

University of Notre Dame

News and Information

ND Newswire

NBC's Tim Russert replaces Fox as Commencement speaker

DENNIS BROWN • DATE: APRIL 29, 2002

Tim Russert, moderator of "Meet the Press" and the Washington bureau chief of NBC News, will deliver the principal address at the University of Notre Dame's 157th Commencement exercises May 19 (Sunday), replacing the previously announced speaker, Mexican President Vicente Fox.

Mexican government officials told the University Fox was unable to attend because of political circumstances within Mexico.

"Tim Russert has been on our list of potential Commencement speakers for some time and, though we didn't anticipate having him join us in this way, we're delighted and grateful that he will serve as our speaker and receive an honorary doctor of laws degree," said Rev. Edward A. Malloy, C.S.C., Notre Dame's president.

"While we are disappointed that President Fox will be unable to attend, we also know that Mr. Russert will provide our graduates with an inspiring and insightful address."

Russert spoke at Notre Dame in November 2000 to inaugurate the Jack Kelly and Gail Weiss Lecture Series on Journalism and Politics. Coming just a week after the contested presidential election, the talk was attended by a standing room only audience.

Russert joined NBC News in 1984 and began moderating "Meet the Press" in December 1991. He has interviewed every major figure on the national political scene on what is the most-watched Sunday morning interview show and the most quoted news program in the world. Now in its 53rd year, "Meet the Press" is the longest running program in television history.

In addition to his duties with "Meet the Press," Russert is the political analyst for NBC's "Nightly News with Tom Brokaw" and "Today" show, senior vice president and Washington bureau chief for NBC News, and a contributing anchor for MSNBC. He also anchors "The Tim Russert Show," a weekly program on CNBC that examines the role of the media in American society.

Prior to joining NBC, Russert worked as a special counsel in the U.S. Senate and in New York state government.

The recipient of 22 honorary degrees and numerous journalism awards, Russert has been named one of the top 100 Irish Americans in the United States by Irish America magazine and has received "Father of Year" awards from the National Father's Day Committee and Parents magazine. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Greater Washington Boys and Girls Club and of America's Promise-Alliance for Youth.

A graduate of John Carroll University, Russert earned his law degree from the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law and is a member of the bar in New York and the District of Columbia. He and his wife, Maureen Orth, a writer for Vanity Fair magazine, live in Washington, D.C., with their son Luke.

Notre Dame's Commencement exercises will include the presentation of honorary degrees to 11 other distinguished figures and of the Laetare Medal to Rev. John P. Smyth, executive director of Maryville Academy in Des Plaines, Ill., and a 1957 Notre Dame graduate. The Laetare Medal is the oldest and most prestigious honor given to American Catholics.

For more information about Commencement ceremonies, please visit the Office of the Registrar's Commencement homepage at: <http://www.nd.edu/~ndreg/commencement.shtml>

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