

NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE

# *Founders Day*

CELEBRATION

JANUARY 14, 2026



# PROGRAM

## **Master of Ceremonies**

Jennifer Militello, PhD

*Program Director, MFA in Creative Writing*

## **Procession** (please stand)

Patrick Cheetham

*Bagpiper*

## **Academic Procession and Mace**

Cynthia Burns Martin, MBA, HA '22

Fran Chelland, MTS

*Faculty Marshals*

## **Welcome**

Wayne F. Lesperance Jr., DLP

*President*

## **Academic Affairs Dean's List for Fall 2025 | Honoring the College's Founding**

Patricia Corbett, EdD

*Vice President of Academic Affairs*

## **Founders Day Address**

Major General David Mikolaities

*Adjutant General, New Hampshire National Guard*

## **Closing**

Wayne F. Lesperance Jr., DLP

*President*

## **Recessional** (please stand)



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Julie Zahn, MBA | *Special Assistant to the President for Special Projects*

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER MAJOR GENERAL DAVID MIKOLAITIES



Maj. Gen. David J. Mikolaities has served as The Adjutant General of New Hampshire since September 23, 2017, acting as the military chief of staff to the governor and commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services. In this dual role, he oversees the strategic direction of the Army and Air National Guard and all facets of veterans services, including the Division of Veterans Services, Community Based Military Programs, and the State Veteran's Cemetery.

Commissioned through the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1987, Maj. Gen. Mikolaities began his career on active duty with the 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) at Fort Carson, Colorado, before transitioning to the reserve component and later joining the New Hampshire Army National Guard in 2007. His assignments include commander of the 54th Troop Command and service with Special Operations Command Central. He deployed to Qatar and Iraq in 2003–2004 and to Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010 in support of combined joint special operations.

He holds degrees in mechanical engineering, strategic studies, and management. A native of Manchester, he now resides in Portsmouth with his family.

## FOUNDERS DAY HISTORY

New England College was founded in 1946 to serve the educational needs of the country's military men and women returning from World War II. The annual Founders Day celebration honors the vision and leadership of the founding faculty, staff, administration, and students of the College.

Founders Day reflects on the foresight of those leaders who sought to make education accessible to a new generation and who pioneered experiential academic opportunities for students. Eighty years later, we proudly recognize and honor how that original vision continues to transform our community and the lives of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

## NEC'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY

This year's Founders Day celebration also serves as the kickoff of NEC's 80th anniversary. Throughout 2026, we will celebrate 80 years of bold ideas, boundless creativity, and a community that continues to shape the future. From our founding in 1946 to today, our story is one of resilience, innovation, and connection—and the best chapters are still being written.



Join us as we honor 80 years of impact and look ahead to the next generation of changemakers.