State College of Florida holds first commencement

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STATE COLLEGE OF FLORIDA

BRADENTON — State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota winter commencement exercises were held Friday evening in the Neel Performing Arts Center at SCF Bradenton — the first under SCF’s new name.

Out of 776 students eligible for graduation, 231 were expected to participate in the ceremonies.

Cathleen Cornish of Englewood was the recipient of the Outstanding Graduate Award, presented to a student who has shown superior leadership, academic achievement and community service while attending SCF. Cornish has been active in the college and community as a Phi Theta Kappa vice president of fellowship, coordinating a recent Venice Main Street “Go Green” Service Project. She also has served as a mentor for Family Support Groups and intern for Women’s Resource Center of Sarasota County. Cornish, who has been accepted into the Program for Experienced Learners at Eckerd College, plans to study humanities, human development and religion.

Other Outstanding Graduate Award finalists were Elisha Byerly, Terrance Marshall, Rafael Gonzalez and Laura Shade.

The evening’s guest speaker was Steve Shenbaum, a former actor and president and founder of game on Media Inc., based at IMG Academies.

The creative communication company uses role-playing techniques to help professional athletes, teams and corporations improve communication and confidence. Shenbaum travels the world leading seminars and speaking to teams and organizations, emphasizing honesty and humility through improvisations.

Shenbaum earned a degree in theater and performance from Northwestern University and has trained at the British American Drama Academy in Oxford, England.

The President’s Award of Distinction was presented to SCF alumni Rose Carlson and John W. Schaub III.

Carlson, a graduate of the University of Texas, is vice president and general manager of Bright House Networks, Manatee Region. A third generation native of Manatee County, she has a long history of service to the community in leadership positions including a gubernatorial appointment to the SCF College District Board of Trustees and a term on the SCF Foundation Board of Directors.

Schaub, a graduate of the University of Florida, is president of Florida Coast Realty of Sarasota, a real estate investment company. He has authored three books, published by McGraw Hill, on investing in property. He is the past president of Habitat for Humanity Sarasota and has served on Habitat’s International Board of Directors. He is currently the president of the State College of Florida Foundation.

Manatee Community College was renamed State College of Florida in July.

The school’s new alma mater, with music and lyrics by Dr. Jack Crocker and arrangement by Rex Willis and Melodie Dickerson, was also performed for the first time Friday.