition to working and having a family.”

“If I can do it, you can, too,” he said. “If you’re here tonight, and you have dreams of going to graduate school, you can make it happen — just use the resources available to you, don’t make excuses and commit to doing whatever it takes to achieve your goal.

“For the faculty and staff here, I thank you so much. I can’t tell you how much your encouragement has meant to me.”

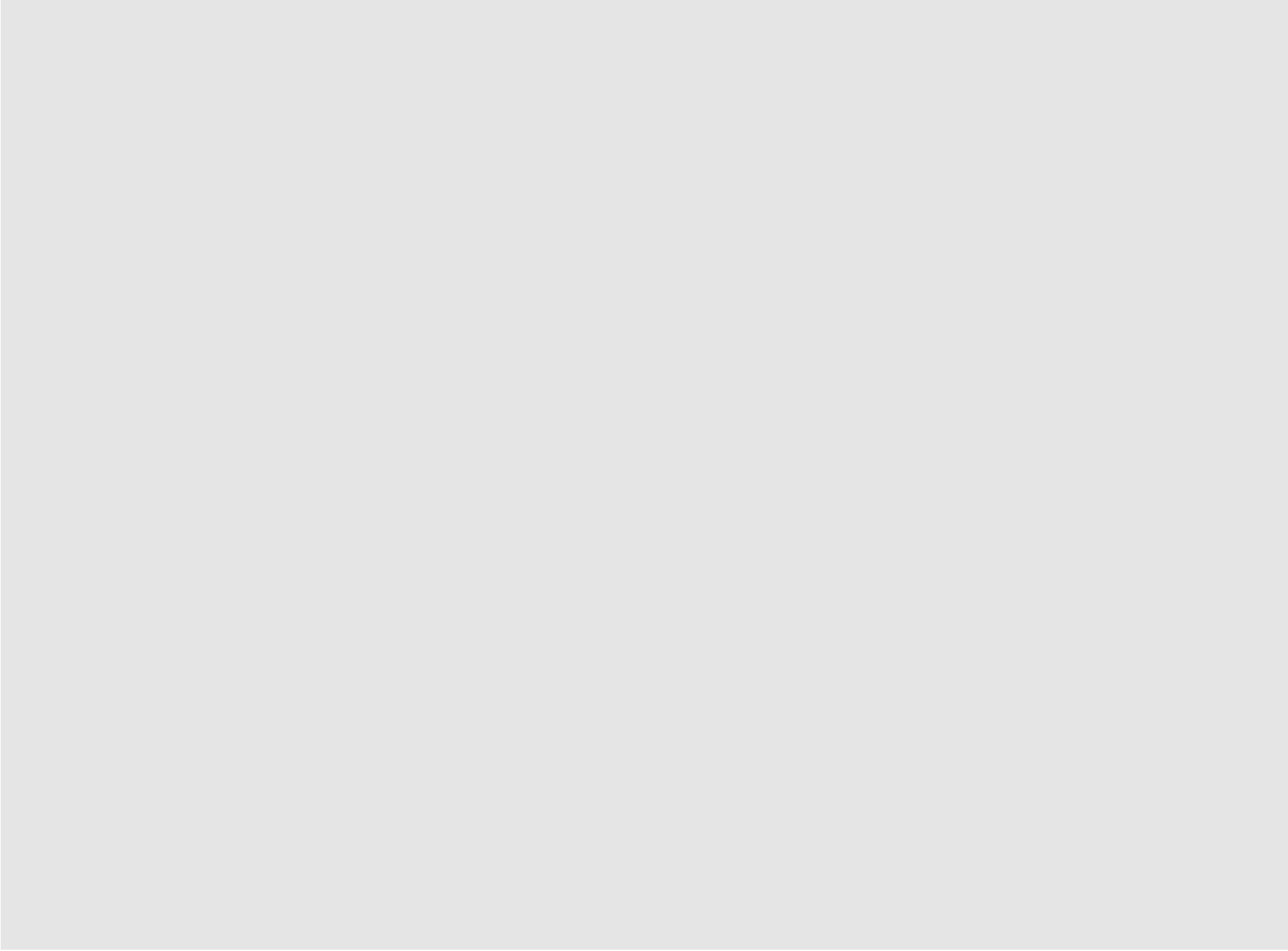
Bratcher said while he faced adversity and struggled at times, he persevered to get his diploma and is now set to attend law school.

“I did it, and so can you.”



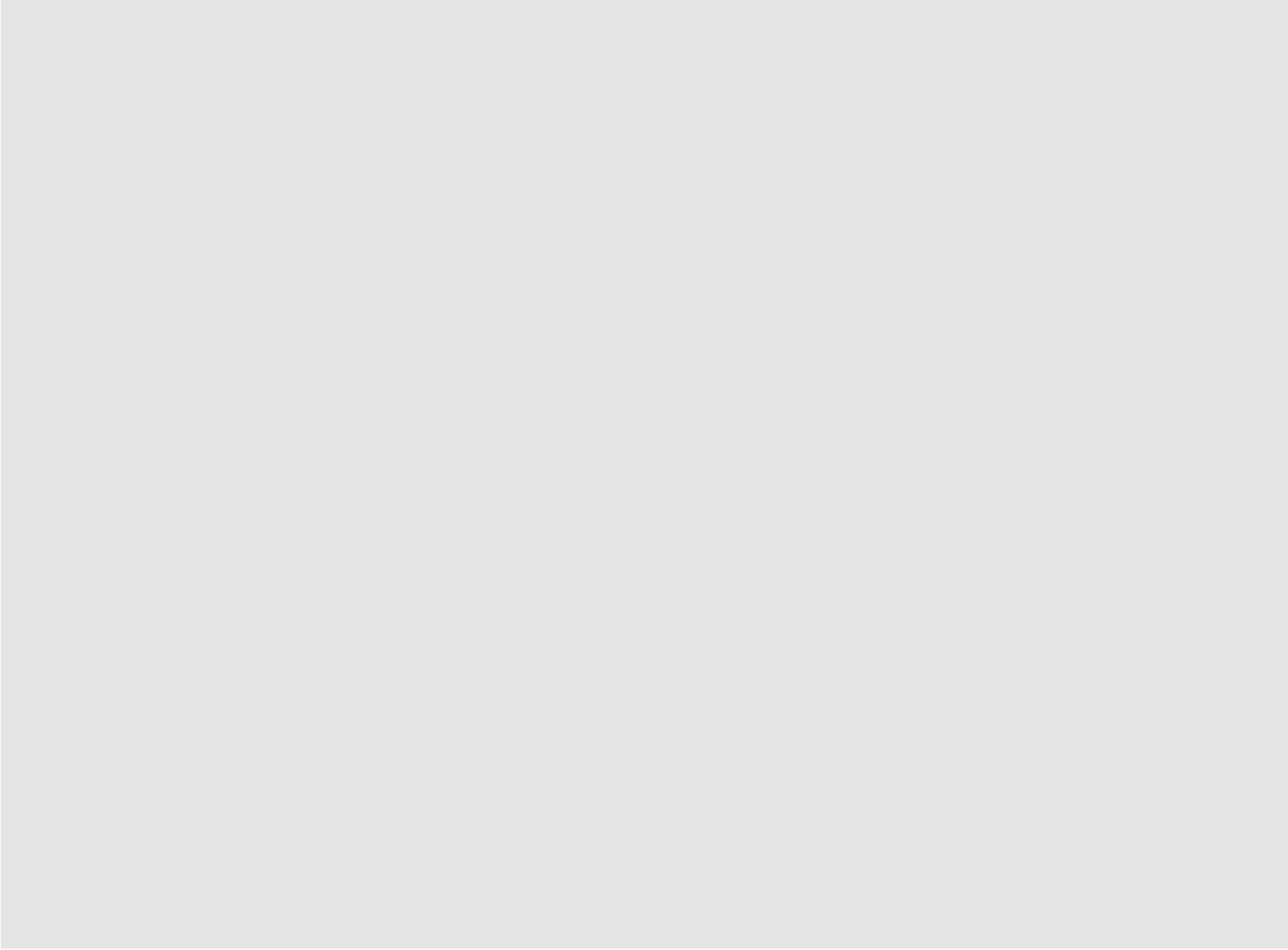
Community members listen to graduate Thomas Bratcher’s keynote address during the Fall 2018 Graduation Ceremony on Thursday evening at Western Kentucky University-Glasgow.

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