Notre Dame College created several new customs this commencement. In addition to celebrating the largest undergraduate class with two separate degree ceremonies, the College presented its first Mission Award.

Laurie Mae Shorts and Daniel Gambrell Jr. were honored for persisting through uncommon circumstances and displaying personal maturity by means of their education at the College.

The Mission Award joins the traditional Sr. Mary Agnes Bosche Award, presented this year to Allison Merten, and the St. Mary LeFroy Finn Award, bestowed to Mark Principle. Both are awarded to undergraduates. The St. Catherine of Alexandria Award, which recognizes a student graduating with a master’s degree, was given to Anna Ball.

Nominees, presenters and others in the extended College community share their accolades for the 2018 commencement award winners.

A man undoubtedly defines what one would consider a successful leader both in the classroom and on the field. I have always known Anna to go above and beyond what is required and far exceed anyone’s expectations.

Jillian Seigl, assistant coach, Notre Dame football

Mark shows a keen inquisitiveness in all he abhors. He studies no matter the discipline and demonstrates a passion to excel in his graphic design major. He understands dedication, perseverance and curiosity, and he balances these attributes with a keen sense of humor.

Mary Ann Schreiber, PhD, dean of the Finn Center for Adult, Graduate and Professional Programs and professor of education at Notre Dame

A large man with a larger heart, Daniel carried five classes and an internship in his final semester and maintained a GPA of nearly 3.0, even during football season when the draw on his time and strength were exhaustive.

Notre Dame College Commencement Program

Serving others is what Laurie does. During her time at Notre Dame, she was involved in many activities that touched the lives of fellow students, all levels of the Notre Dame community and, through her involvement in theatre and music, the broader community as well.

Notre Dame College Commencement Program

Throughout all he has done on and off the field, Daniel demonstrates the mission of the College in his life, his maturity and his acceptance of responsibility.

Notre Dame College President Thomas G. Kruczak

One of Anna’s strengths is her ability to adapt to any situation and her ability to work successfully with a variety of individuals. She is able to see the strengths in her teammates and peers, and as a student, applied her knowledge and understanding of the students to assist them and shape their success.

From Arch, Ed.D, Notre Dame associate professor of professional education

Allison’s commitment to enacting the values and obligations of the nursing profession are evident in everything she does with her classmates, her mentors and teachers and, most importantly, in her care of patients and their families. She has demonstrated an uncommon courage in her commitment to the standards of professional practice as a patient advocate and has been commended by nursing leaders for her professional demeanor in this regard.

Nichole P. Salmi, PhD, assistant professor of nursing and associate professor of psychology

A man pushes student athletes on the road to growing up and maturing. She creates opportunities for her players to learn tough lessons. Neither goal nor better is enough; she wants her players to be the best on the field—and as young women learning to be young leaders.

Hershey Brand, PhD, Notre Dame assistant professor of education and director of graduate programs

Allison has fulfilled all of her commitments with a generous spirit and an understanding that shehe cherishes and encourages those who work with her.

J. Patricia McCarthy, PhD, chair of the Notre Dame Division of Nursing

Mark has great leadership skills and inspires others to be leaders in the news as well. He does this by example. He alludes his students to get the job done, coach and encouraging others to work as well.

Rachel Harris, MA, Notre Dame associate professor of philosophy

Allison has fulfilled all of her commitments with a generous spirit and an understanding that the cherishes and encourages those who work with her.