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FAU HAILS GRADUATES AS PEERS, KIN CHEER: [SOUTH Edition]

LONA O'CONNOR Palm Beach Post Staff Writer. **Palm Beach Post** [West Palm Beach, Fla] 07 May 2005: 1C.

Abstract (summary) Translate [unavailable for this document]

There were plenty of others in the stroller set to witness the first of three FAU graduation ceremonies on Friday, joining parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, spouses and sweethearts. [Frank Brogan] acknowledged them all for their supporting roles in the graduates' lives. Brogan, who has a twin brother, got a particularly hearty round of applause when he gave special notice to the group he said was the most misunderstood of all, brothers and sisters.

As the graduates filed onto the gym floor, the FAU Wind Ensemble played the familiar strains of Edward Elgar's classic graduation processional Pomp and Circumstance about eight times by trombonist Chris Corriston's count. By the end of the day, he expected to have played it through another 16 times. He and the rest of the ensemble and FAU chorus were committed to performing at all three FAU graduations.

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Ran all editions.

Even though the gym was packed to the rafters, Spring 2005 graduation at Florida Atlantic University still managed to be a family affair.

FAU President Frank Brogan set the tone at the 9 a.m. ceremony by introducing his chubby-cheeked infant son Colby to the crowd, right away, in case the 12-week-old might get fussy later.

But it was unlikely that any baby wails could have been heard above the din of shouts, screams and bleacher-stomping from the enthusiastic crowd. Some brought dinner bells and police whistles for a distinctive sound to catch the ears of their graduates.

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In all, 1,624 FAU students were expected to graduate in the ceremonies, set four hours apart for parking purposes.

Many graduates decorated their mortarboards with hot pink smiley faces or other highly visible motifs to grab the attention of their friends in the nosebleed seats. Winston Ricketts, however, was aiming much higher than the rafters. His hat spelled out "Lillian Ricketts" in honor of his late mother. Ricketts of Delray Beach graduated with a degree in music.

Other families used a combo of cellphones and waves to locate their graduates in the sea of black.

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There were congratulatory speeches, urging the graduates not to forget their alma mater. Brogan singled out a few students for distinction. Through all the usual pomp and circumstance, the crowd maintained a polite decorum.

Corriston leapt out of his spot in the back and shook hands with three of his pals as they filed back. He saluted a forth with a trombone blast. He expects to graduate next fall with a degree in commercial music.

When the last diploma was handed over, the crowd went wild. All the bells, whistles, foot-stomping and screaming combined in a New Year's Eve roar of exuberance. The hugging and kissing, smiles, flowers and balloons, digital cameras and camcorders spilled out into the sunshine.

Ariel Sheen, 22, wore a colorful collection of ribbons and cords signifying academic honors. Sheen of Delray Beach is graduating with an English degree. One of his literary heroes is the Russian novelist Dostoevski, known for his excursions into the darker regions of the human soul.

"I'll probably live a tortured and poor existence like that," joked Sheen, who immediately revised his prediction on the brighter side.

He's headed for a summer writing workshop in Prague and expects to keep body and soul together by writing and teaching.

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Illustration

Caption: photos by CHRIS MATULA 1. Mat Denton (above) embraces his son, Camden, 7 months, after graduation Friday at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. 2. Metsuka Nicolas (right, facing) hugs cousin Patrick Ciceron while cousin Patricia Ciceron (far right) is congratulated by aunt Coairol Bastian. It's likely the university conferred its 100,000th degree during the ceremonies.

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