

**Accent Banner's guide to**

# **COMMENCEMENT**



**A Publication of Accent Banner. LLC**

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# CHAPTER ONE

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## **The Importance of Commencement**

# The Importance of Commencement

## An end & a beginning.

It is a much-revered ritual in educational institutions everywhere. At the end of every school year, graduating students, whether they're little kids in grade school or young adults in college, walk solemnly towards the stage elegantly garbed in their robes and tassels. One cannot underestimate the significance of such a moment as every student's journey towards graduation is filled with all sorts of trials and challenges.

However, graduation is not so much an ending as a new beginning. For grade school students, graduation is the beginning of their adolescent adventures as they let go of their parents' embrace and test their wings in high school. For high school students, graduation is the beginning of their journey of self-discovery as they explore what it is that they really want out of life in college. For college students, graduation is the beginning of their real lives as they fly out from the warmth and comfort of the university. Graduation is significant for parents too; their children's achievements belong to their parents as well.





# CHAPTER TWO

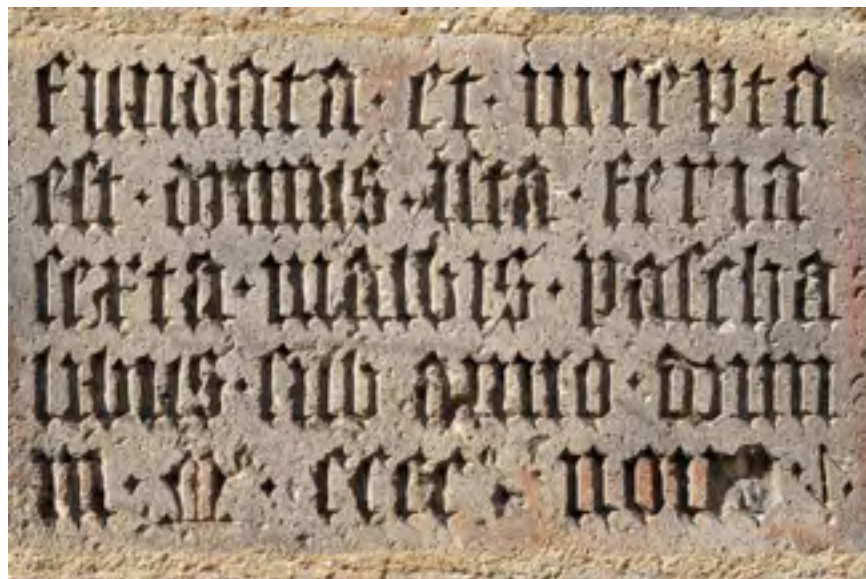
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## **A Brief History**

# A Brief History

## The real story.

Ceremonies for graduating students date from the first universities in Europe in the 12th century. At that time Latin was the language of scholarship. A “universitas” was a guild of masters (MAs) with license to teach. “Degree” and “graduate” come from gradus, meaning “step”. The first step was admission to a bachelor’s degree. The second step was the masters step, giving the graduate admission to the universitas and license to teach. The typical dress for graduation are gowns and hoods or hats adapted from the daily dress of university staff in the Middle Ages, which was in turn based on the attire worn by medieval clergy.[1]



The tradition of wearing graduation hats in Sweden has been in place since the mid 18th century. The cap is typically a white sailor hat with a black or dark blue band around it, a crown motif and a black peak at the front. The graduation hat tradition was initially brought into practice by students at Uppsala University. The headgear then became popular across several other European nations as well.[2]

1. Graduation through the ages <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/graduation/grad-history.shtml>
2. Elin Olsson. “Swedish high school graduation day” academia.edu



# CHAPTER THREE

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## What You're Going to Need

# What You're Going to Need

**OK, here's the good stuff.**

Commencement is steeped in tradition that includes items symbolizing this transition from school into the real world. While each school's commencement is unique to their heritage certain elements remain constant. At any graduation ceremony you'll see the same key products that commemorate this special occasion. Items such as gonfalons, table drapes, backdrop banners, caps, gowns, class rings, diplomas, and photos or even photo booths to remember this special occasion. In the following sections we'll break down the different items as well as their importance to this unique tradition.





# GONFALONS

When you're attending in or participating in a graduation, there's a lot of symbolism that is often overlooked. The long gowns go back to medieval Europe, when scholars would wear long robes to remain warm in unheated castles. The mace carried by the Grand Marshall goes back to the same time period when bishops were not allowed to carry swords in battle and a mace was carried instead, as a symbol of their authority and as a means of defense.



The commencement gonfalon banner and the graduation gonfalons signify the different colleges within a single university.

Gonfalons for graduation are banners, often shield-shaped, which hang from a crosspiece on top of a pole. They will bear the same school colors across all the gonfalons, but each college will have a different set of symbols that best represent the historical elements of that college. As an example, a trio of trumpets representing heralds passing news or trumpets as a way of signaling between encampments in the middle ages could be used for a communications program. Some colleges with more modern roots, such as information technology, will use modern symbols instead of more traditional ones, such as a computer instead of a quill pen.

# GONFALONS

Originally used to designate a household, fighting unit or office, gonfalons were the original marketing logo. In a time when the vast majority of the population was functionally illiterate, gonfalons were the equivalent of McDonald's golden arches or the Nike swoosh. As the Renaissance and Enlightenment encouraged a more literate and educated population, gonfalons became a popular symbol of educational institutions, where they remain commonly used today. They were also often used in religious processions, hence the modern church gonfalon banner.



# GONFALONS

If your organization, business or event needs a custom gonfalon, it can sometimes be difficult to find a manufacturer who can cater to your exact needs. At Accent Banner, we can provide full design services to create customized products. We've been making high-quality, handmade applique custom gonfalons, flags and banners for over two decades.

We're proud to serve the schools, Colleges and Universities all across the United States and are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Please contact us today for further information.



NEED MORE INFO ON GONFALONS?  
[Click here.](#)



# TABLE DRAPES

Having great-looking table drapes or table skirts can help create a professional appearance at your graduation. Table skirts and custom table drapes not only cover otherwise boring tables, but they also help to develop a more professional and cohesive image for your college or university.

Our custom made table drapes can be created using appliqued, printed or hybrid manufacturing techniques. We can offer them in a wide variety of colors, styles and sizes to meet your business' or organization's specific needs. Applique table drapes present a very professional and rich appearance for your company or organization. They are created by hand by our exceptional craftsmen, who are able to stitch different fabric colors on top of the base table drape or table skirt. This process, called applique, is our specialty at Accent Banner and what sets our products apart. Visit our [applique page](#) to watch a video on the process of applique.



# TABLE DRAPES

Table skirts can be used for an endless number of possibilities from attending a corporate trade show, representing your college in an admissions hall, or a girl scout troop using them at a bake sale. Beautifully made table drapes can help your company or organization convey an appearance of professionalism and brand awareness. They can also serve to create an effective storage space for boxes, bins and supplies underneath the table, hiding them from the public eye. Additionally, we can of course also offer printed table drapes, or even a “hybrid” product that incorporates both printed and applique processes. All solutions we offer represent the highest quality options on the market and we will work with you and your team to find the one that suits your needs the best.



**NEED MORE INFO ON TABLE DRAPES?**  
[Click here.](#)

# BACKDROP BANNERS



Backdrop banners are the ideal method of communicating school pride with your audience at graduation. Their large size make them a dramatic symbol of what you have accomplished and of what you have in store and the event you are promoting. Large format banners provide the college or university with a highly personalized, colorful and pleasant way of making a memorable impact with their graduates and families.

Creating large format banners is a big undertaking (no pun intended). In order to scale up an image or text while also keeping the image from distorting requires the right equipment and skill. When we create large format banners we work closely with the venue to make sure that the design, construction, and dimensions make sense and fit seamlessly for the optimal impact at the location that they are going in. In addition to simply designing and creating the banners we also have the capability to install them.



# BACKDROP BANNERS

Installing an eighty foot wide banner is a very difficult and potentially dangerous undertaking for somebody that doesn't have experience. Our dedicated team has installed hundreds of large format banners in almost every foreseeable location in the Boston area. If you're interested in installing a large format banner please hire a specialist who has done banner installation before.

Because these banners are also available on a range of different types of fabrics and use innovative printing techniques, you are limited only by your imagination when it comes to the options available. With the addition of premium stitching, grommets, hardware, reinforced edges and other finishing work services, you can customize your banners for a variety of uses including outdoors. Our experts can recommend the appropriate finishing work touches to complete your project.

If you're considering using a large format banner for your commencement call us to setup a consultation. Our experts can walk you through the process of designing, creating, installing, and removing banners of any size.

**NEED MORE INFO ON LARGE BANERS?**  
**[Click here.](#)**

# EVERYTHING ELSE

## Caps & Gowns

Where on earth did the whole cap and gown tradition start -- and when? Believe it or not, the tradition goes back literally thousands of years and to another continent. Caps and gowns originated in the 13th and 14th centuries in Europe, when universities began forming throughout the continent. But it wasn't until the late 1800s that England began designating different colors for different fields of study. The gowns symbolized the title of scholar, and Oxford and Cambridge are two of the few universities around the globe that to this day have their professors wear gowns in the classroom to signify their academic status.



The graduation cap (a.k.a. the “mortar board”) got its nickname because it reminded people of the tool masons use to spread mortar! The tassel was added in the 1800s. Protocol dictates that the tassel be worn on the right side of the cap until the graduating student has his diploma in-hand. Then, and only then, the student may flip the tassel over to the left side. The hat toss is said to symbolize the student being free to “take flight in the world”, by some accounts. But the tradition is actually believed to have started for a more practical reason by Naval Academy graduates on 1912. For the first time that year, the Navy gave graduates their new officer’s caps at the graduation ceremony. Since they no longer needed the midshipman’s caps they’d been wearing for four years at the academy, they tossed them into the air and donned their new officer’s caps instead.





# EVERYTHING ELSE

## Class Rings

Another American tradition, the class ring, was also originally conceived by the U.S. military in 1835 at West Point. The first class rings were plain, but soon morphed into the heavy ring with a stone center that we know today. Seniors and graduates wear class rings to show both school pride as well as a sense of accomplishment.

## Diplomas

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## Diploma Books & Frames

What better way to show off your accomplishment by immortalizing it in a customized diploma book or diploma frame. Enter any office of a professional in almost any field and you'll see diplomas in frames on the walls of their office. Keeping a document that was so hard-earned deserves to be kept in the best condition possible. For this reason it's no wonder graduates often invest in a high-end diploma book or diploma frame.

## Photos & Photo Booths

As with any momentous occasion photos and professional photographers are a must-have. Making sure that you capture that one moment walking across the stage to receive your diploma is a hugely important moment not only for the graduate but also for the families that have helped their son or daughter throughout their journey. With the recent popularity of open-air photo booths you may also see them present at commencement ceremonies. New age photo booths often include customized green screen backdrops in which you can create backgrounds with the colleges logo or mascot. Modern photo booth rental companies such as The Snap Boxx of Boston include the ability to easily share the photos on social media; adding even more exposure to the college or university on this special day.

# CHAPTER FOUR

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## Ordering & Logistics

# Ordering & Logistics

Plan, plan and plan some more.



Planning ahead for this big day is essential to ensure that everything goes smoothly. When creating customized gonfalons or backdrops you'll want to make sure your team has enough time to design, create and install these items before the big day. Installing a large format college banner is no simple task. You'll want to make sure that you work with professionals with experience designing and installing these items to ensure you make the best impression on graduation day. A large banner that is incorrectly installed can be a huge liability for any college or university. We highly recommend that you contact our field services team at Accent Banner to get advice from our professionals about installation and removal before attempting to do anything yourselves. Our team has years of on-site experience and will help ensure that your gonfalon, banner, and other accessories are correctly installed and will give you the peace of mind that you can fly your school's banner legally and safely.

**NEED INSTALLATION HELP?**



# CHAPTER FIVE

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## Commencement Gallery

# Commencement Gallery

## Ideas gallore!

To give you some ideas of what's possible with custom backdrops and gonfalons for graduation we've put together a small gallery of some of Accent Banner's recent projects for the schools we work with. Take a look through some of our client's commencement projects to help visualize the impact your customized items can have at your school's commencement ceremony.





# Commencement Gallery





# CHAPTER SIX

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**Thank You!!!**

# THANK YOU!!!



Thank you for taking the time to read through our commencement guide. Our team at Accent Banner has decades of experience producing customized graduation products for a huge range of high schools, colleges, and universities. Contact our team to get prepared for your school's big day. Our specialists will walk you through everything you need to know from design, pricing, and installation to ensure that your graduation ceremony goes perfectly and gives off the best impression possible.

[REQUEST A QUOTE?](#)

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**“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”**

*- William Arthur Ward*

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# REQUEST A FREE QUOTE

**Commencement can be a busy time!**  
**We're happy to help simplify things and provide you with**  
**pricing or any other information you might need.**

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**CLICK HERE**