

[Miami-Dade County](#) - May 2, 2015

Life lesson from grandmother graduating from MDC: ‘Learning is wonderful’



Never too late to learn: Rosa Salgado graduated Saturday from Miami Dade College along with two of her grandchildren — David and Mauricio. | Roberto Koltun El Nuevo Herald

By Lance Dixon - ldixon@MiamiHerald.com

After years of studies, hard work and dedication, thousands of graduates will cross stages, receive diplomas and shake hands this month at colleges across South Florida.

While the majority of them will be young adults preparing to enter the job world or go on to graduate school, others are older, even senior citizens. Such is Rosa Salgado, who graduated Saturday from Miami Dade College’s Wolfson campus, fulfilling a lifelong dream and graduating with two of her grandchildren — David and Mauricio Salgado.

“My grandchildren, my family, they’ve grown up watching my activity and they are going to learn and fight in life and overcome obstacles,” said Salgado, who graduated with honors, earning an associate of arts in education. She is nearly 80.

Salgado received her diploma in one of five graduation ceremonies Miami Dade College held Saturday for its many campuses.

Salgado, a short woman with a wide smile who carries her supplies in a rolling book bag, began her studies at Miami Dade College about a year after moving to Miami from Colombia in 1995. She started in the college's English for Academic Purposes program in 1996, and after that began her studies as a full-time student.

One of her former professors, Sara Bulnes, said Salgado's grasp of English was limited — but her drive to learn was not.

"When she came into my classroom her English was very limited and she struggled to learn the language, but she persevered," Bulnes said.

Bulnes said Salgado became an inspiration to so many students because of her cheerful demeanor and her dedication to her studies despite obstacles.

"She had some personal setbacks and she beat them all and she's here graduating," Bulnes said. "I'm very proud of her."

Salgado had to put her full-time studies on hold and limit her coursework on various occasions on her path to earning her degree. The most notable hardship was in 2005 when her youngest daughter was in an accident that left her in a coma.

She now carries pictures of her family with her, photos of various family gatherings and high school graduations.

She also has pictures of her working in the college's Early Childhood Center, caring for toddlers and infants. Teaching and being around young people are among her passions. Salgado said she enjoys writing poetry and painting pictures for the children in the center.

"I'm so happy when I'm working with the infants," Salgado said.

Salgado said she isn't sure what the future holds for her education. She wants to continue her studies — saying she loves learning about science, nature and computers—but said the financial burden and the physical toll has made things difficult.

"It's difficult to study because I don't have the money and I have to take care of my health," Salgado said.

Finances and student loan debt remain one of the main concerns for college graduates; a 2014 Institute for College Access and Success report showed that about 70 percent of 2013 graduates left school with nearly \$30,000 in debt. Also U.S. Department of Education data show that student loan debt was nearly \$1.2 trillion as of the first quarter of 2015.

Despite those figures, some reports suggest a positive outlook for the class of 2015 as graduates enter the job market. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers 2011-15 job outlook report, employers plan to hire about 9.6 percent more graduates this year compared with 2014. And a CareerBuilder.com survey said employers plan to hire 65 percent of new college graduates this year.

The survey said employers are looking to hire computer and information sciences graduates, and nearly 50 percent of them plan to offer salaries from \$30,000 to \$50,000.

So as thousands turn their tassels, their post-graduate paths appear to be more optimistic than those of previous graduates. And they can look to students like Rosa Salgado as proof that whether you're a 22-year-old graduate or an 80-year-old grandmother, there are multiple paths to success.

"I would say to students, young, old or in the middle, that every day they have to fight to learn because learning is wonderful," Salgado said. "And I know there are a lot of things I still have to learn."

Upcoming College Graduations

Florida International University

All ceremonies at the FIU Arena on the Modesto A. Maidique campus, 11200 SW 8th St.

9:30 a.m. May 3: Schools of: Architecture and the Arts; Education

2 p.m. May 3: Undergraduate School of Business

6:30 p.m. May 3: Graduate School of Business, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management

10 a.m. May 4: Schools of: Medicine; Public Health and Social Work; Nursing and Health Sciences

7:30 p.m. May 4: Schools of: Journalism and Mass Communication; Engineering and Computing

10 a.m. May 5: School of Environment, Arts and Society, School of International and Public Affairs (Masters and Ph.D)

3 p.m. May 5: School of International and Public Affairs (Undergraduate)

7:30 p.m. May 5: School of Integrated Science and Humanity

Broward College

3 p.m. May 5 at the BB&T Center, 1 Panther Pkwy.

University of Miami

All ceremonies at the BankUnited Center, 1245 Dauer Dr.

4 p.m. May 7: Graduate degrees

8:30 a.m. May 8: College of Arts and Sciences and Continuing Studies

1 p.m. May 8: Schools of: Architecture, Communication, Education and Human Development, Marine and Atmospheric Science, Music, Nursing and Health Studies

5 p.m. May 8: Schools of: Business Administration, Engineering

10 a.m. May 9: School of Law

5 p.m. May 9: Miller School of Medicine

Nova Southeastern University

Both ceremonies at the The Arena at the Don Taft University Center, 3301 College Ave.

10 a.m. May 8: College of Arts and Sciences, School of Education, School of Business and Entrepreneurship, Institute for the Study of Human Service, Health and Justice

4 p.m. May 8: College of Healthcare Science, College of Nursing, Career Students

Barry University

Both ceremonies will be held at the James L. Knight Center, 400 SE 2nd Ave.

10 a.m. May 9: College of Nursing and Health Sciences, School of Education, School of Social Work

2:30 p.m. May 9: College of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, School of Human Performance and Leisure Sciences, School of Professional and Career Education.

St. Thomas University

Both ceremonies at the school's Fernandez Family Center, 16401 NW 37th Ave.

10 a.m. May 16: School of Law

2 p.m. May 16: Main campus ceremony

Johnson and Wales University

10 a.m. May 23 at the James L. Knight Center, 400 SE 2nd Ave.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article20119143.html#storylink=cpy>