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UMaine Plans First Outdoor Commencement Since 1994; May 20 Ceremony Set for Alfond Stadium

May 1, 2000

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ORONO -- More than 1,300 University of Maine degrees will be awarded at the University's 196th Commencement, scheduled to be held on Morse Field at Harold Alfond Stadium on Saturday, May 20 at 10:30 a.m.

If the weather cooperates, this will be the first time a UMaine class will graduate at a single outdoor ceremony since 1994. A combination of factors, including weather and the deteriorating condition of the former Alumni Stadium, have caused the last five spring Commencements to be held inside Alfond Arena. In those cases, space limitations meant that two ceremonies -- one in the morning and one in the afternoon -- were held each year.

Alfond Stadium will accommodate an audience of 10,000.

The Commencement Address will be given by Cathie A. Pelletier, a native of Allagash, Me. whose literary credits include eight novels, a screenplay, poetry, non-fiction, song writing and a children's book. The novels include *The Funeral Makers*, *Once Upon a Time on the Banks* and *The Weight of Winter*, three stories based on the fictitious town of Mattagash.

Honorary degrees will be awarded to Pelletier and Ashley F. Bryan, an artist, author, crafter and educator who taught at Queens College, Lafayette College and Dartmouth College before retiring to his Maine home in 1989.

In keeping with the University of Maine tradition, each graduate will have his or her name announced to the audience upon receipt of a diploma and a handshake from either President Peter S. Hoff or Provost Donald Zillman. Of the 1,333 anticipated graduates, 335 will receive graduate degrees, including 31 who will receive doctorates.

If the weather causes a move back into Alfond Arena, there will be two ceremonies. Those receiving degrees from the College of Business, Public Policy and Health; the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; and the Division of Lifelong Learning will participate in the 10:30 a.m. exercise. Graduates from the College of Education and Human Development; the College of Engineering (including the School of Engineering Technology); and the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture will attend the 2:30 p.m. ceremony.