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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Heritage University Celebrates Graduates at Commencement**

TOPPENISH – Heritage University will hold its 27<sup>th</sup> commencement exercise on Saturday, May 8 at 10:00 a.m. on the Toppenish campus. About 157 students will participate in this year's ceremony, including undergraduate and graduate students from the Toppenish campus and from regional locations across the state. Overall 303 students earned their degrees at Heritage this year.

Incoming Heritage President Dr. John Bassett will present the keynote address. Dr. Bassett currently serves as president of Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts; a position he has held since 2000. Prior to his career at Clark, Dr. Bassett was the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and professor of English at Case Western Reserve in Cleveland from 1993-2000. He is a scholar and teacher of American literature and has published 11 books and more than 30 professional articles, including a new annotated bibliography of recent criticism on William Faulkner. He is a nationally recognized leader in higher education and currently chair of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Heritage alumna Francisco Guerrero, a graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration in 2007, will be honored with the Violet Lumley Rau Outstanding Alumni Award during the ceremony. This award is given annually to an alumnus who represents the values of the University in his or her life and

the community. Additionally, University officials will announce the recipients of the Board of Directors' Academic Excellence Award and the President's Council Student Award of Distinction. These awards are each given to a graduating Heritage student who maintain at least a 3.00 GPA, made a contribution to the betterment of Heritage, and had an active interest in student affairs.

Heritage University is located at 3240 Fort Road in Toppenish. Parking for the event is limited.

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Heritage University is a non-profit, independent, regionally accredited institution of higher education offering undergraduate and graduate education across the state of Washington.