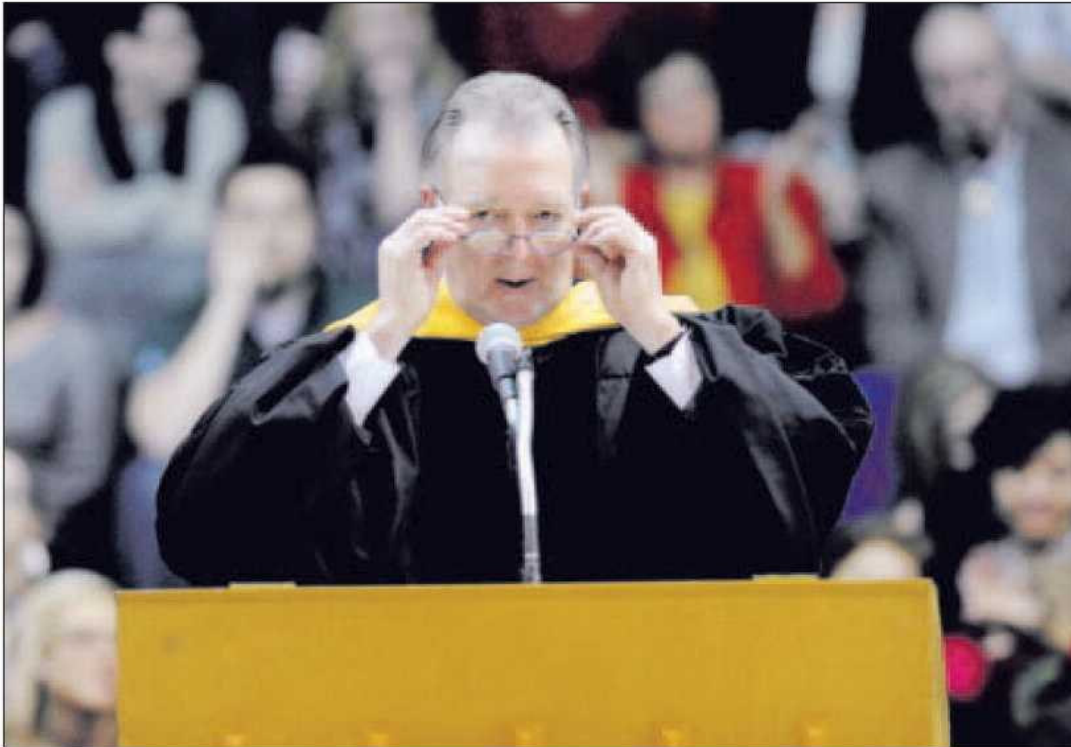


# Western honors attorney at commencement



Matt Reid | St. Joseph News-Press

Dan Boulware speaks during the commencement ceremony Saturday morning at Missouri Western State University. Mr. Boulware received an honorary doctorate from Missouri Western State University.

## Dan Boulware given honorary doctorate of humane letters

By JIMMY MYERS  
St. Joseph News-Press

Dan Boulware took his first job as a lawyer in St. Joseph in 1972. Raised in a small southeast Kansas town, the University of Kansas graduate knew absolutely nobody here.

He was certain he'd get a couple of years in the courtroom underneath him and move on. But he never left.

Much has changed in the 40 years since he arrived. Many

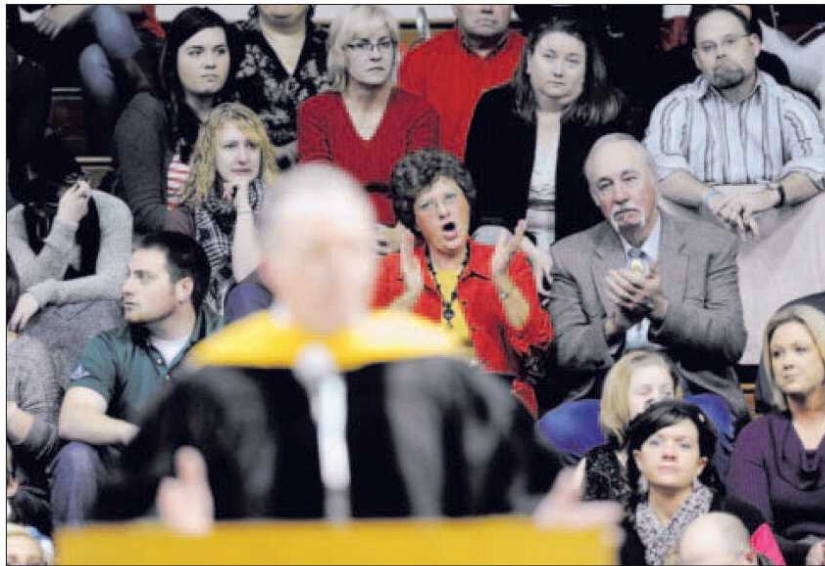
people know his name. And on Saturday, Mr. Boulware received Missouri Western State University's highest honor — an honorary doctorate of humane letters — during the commencement ceremony, where 300-plus students accepted their bachelor's and master's degrees.

He's probably best known as a successful attorney, the managing partner at the Polsinelli/Shughart law firm here. But thousands also know him as the person who introduces the speaker at the Convoca-

tion on Critical Issues, an event at Western that is held in his honor every fall since 1993.

Mr. Boulware's office is plastered with pictures detailing the last four decades; many are from the convocation, where feisty speakers include figures such as Bob Woodward and Colin Powell. One picture near the entrance to his office is of Mr. Boulware and feisty political commentator and former presidential adviser James Carville. Each have

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The Missouri Western crowd, who gathered for the commencement ceremony Saturday morning, react to Dan Boulware's thoughts of having more God in the classrooms. Mr. Boulware referenced the shootings that took place in Connecticut on Friday, and said there is a negative correlation between the absence of God in schools and the increase in violence.

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their hands wrapped around each other's throats, but are smiling.

"I always thought I'd get into politics," he said of his childhood ambitions, which would have been in line with the ambitions of his grandfather, who was a leader in the Kansas Senate. "Kids I went to high school with said, 'Dan will be governor by the time he's 35.'"

### Honored by peers

But in his first year of law school, he decided that wasn't the life for him. And if he was going to be a lawyer, he'd be a trial lawyer.

Instead of being governor at 35, he earned the highest rating a trial lawyer can earn from the *Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory*. A year later he received the Lon Hocker Memorial Trial Lawyer Award, given by the Missouri Bar Foundation to outstanding young trial attorneys.

Mr. Boulware's grandfather was a member of the Kansas Board of Regents. While he didn't follow his grandfather's footsteps into politics, they share a passion for education.

He first joined Western's governing board in 1979. But Mr. Boulware got caught, through no fault of his own, in the middle of a political squabble between the governor and a local state senator who had different ideas about how board appointments were made. He thought it best to bow out and approach it again later.

That day came in 1986, when he was again asked to serve on Western's board, this time without any political squabbles. He accepted and eventually served as president of the board

in 1991 and 1992. He also served on the Western Foundation's capital campaign, as well as the Missouri Task Force on Critical Issues for Higher Education. He currently serves on the board of directors for the Missouri Higher Education Partnership.

"Education has always been something I think is important, because I've seen it lift so many people up," he said. "It opens doors."

### Staying active

At the behest of former Western President Dr. Janet Murphy McCarthy, a scholarship is being established in Mr. Boulware's name. It will assist students who are on the path to become lawyers.

At 66, Mr. Boulware thinks more about retirement than he used to, but he still loves practicing law. He's promised himself that when he does retire, he'll have plenty of energy left to volunteer. It's something that his wife, Dale, has done in the community for many years.

"I want to do volunteer service," he said. "I want to be active."

He'll also have more time to commit to his son, Daniel Allen Boulware, who practices in Kansas City, and his three young grandchildren. "Faith, family and friends," he said of what he values most.

Kylee Strough, president of Western's governing board, said it's the drive and commitment to Western that earned him the honor he received Saturday.

"He has made a tremendous impact on the university," she said. "He's still very involved in advocacy and support of the university. The convocation is just one of the things

the community sees."

### Future plans

Community eyes focused on Western's graduates Saturday morning, as scholars strolled across the stage and into the first phase of their professional lives. Many felt relief and excitement that graduation day finally arrived.

"It's a big weight off my shoulders," said St. Joseph native Heather Reeder, 22, who double-majored in management and marketing. "I just worked so hard. Graduation hasn't sunk in yet."

She said she has a second interview for a job at Enterprise Rent-A-Car on Monday, and is ready to move forward and better herself.

"I'm born and raised (in St. Joseph), ... and I'm kind of scared. But I'm really excited," she said, adding that she eventually wants to move to the Gladstone, Mo., area.

Joining in her excitement, Ebonee Bright, 23, of Independence, Mo., stood in line as graduates readied to enter Western's Looney Complex. Armed with a degree in finance, she plans to stay at her job with Boehringer Ingelheim in St. Joseph, and work her way up from there.

"It's weird, because you are ready to get out, but when you are finished with your last final, you are like, 'So what do I do now?'" Ms. Bright said with a laugh. "It's been a lot of work, but I'm so ready to see what's next."

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