Freeman's 2012 graduate diploma ceremony spans traditions

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The Freeman School’s 2012 graduate diploma ceremony was Ira Solomon’s first as dean of the business school, but in a number of ways the event harkened back to traditions of the past.

Dean Ira Solomon presided over the largest graduation ceremony in school history.

For the first time in three years, a band—the Po Boys Brass Band—was on hand to lead students into McAlister Auditorium at the beginning of the ceremony and out of the auditorium at its conclusion, lending an appropriately festive spirit to the proceedings.

For the first time in more than 10 years, the ceremony featured a distinguished guest speaker. Staley Motta (BBA ’67), chairman of Copa Holdings, the parent company of Panama’s Copa Airlines and Colombia’s Copa Colombia Airlines, delivered a humorous, heartfelt charge to the graduates.

And for the first time in more than 20 years, the ceremony featured the tradition known as “graduation bingo,” a game inaugurated by the late Irving LaValle, school marshal and professor of decision theory, in which students are given bingo cards featuring random words and phrases from the ceremony. The first student to get

five words or phrases in a row—and shout “Bingo!” at the top of his or her lungs—wins a prize, which this year was a special second-line umbrella and the right to lead the graduating classes out of the auditorium.

Stanley Motta (BBA ’67), chairman of Copa Holdings, delivered this year’s charge to graduates.

Maggie Hopkins (MBA/MD ’12) won that honor, and she embraced the role with enthusiasm, leading a graduate second line out of the auditorium.

What was definitely not a return to the past was the size of the event. The Freeman School awarded diplomas to 857 graduates this year, the most in the school’s 95 year history of conferring business degrees.

At the graduate diploma ceremony, Dean Solomon presented diplomas to 63 Master of Accounting degree recipients, 279 Master of Business Administration degree recipients, 85 Master of Finance degree recipients, 35 Master of Global Management degree recipients, 85 Master of Management degree recipients, seven Master of Risk Management degree recipients, and 10 Doctor of Philosophy degree recipients.

Earlier in the afternoon, at the Newcomb-Tulane College Undergraduate Diploma Ceremony at the Superdome, Dean Solomon awarded diplomas to 343 Bachelor of Science in Management degree recipients.

Graduation bingo winner Maggie Hopkins (MBA/JD ’12) led a graduate second line out of the auditorium at the end of the ceremony.

Arielle K. Drucker (BSM ’12) received the BSM Scholastic Achievement Award, which recognizes the graduate of the Bachelor of Science in Management program with the highest cumulative grade point average. Robert W. Lynch (MBA’12) received the Marta and Peter Bordeaux Scholastic Achievement Award, which recognizes the graduate of the Master of Business Administration program with the highest cumulative grade point average.

“This year’s graduates, like those who came before and those who will come after, have completed rigorous, state-of-the-art courses of study,” Dean Solomon said in his remarks to graduates, their families and guest. “This year’s graduates have been challenged to make a positive impact on society using their knowledge and skills learned and honed here at Freeman. I have no doubt that they will be successful, making all of us proud to recognize them over the coming years as members of the Freeman and Tulane families.”

To see more photos from the 2012 Graduate Diploma Ceremony, visit the Freeman School’s Flickr page.