During the May 14 graduate degree ceremony, the University bestowed honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degrees upon former provost (2000-07) Donna Marie Randall, PhD, chief executive officer of the Cancer Prevention Institute of California; and Miriam Therese “M.T.” Winter, PhD who joined the Hartford Seminary in 1980 to establish a department of liturgy, worship, and spirituality.

Randall gave the Commencement address and told the graduates, “Your integrity will define your reputation and your reputation is the most important asset you will bring to your personal and professional life.” She went on to explain that people follow those they trust and implored the students to choose the right path.

At undergraduate Commencement on May 15, keynote speaker Kennedy Owiti Odede, internationally recognized social entrepreneur and CEO of Shining Hope for Communities (SHOFCO), said, “At some point in all of our lives, there is a moment when you’re at a crossroads. You can continue on the path you’ve always known—whether good or bad—or you can take the path of the unknown, the one that will likely change your life.”

A former street child who lived most of his life in one of Africa’s largest slums in Nairobi, Kenya, Odede founded SHOFCO to combat extreme poverty and gender inequality by linking free schools for girls to a set of high-value, holistic community services for all.

Odede received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. Alan B. Lazowski, chairman, chief operating officer, and founder of Connecticut-based LAZ Parking, received a Doctor of Commercial Science and his father, Philip Lazowski, PhD, rabbi emeritus at Beth Hillel Synagogue in Bloomfield, Conn., and a Holocaust survivor, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters; and Calvin Trillin, New York Times best-selling author and a writer for The New Yorker for more than 50 years, received an honorary Doctor of Letters.

Sunday’s Commencement included the presentation of awards to several faculty members for their achievements:
Susan Coleman, professor of finance, Barney School of Business
Humphrey R. Tonkin Award for Scholarly and/or Artistic Creativity

Mark Blackwell, professor of English, College of Arts and Sciences (A&S)
Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Award for Sustained Service to the University

Raymond McGivney, professor of mathematics, A&S
University Medal for Distinguished Service

Sarah Senk, assistant professor of English and modern languages, A&S
Donald W. Davis All-University Curriculum Award

Jessica Nicklin, associate professor of psychology, A&S
Belle K. Ribicoff Endowed Professorship

Eoin King, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture, Belle K. Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize