

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Palm Beach Community College completion rate increases five percent**

### **Over eleven hundred graduates will march on May 8**

### **76-year-old Royal Palm Beach woman earns her degree**

(Lake Worth, May 2, 2003) Over eleven hundred graduates will receive their two-year degrees from Palm Beach Community College on May 8. The commencement ceremony will take place in the Florida Atlantic University gymnasium in Boca Raton at 6 p.m.

The number of graduates increased five percent over last spring's number. The majority of the 1,164 graduates, 940, will receive their associate in arts degrees, the first two years of a bachelor's degree. Earning their career degrees this spring are 126 associate in science graduates and 98 associate in applied science graduates, 76 of them in the registered nursing program.

**Dennis P. Gallon**, Ph.D., PBCC's president, will congratulate the graduates on staying focused during difficult times and discuss their roles in "the rise of a digital, global economy."

Other speakers include William Howden, president of the District Board of Trustees, and two students chosen for their high academic performance and participation in college organizations and activities. **Bethany Casazza, Lake Worth**, is a communications major with a 3.5 grade point average. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the honor society, and volunteers as a youth ministry assistant at the First Baptist Church in Lake Worth. **Zina El-Daghar, Belle Glade**, is a pre-med student.

The alumni induction ceremony will be conducted by **Juan Williams**, a PBCC alumni and owner/agent of the State Farm Insurance Agency in Lake Park. In 1982 Williams earned his associate's degree at PBCC with an emphasis in business administration. He is an FAU graduate as well.

One very non-traditional graduate this year is **Irene Parent**, 76, who is earning her associate in arts degree after eight years of study. Parent grew up during the Depression in a single-parent family and couldn't afford the cost of college after high school in 1943. Her six children and 11 grandchildren are "stunned" by her upcoming graduation with honors.

"Every course was like opening up a new world. It's such a wonderful experience," Parent said. "I tell the other PBCC students how lucky they are to get an education like this. When I was growing up, we were separated from the rest of the world by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Now we *have* to know about other nationalities because we're not separated anymore. We have to work together."