Ogden Foundation Scholar – Kelly Burgess

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This weekend marks the first commencement for WKU’s tenth president Dr. Timothy C. Caboni who will confer degrees to more than 14-hundred students.

Amy Bingham talks to the graduate receiving the highest academic honor in this week’s View from the Hill.

Kelly Burgess is a hospitality management and dietetics major from Franklin, Tennessee. She has been using her knowledge to help others in a variety of ways and never dreamed her endeavors would result in the Ogden Foundation Award.

When it comes to helping others make good choices with food, Kelly Burgess is eager to help.

“I love to spend time doing things I’m most passionate about. I tried to build time in my schedule to do those things that are most important.”

Burgess first became interested in dietetics while a high school junior when she shadowed a clinical dietician in a hospital.

“I learned a little about that side of nutrition and learned enough to know hey this is something I’m interested in.”

From there, the Franklin Tennessee native began looking at schools with a great nutrition program and her mom encouraged her to give her alma mater, WKU, a try.

“The more times I came back here it just felt like a 2nd home, the more I was here I was like oh my gosh this place is so amazing. I would tell anyone to come here.”

Burgess says a pivotal moment in her studies came her sophomore year when she volunteered at Hotel Inc. to fulfill a class requirement.

“I love that nutrition is a really good platform to help people who are less fortunate because you need to eat.”

Next came mission work in both eastern Kentucky and Haiti that allowed her to spread nutritional education.

“I was able to collaborate with some of the full time missionaries and translators who are more locals to know what kind of food do they have, what should I tell them to eat?”

Excelling in academics and civic engagement, Burgess is now thinking about what she will say in her commencement speech.

“To me one of the most important elements of leadership is to serve others.

The reason you have this degree is so you can serve others well.”

Fall Commencement will be held at 9:30 am and two pm Saturday at Diddle Arena.

Burgess will speak at the morning ceremony.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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