

SPECIAL REPORT

CWI honors 1,170 graduates

2015 marks CWI's sixth commencement ceremony

By RUTH BROWN

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BOISE — Kassie Gomer hopes use her new degree to inspire children to read, just as one Boise public librarian inspired her when she was a girl.

Gomer, 39, of Boise, graduated from College of Western Idaho on Saturday, saying she decided to return to school now that she is "almost an empty-nester."

She was one of 1,170 graduates who celebrated in CWI's sixth commencement at the Taco Bell Arena in Boise.

After earning her associate degree in English, Gomer plans to attend Boise State University to study English literature for her bachelor's degree. She also plans to later finish a master's degree and become a librarian.

She still remembers her childhood librarian, who always wore purple and had purple hair.

"She made me love books and introduced me to 'Anne of Green Gables' and Jane Austen and it was wonderful," Gomer said.

CWI boasts the average GPA among students at the school is 3.21, 328 of its grads left the school with honors and 199 of the grads had multiple degrees or certificates. CWI's youngest graduate in 2015 was 17 and



Photos by Adam Eschbach/IPT

College of Western Idaho graduate John DeRoos raises his fist after receiving his diploma at the commencement Saturday in Boise.

the oldest was 62.

Chris Luleff, 38, of Nampa, graduated with a degree as a computer support specialist. He hopes to use his education to eventually start his own business and develop his career.

"I would recommend CWI just because of the flexibility and the teachers' support," Luleff said.

After introductions, CWI President Bert Glandon spoke to the graduates on the importance the goals set to use the education earned.

"Your goal is your North

Star," he said. "(With it), you will find direction even in the darkest of nights."

For 23-year-old Laurena Mukuna, the flexibility of CWI is what helped her finish her degree. Most of her classes were taken online.

Mukuna, of Johannesburg, South Africa, earned an associate degree in criminal justice and plans to attend Boise State University in the spring. She eventually wants to go to law school.

"CWI was what worked best for me at the time I needed it," said Mukuna.



College of Western Idaho graduates wave to their friends and families during the commencement ceremony at Taco Bell Arena.