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Three generations of the same family—grandmother, daughter and son—will be among the graduates when Governors State University holds its annual Commencement Ceremonies Saturday, May 16 at the Tinley Park Convention Center.

GSU will hold two commencements, at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. In the morning ceremony, world renowned writer, commentator, activist, and educator Nikki Giovanni will receive an honorary degree. GSU will also present WTTW-TV journalist Elizabeth Brackett with an honorary degree at the evening ceremony.

During the evening commencement, Karolyn Grissom, her daughter, Pamela Jones, and grandson Mathew Brown, each will receive their bachelor’s degree in Communication from GSU. All three family members were also inducted into GSU’s Tau Sigma Honor Society because of their high GPA’s. Grissom has a 3.938 GPA and Jones and Brown each recorded perfect 4.0 GPA’s.

For Grissom, having her daughter and grandson graduate with her is a source of great pride. “I am so proud of Pamela and Mathew. I want to share our accomplishments with other people and show them that it can be done. It’s never too late for an education, and Governors State is a great place for people to come for that education.”

Brown was 11 when his mother suffered a debilitating health issue. Watching Pamela overcome these struggles to complete her degree was an inspiration to him. “It means so much to me to be graduating with her after all she’s been through. I never could have envisioned this happening. She has inspired so many other people. My aunt, my cousins; they are all going to school now because of my mother,” he said.

As for the immediate future, after graduation all three have applied for GSU’s Master of Arts in Communication program for the fall. The trio plans to pursue law degrees in the future, with an eye on pro bono work. “As a family unit, we want to collectively go into help mode for those less fortunate who need legal assistance,” Grissom said.

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