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# Daniel Cannity, of Westfield, graduates from American International College and honors mom's wishes

Published: Sunday, May 23, 2010, 1:16 PM Updated: Sunday, May 23, 2010, 7:09 PM



Elizabeth Roman, The Republican

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The Republican / Michael S. Gordon

May 23, 2010 - Springfield - Republican staff photo by Michael S. Gordon - Daniel J. Cannity of Westfield smiles before receiving his diploma and graduating summa cum laude Sunday from American International College in a ceremony at the MassMutual Center.

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SPRINGFIELD – When Daniel J. Cannity, of Westfield, accepted his bachelor's degree in sociology Sunday he knew he was fulfilling his goals, but also his mother's.

"It was very important to her that I graduate," said Cannity, who lost his mom to breast cancer in December of 2009.

Cannity was one of more than 1,000 students to earn advanced and undergraduate degrees during American International College's 125th commencement ceremony held at the MassMutual Center.

Like many students Cannity had many responsibilities besides his studies, but taking care of his mom became a priority after she was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer in February of 2009.

"It was very hard and a lot of times I would go see her in the hospital at 6 a.m. and offer to stay the whole day, but she would say I had to go to class," he said. "It was important to her that I finish."

In the fall Cannity, who graduated summa cum laude, will go on to the University of Massachusetts Amherst where he has been accepted into the doctorate degree program. He was awarded an exclusive fellowship with the sociology doctorate program at the school.

Cannity credits sociology professor Theodore Thornhill and former professor Linda Bertrand with helping him along the way.

"They have been very supportive of me and helped me get to this point," he said.

The graduation ceremony included speeches by the college president Vincent M. Mancini, class valedictorian and hockey player Dean S. Yakura, student government president Darren James and Harold Robles, co-founder and president of the Medical Knowledge Institute (MKI), an international non-profit organization based in the Netherlands that focuses on education and provides information from the conviction and healthcare is a human right.

James told fellow graduates to celebrate their success even if they are entering a difficult job market.

"We are graduating in less than optimal times for jobs, for continuing your education, for sticking to our course of action. But we are not graduating in a time when success is unattainable because we are successful today."

Indera Daniels, of Springfield, graduated with a degree in special education. She said the small classes and dedication of her professors helped her get to where she is today.

"Being a smaller school you get to know your professors and they really encourage you," she said.

Daniels hopes to work with children who have autism.

"I met people here from all around the world. I had a great experience at the college," she said.

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Photo provided by American International College  
Harold Robles, co-founder and president of the Medical Knowledge Institute.

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