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Auburn alumnus and forestry executive Marc Walley announced as the summer 2023 commencement speaker

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Marc Walley, president and chief executive officer of Forest Investment Associates (FIA) will deliver the keynote address to Auburn University’s summer graduates during the institution’s two commencement ceremonies on Aug. 5 in Neville Arena.

A 1985 Auburn graduate, Walley currently leads one of the world’s most influential forestland investment advising firms. Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, FIA oversees more than 2 million acres of timberland investments across 16 states, Brazil and Chile. In addition to managing a forest investment portfolio with a market value exceeding \$4.5 billion, Walley and his FIA team are noted experts in sustainability and forest conservation.

“I am delighted to welcome Marc back to Auburn as our summer commencement speaker,” said Auburn University President Christopher B. Roberts. “In addition to being an accomplished leader in the forest investment industry, Marc represents the ideas that define an Auburn education, including hard work, a commitment to excellence and raising the bar for the next generation. I am confident he will inspire our graduates to achieve greatness in their next endeavors.”

After graduating from Auburn, Walley joined Scott Paper Company in Mobile, where he spent four years supporting its timberland management and strategic operations. Upon joining FIA in 1994, Walley worked alongside a team of investors and industry experts to acquire and expand the company’s portfolio and was eventually appointed to executive vice president and director of timberland management in 2008. He was named president and chairman of the Executive and Investment Committees in 2016. As president and CEO, he also serves as a member of FIA’s Board of Directors.

A registered forester and prominent expert on timber investments, Walley is often credited for his employee-centered leadership approach that blends disciplined acquisitions with effective land management practices to generate investment value. In addition to fostering an organizational culture founded in core values of corporate responsibility, integrity and environmental stewardship, FIA also plays a significant role in advancing efforts to create a low-carbon economy. Since its founding, FIA has planted more than 400 million trees, and the company’s working forest lands support thousands of jobs in rural communities across the U.S. and abroad.

“Anyone who knows me knows how proud I am of my Auburn family and my Auburn education,” said Walley. “While I have been personally and professionally blessed, speaking to Auburn’s graduates and sharing insights from my journey is the honor of a lifetime.”

With a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from Auburn, Walley currently serves on the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment Advisory Council. In addition to chairing the college’s campaign leadership team during the university’s last capital campaign, Walley was awarded the Outstanding Alumni Award in 2017.

Walley will address more than 1,400 graduates and their families during the university’s summer ceremonies on Aug. 5 at 9 am and 2 pm in Neville Arena. Doors open 90 minutes before each ceremony, and graduates should plan to arrive at the designated time for their college ceremony through the student entrance. Guests may enter Neville Arena through the main doors or the scholarship entrance for those with accessibility needs. All guests planning to attend commencement are asked to adhere to the safety protocols, including the clear bag policy.

Auburn’s commencement ceremonies will be streamed live on the university’s commencement [website](#). For more information, visit auburn.edu/commencement.



Media interested in this story can contact Communications Director Preston Sparks at (334) 844-9999 or preston.sparks@auburn.edu.

Auburn University is a nationally ranked land grant institution recognized for its commitment to world-class scholarship, interdisciplinary research with an elite, top-tier Carnegie R1 classification, life-changing outreach with Carnegie’s Community Engagement designation and an undergraduate education experience second to none. Auburn is home to more than 30,000 students, and its faculty and research partners collaborate to develop and deliver meaningful scholarship, science and technology-based advancements that meet pressing regional, national and global needs. Auburn’s commitment to active student engagement, professional success and public/private partnership drives a growing reputation for outreach and extension that delivers broad economic, health and societal impact.



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