



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, May 14, 2009

## **Madonna Sign Language Grads Launch Their Careers**

LIVONIA, Mich. – Robin Fraser of Canton and Sara Madden of Brighton graduated from Madonna University this spring, with bachelor's degrees in Sign Language Studies (SLS). They both received the Ernest I. Nolan Award for Excellence in the Humanities, named after Madonna's vice president for academic administration and former humanities professor, for their academic achievements in Madonna University's SLS program.

Prior to graduating, Fraser and Madden earned their interpreter certifications – an accomplishment that takes many students 2-3 years of post-graduate preparation to achieve, according to Dan McDougall, chair of Madonna's Sign Language Studies program. Michigan law requires successful completion of the Michigan Quality Assurance (QA) test in order to be certified as an interpreter. "Robin and Sara are extraordinary," said McDougall. "These young women personify our department's goal to help students earn their certification and obtain jobs within the Deaf community as quickly as possible."

The performance portion of the QA test requires test-takers to interpret between spoken English and American Sign Language (ASL). The interpretations are recorded and sent to a committee, administered by the State of Michigan, for evaluation. Madonna sign language students practice by recording interpreting sessions in the University's Sony Language Lab, the first of its kind in Michigan.

Fraser and Madden will begin their careers as classroom interpreters for Deaf students at Madonna University this summer "Interpreting a micro-biology class will be a true challenge," Madden noted.

Already on a fast-track to success, the recent graduates are planning for the future. Madden enjoys educational interpreting and aims to become a teacher for the Deaf. Fraser would like to interpret within a medical setting. "After completing Madonna's Sign Language Studies program, I have many career options," she said. "The curriculum is well-rounded and you learn American Sign Language, versus word-for-word translation, so you can apply it to any field."

Madonna University ([www.madonna.edu](http://www.madonna.edu)) has offered a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sign Language Studies (SLS) since 1975 and is the only bachelor's program in Michigan. By the year 2012, all sign language interpreters must have a bachelor's degree in sign language to qualify for national certification. The SLS program is offered at Madonna University's main campus in Livonia, and at the University Center in Gaylord.

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