

# graduation

## IS ALWAYS A SPECIAL TIME OF YEAR

*219 graduates were awarded diplomas during commencement on Sunday, May 3*



Later this summer, 2015 DC graduate **Philip Balla** will begin his graduate studies at Harvard Divinity School. Balla, a ministry studies major, received a full tuition scholarship with \$10,000 stipend, renewable annually.

The HDS Ministry Fellowship is the highest distinction offered to any incoming freshman divinity student.

Balla was thrilled earlier this spring when he received word of the Harvard fellowship. "I always had an inclination to go someplace special for seminary," he said. "The best place I could. This is where the cutting edge is, so I want to be part of that."

He visited the campus after receiving word of his acceptance. "The place is beautiful. Not to mention, the libraries are fantastic. ... a golden ticket for theology."

He plans to explore many of the opportunities offered at Harvard and envisions a future that involves multiple fields, from academics to theology to the nonprofit sector.

Balla credits his Defiance College experience with acceptance into HDS. "In four years here, I've matured in so many ways. I'm a whole different person. I've seen the world. I did real research on the ground in Cambodia. Frankly, I don't think I would have gotten into Harvard without the impressive experience I've had at Defiance. Plus, my degree in ministry studies is a huge advantage. I've already been in churches doing academic work through internships."

He will head to Cambridge in late August for orientation, with classes starting Sept. 2.

Balla is the son of Bill and Karen Balla from Rossford, Ohio.

