

# POINT PARK UNIVERSITY

For Immediate Release

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## **Arthur Blum, instrumental in the founding of Point Park, to be presented with honorary degree at Commencement**

-- Outstanding students Katy Thompson, Josh Croup to address graduates --

**PITTSBURGH, PA – Arthur M. Blum**, the second president of Point Park who was prominent in the founding of the University, will receive an honorary degree at this year's Commencement. When Blum was named president in 1967 he was, at age 34, the youngest college president in the United States.

**Jim Ice**, managing director and owner of jim ice & associates, will give the keynote address at the 2018 Hooding and Degree Conferral.

### **Hooding and Degree Conferral**

The Hooding Ceremony will be at 9 a.m. Saturday, April 28 at PPG Paints Arena. Doors open at 7:30 a.m.

Keynote speaker Jim Ice is a trusted adviser to business leaders for more than 30 years, designing and implementing programs to improve individual and organizational performance and companies such as Westinghouse, Respironics, Allegheny Energy and Alcoa. In 2017, Ice was a member of the first class of graduates from Point Park's Ed.D. program in Leadership and Administration.

"As a student, Jim came to Point Park in the midst of a long and successful career in business. We're honored that he thought highly enough of our doctoral program to return to the classroom," said Paul Hennigan, president of Point Park. "Someone with his depth of experience and desire to learn is the perfect type of person to speak to our region's future leaders."

In addition, **Katy Thompson** will give the Outstanding Graduate Student Address. Thompson earned her bachelor's degree in Intelligence and National Security at Point Park in three years, then continued into a one-year graduate program in Environmental Studies.

"My field of interest is food insecurity and sustainable agriculture," Thompson said. "The idea is that, when populations have their basic needs met – food, clean water, shelter – the society is stabilized, resulting in lower crime and thriving communities."

Thompson will travel to Uganda this summer to work with a nonprofit called Development in Gardening. The organization works with vulnerable populations, teaching sustainable agriculture and organic farming, while promoting gender equity, empowerment, community and financial independence.

**Heather Starr Fiedler**, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Community Engagement and professor of Multimedia, will serve as Grand Marshal. It is expected that 335 students will receive graduate degrees from across 18 master's programs offered at the University. In addition, 12 students will receive Doctor of Education degrees in Leadership and Administration.

### **Commencement Ceremony**

Commencement will be at 12:30 p.m. Saturday, April 28, at PPG Paints Arena. Doors open at 11 a.m.

Honorary degree recipient Arthur M. Blum was the second president of Point Park University and prominent in the founding of Point Park. A corporate secretary of the Business Training College, Blum managed the process and legal obligations required by the state of Pennsylvania to issue the charter for Point Park Junior College in 1960.

He served as director of admissions and executive vice president in the early 1960s. Following the retirement of founding President Dorothy Finkelhor, he was named Point Park's second president in 1967. At age 34, he was the youngest college president, serving until 1973.

"Arthur helped nurture many new academic programs at Point Park, including the dramatic arts," Hennigan said. "The creation of that program led the University to acquire the Pittsburgh Playhouse in 1968. It's gratifying that, 50 years later, Arthur can witness the birth of the new Pittsburgh Playhouse."

**Josh Croup**, graduating with a degree in Broadcast Reporting, will give the Outstanding Graduating Senior Address. While at Point Park, Croup has served as editor-in-chief of The Globe and news/sports director of U-View Television, while also working with the Pirates, Penguins, AT&T SportsNet, the NHL Network and WQED, among others. He won the 2017 Mid-Atlantic Emmy Award for College/University Talent, and will work as a news anchor after graduation.

"It's hard to put into words how much Point Park has meant to me over the last four years," Croup said. "The experiences I gained inside and outside the classroom were invaluable and have undoubtedly jump-started my career."

**George Bromall**, professor of Business Management, will serve as the Grand Marshal. It is expected that 711 students will graduate, with degrees in 55 different majors.

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*Founded in 1960, Point Park University, a [College of Distinction](#), is a dynamic, urban university with a strong liberal arts tradition. Located in Downtown Pittsburgh, Point Park enrolls more than 4,000 full- and part-time students in more than 100 undergraduate and graduate programs offered through the School of Arts and Sciences, Rowland School of Business, School of Communication and Conservatory of Performing Arts. Visit [PointPark.edu](#) to learn more.*