

News Release

Former Minneapolis Fire Chief and U of M Crookston graduate, James Clack, '80, Current Baltimore, Md., Fire Chief to Address Graduates at Commencement on Saturday, May 8, 2010

By Itollefs on Wednesday, April 7, 2010

The University of Minnesota, Crookston is pleased to announce that Baltimore, Md., Fire Chief James Clack will give the commencement address to the Class of 2010 at exercises to be held on May 8, 2010. A 1980 graduate of the U of M, Crookston, Clack will speak at the 2 p.m. ceremony to be held in the Lysaker Gymnasium. Clack was the Minneapolis fire chief who led the relief effort after the 35W bridge collapse in 2007. Clack, who served with the Minneapolis Fire Department for some 22 years, accepted his current position in Baltimore in 2008.



Born in Crookston, Clack grew up in Fowler, Calif. He attended the U of M, Crookston Technical College, located on what is now the U of M, Crookston, graduating with a degree in general business administration. Clack began as a firefighter in February 1986 and spent five years at Station 11 in southeast Minneapolis on the hazardous materials team. In 1992 he was promoted to captain--where he moved from station to station--and in 1998 he was appointed deputy chief of personnel.

In 2004 he became assistant chief and was officially appointed chief in 2007 after serving as acting chief for about a year. During the August 2007 bridge collapse, Clack and his department played an integral role. For the first 24 hours the Minneapolis Fire Department was the lead agency of the unified command team, making Clack the primary commander of the rescue effort.

"We are excited to have an alumnus address the Class of 2010 at commencement," said Andrew Svec, who co-chairs the commencement committee with colleague, Laurie Wilson. "James Clack's experience gives him a unique perspective on leadership, and he will share his thoughts with the graduating class. We welcome the community to join us to hear him speak and to congratulate the members of this year's graduating class."

Events for the day begin with a reception in the Sargeant Student Center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend the reception and the graduation ceremonies that follow. Commencement will begin with the traditional processional by faculty, staff, and graduates from the student center to Lysaker Gymnasium at 2 p.m.

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers more than 25 bachelor's degree programs and 50 concentrations, including several online degrees, in agriculture and natural resources; arts, humanities and social sciences; business; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of about 1,300 undergraduates, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

Photo of James Clack, above, courtesy of Patrick O'Leary, University of Minnesota, 2008.

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2900 University Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
800-862-6466 | 218-281-6510 | umcinfo@umn.edu

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