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## Graduation marks start of new chapter for WKU students

KATHERINE KNOTT The News-Enterprise May 15, 2018 Updated 10 hrs ago



Western Kentucky University students march Monday night into the Hardin County Schools Performing Arts Center at John Hardin High School as they take part in commencement ceremonies for the WKU Elizabethtown-Fort Knox campus.

NEAL CARDIN/The News-Enterprise

Red towels were waving Monday night inside Hardin County Schools Performing Arts Center at John Hardin High School as Western Kentucky University students celebrated their graduation.

Faculty and staff from the WKU-Elizabethtown and Fort Knox campuses recognized 50 graduates during a commencement ceremony. About 98 students were eligible for graduation.

Beth Laves, associate vice president in the Division of Extended Learning and Outreach, led graduation. She said it was her first time leading a commencement ceremony.

“I’m an adult learner, too,” she said.

Laves and the Division of Extended Learning and Outreach now are overseeing the university’s three regional campuses as part of a management change announced earlier this year. The division’s focus is on adult learners in the region and bringing WKU’s educational resources to more Kentuckians.

Laves told students the ceremony not only marked the conclusion of their degree, but also the start of a new phase.

“Make the world in which we live a better place for all,” she said to them.

Laves said graduation is the highlight of the year for her.

“To see all of these non-traditional students getting their university degrees, it’s absolutely amazing and inspiring to see them,” she said. “It’s such an achievement in their lives.”

Laves said she hoped the graduation would inspire more students to complete their degrees.

“My favorite part is looking each graduate in the face and getting to tell them congratulations,” she said. “There’s so much joy and happiness.”

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## **Katherine Knott**

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