



Hasu Shah to Deliver Central Penn College 2012 Commencement Address

Honorary doctorate degrees to be conferred to Hasu Shah and Nancy Chavez

SUMMERDALE, Pa., March 19, 2012 – Community leader and philanthropist Hasu Shah, founder and chairman of Hersha Hospitality Trust, will deliver the May 4 commencement address at Central Penn College's 130th commencement ceremony, President Todd A. Milano announced today. Shah, of Camp Hill, Pa., and community advocate Nancy Chavez, of Mechanicsburg, Pa., will receive honorary doctorate degrees from the college. The 2012 class of more than 500 eligible bachelor's and associate degree students are from Central Penn's Harrisburg, Lancaster and Lehigh Valley locations, as well as its bachelor's degree completion programs with McCann School of Business & Technology campuses.

"Hasu Shah's amazing entrepreneurial spirit, work ethic and core values provide an inspiration for Central Penn graduates as they begin the journey of turning their potential into career success," says President Todd A. Milano.

Shah founded the Hersha Group with the purchase of a single hotel in Harrisburg, Pa., in 1984. In the last 25 years, Shah has developed, owned, or managed nearly 100 hotels across the United States and started affiliated businesses in general construction, purchasing and hotel management. These companies include Hersha Purchasing and Design, Hersha Development Company and Hersha Hospitality Management, L.P. Shah has served as chairman of Hersha Hospitality Trust since its inception in 1998. He has served on the board of directors for Graystone Tower Bank and Montour Bank, corporations which he also cofounded.

In 2010, Hasu and his wife, Hersha, received the prestigious Tocqueville Award from the United Way for their outstanding humanitarian efforts locally and around the world. Among other awards, Shah has earned the Entrepreneur of the Year award given by Ernst & Young LLP and the Creating a Voice award given by Project IMPACT, honoring South Asian American community leaders. Shah and his wife are active members of the local community and are involved with charitable initiatives in India.

Locally, he has served on the nonprofit boards of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities, Holy Spirit Hospital, American Red Cross of the Susquehanna Valley, Capital Region Chamber of Commerce and the Minority Purchasing Council of Central Pennsylvania. Shah is a founding member of the Harrisburg Riverboat Society. He has been an active Rotarian for nearly 25 years and continues to serve as a trustee of several community service and spiritual organizations.

In 2005, the Shah's donated the necessary funds to develop a hospital in Gujarat, India, which now bears their name. Also that year, the Shah's established the Shree Krishna Foundation to provide eyesight to one million disadvantaged blind people living in India. The Shah's are founding members of Human Enrichment by Love and Peace (HELP), which began in 1993 as an organization to aid the homeless in India, but has grown to provide vital prescription drugs and disaster relief services to those in need in India and Africa. Both HELP and the Shah's assisted those affected by major earthquakes in India in 1994, 2001 and the 2006 tsunami.



Shah received a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Tennessee Technical University and earned a master's degree in administration from The Pennsylvania State University, which named him as an alumni fellow. He is an alumnus of the Owner and President's Management program at the Harvard Business School. In 2010, he received an honorary doctorate degree of public service from HACC. Shah resides in Camp Hill, Pa.

Shah and Nancy Chavez, a community advocate for various programs and issues, specifically domestic violence, will receive honorary doctorate degrees from Central Penn College at the commencement ceremony. The honorary doctorate is conferred upon individuals whose intellectual, spiritual, and cultural values have contributed significantly to society and the community at large.

While working full time with the state government and raising a child as a single parent, Chavez pursued her college education at night for fifteen years. She graduated from HACC and The Pennsylvania State University with a bachelor's degree in business management and a master's degree in public administration, with a concentration in planning and development, respectively.

Chavez currently serves as director of the Pennsylvania Weed and Seed Program within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, a law enforcement /community revitalization effort targeting medium-size Pennsylvania communities whose inner cities are plagued by crime, violence and relative social deterioration. She has served in different capacities in state government over her 30-year tenure, including: program manager for the Governor's Project for Community Building, Department of Community and Economic Development; executive assistant and agency liaison to the Secretary of General Services; manager of the Small Business Resource Center, Department of Community and Economic Development; and administrator for the Pennsylvania Minority Business Authority, Department of Commerce.

She was credited for publishing a comprehensive "Entrepreneur's Guide: Starting and Growing a Business in Pennsylvania," which outlines the stages of small business development for Pennsylvania, and published a comprehensive directory of service providers to educate economic development staff on community-based technical assistance.

Chavez serves the community in advocating for issues of domestic violence and sensitivity toward victims. She was twice a victim of domestic violence, experiencing seven and half years of an abusive marriage and the violent murder of her daughter, Randi Trimble, on January 10, 2003. She has successfully organized Randi's Race, a 5K Run/Walk for Hope and Courage in honor of her daughter, and over the last three years has raised more than \$189,000 for a local domestic violence service agency.

She has been highlighted as one of the "Thirty Remarkable Women: Making Domestic Violence History," sponsored by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. On behalf of the Pennsylvania Commission for Women, Chavez was selected among 150 women across Pennsylvania and featured in "Voices," a publication of the Governor's Commission for Women featuring African American and Latina women. Chavez is currently writing a personal memoir about her daughter's life. The proceeds will support the establishment of Randi's House of Angels, a nonprofit organization that will be a healing place for children who are exposed to, and victims of, domestic violence



She serves on several boards and currently is the vice chair for the Institute for Cultural Partnerships and past chair of the Cumberland County Commission for Women. Chavez and her family were the first Hispanic family to reside in Mechanicsburg, Pa., where they reside to this day.

According to Central Penn's most recent One-Year Graduate Survey, 83.7 percent of the college's graduates were employed in their chosen field or continuing their education within one year of graduation. The Central Penn College commencement ceremony will begin at 8 p.m., Friday, May 4 at the Forum, located at 5th and Walnut Streets, Harrisburg. Tickets are required for admission.

Central Penn College has been helping students turn potential into career success since 1881, offering bachelor's and associate degrees in the fields of accounting, business administration, criminal justice, information technology, communications, healthcare, homeland security and legal studies. The College, currently serving students at its Harrisburg, Lancaster and Lehigh Valley locations, attributes its high rate of student success to a caring faculty and its hands-on learning approach. Based on Central Penn's most recent One-Year Graduate Survey, 83.7 percent of graduates were employed in their chosen field or continuing their education within one year of graduation. Central Penn College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104 (267-284-5000). The Middle States Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. www.centralpenn.edu

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