



LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY
APPLETON, WISCONSIN

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For immediate release

Actor Campbell Scott named Lawrence University's 2025 Commencement speaker; pianist Robert McDonald to deliver Baccalaureate address

APPLETON - Two widely acclaimed Lawrence University alumni, actor and director Campbell Scott and pianist Robert McDonald, will return to campus to address the 2025 graduating class and be honored during Commencement weekend.

Both will receive honorary doctorate degrees at Commencement, to be held at 10 a.m. June 15 on Main Hall Green. Scott, a 1983 graduate, will be the featured Commencement speaker; McDonald, a 1973 graduate, will address the graduates and their families at the Baccalaureate service the day before in Memorial Chapel.

Campbell Scott

Scott is an accomplished actor of stage and film who first rose to prominence in 1990, seven years after graduating from Lawrence, when he starred in the groundbreaking film *Longtime Companion*, netting him a feature in *Rolling Stone* and a bevy of new film offers. He has since crafted an impressive career as an actor and director, starring in such films as *Dying Young*, *Singles*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Roger Dodger*, *Secret Lives of Dentists*, and *Jurassic World Dominion*, and the television series *Royal Pains*. Most recently, Scott starred in *Millers in Marriage* (2024) and is in the upcoming comedy, *Nonnas* (2025).

On the directing front, Scott teamed with Stanley Tucci in 1996 to direct *Big Night*, winning both the New York Film Critics Circle Award and the Boston Society of Film Critics Award for Best New Director. Other directing credits include *Off the Map* and *Company Retreat*.

Lawrence previously honored Scott in 1998 with its Nathan M. Pusey Distinguished Achievement Award. He later served on the Board of Trustees from 2002 to 2008.

Scott is the son of acting royalty—his parents are the late George C. Scott and Colleen Dewhurst. His mother attended Milwaukee-Downer for two years before embarking on her acting career.

Scott has often said he didn't fall in love with acting until he was an undergraduate at Lawrence. His parents never pushed him into the business.

"We never talked about it, really; I went to school to be a teacher and started acting in college," Scott told *Interview* magazine in 2011. "Neither of them talked about craft; they were pretty

instinctual. I learned, especially from my mother, to respect the profession and take it seriously, but not take yourself too seriously.”

Scott told *The Lawrentian* in 2002 that his student experience at Lawrence set him on an unexpected path in theater and film.

“When I first got here, I didn’t even approach the theater area,” he said. “My senior year, I was directing, writing, and I was comfortable over there, and I loved it.”

Robert McDonald

McDonald has been a sought-after pianist for decades, performing in concerts and presenting masterclasses around the world. He has performed and recorded with Isaac Stern and Midori, as well as with numerous high-profile ensembles.

He is on the faculty at The Juilliard School and the Curtis Institute of Music, where he holds the Penelope P. Watkins Chair in Piano Studies. He has been the recipient of the gold medal at the Busoni International Piano Competition, the top prize at the William Kapell International Competition, and the Deutsche Schallplatten Critics Award. In addition to being the artistic director of the Taos School of Music and Chamber Music Festival in New Mexico, he has participated in the Bergen, Lucerne, and Salzburg festivals in Europe, the Four Seasons, Marlboro, and Brevard festivals in the United States, the Steans Institute at Ravinia, as well as at the Banff Center in Canada and the Music Academy of the West.

McDonald holds degrees from Lawrence, the Curtis Institute of Music, and Juilliard. He has taught at Juilliard since 1999 and the Curtis Institute since 2007. He was honored by Lawrence in 1990 with the Nathan M. Pusey Distinguished Achievement Award and was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Manhattan School of Music in 2018.

In advance of a 2022 performance at Bowling Green State University, McDonald talked about how his Lawrence experience prepared him for what was to come. It was the first time, he said, that he had role models for a life in music.

“The Lawrence experience set me on the right path,” he said.

He continues to stay connected to Lawrence. When the Conservatory of Music took its 150-year celebration to New York City during the recent spring break—[11 students spent four days in NYC attending masterclasses, one-on-one sessions, and performing at Manhattan School of Music](#)—McDonald was among the alumni working with the students.

[*Lawrence University*](#) is a liberal arts college located along the banks of the Fox River in Appleton, Wisconsin. Founded in 1847, Lawrence has an enrollment of about 1,500 students drawn from nearly every state and more than 40 countries. Annually ranked among the best colleges in the nation, it features a college of arts and sciences and a conservatory of music.