The Honorable Lisa D. Cook, Ph.D., returned to her roots and hometown in Milledgeville this past weekend, to give two inspirational keynote addresses at Georgia College & State University commencement ceremonies.

Governor Cook is the first Black woman and fourth native Georgian to serve on the Federal Reserve Board in its 117-year history. She is also the first member of Howard University’s Kennedy School of Government and Michigan State University.

Governor Cook has throughout her career demonstrated a commitment to mentoring underrepresented groups in the fields of academia, said Georgia College President Cathy Cox, when introducing Cook at commencement ceremonies for the university’s Business & Technology and College of Arts & Sciences.

“All of Dr. Cook’s impressive achievements would make her a provocative selection as our commencement speaker this year,” Cox said, when introducing Cook at commencements for the university’s College of Arts & Sciences.

“In addition, Cook’s two sisters have ties to Georgia College. Pamela Cook served as director of Minority Affairs for more than four years, Board.

“Georgia College has been a home for over 100 years, and the world has been my family,” said Cook.

“Museums are a gateway for the public to look into what’s going on in historical research,” she said. “But if I really believe in helping students learn and discover new things—that’s just a wonderful thing.

“Museums are a gateway for the public to look into what’s going on in historical research,” she said. “It’s a way for me to be able to share my story and my experiences with others.”

The Savannah resident landed a job in February as a research assistant for the Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport. She studies the global workforce and has worked with organizations such as the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

In 2000-01, Cook was senior advisor at the U.S. Treasury Department.

For her many accomplishments, Cook received the highest recognition a university can bestow. Cox and Georgia College Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Costas Spirou presented Cook with an honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, from Georgia College.

“Governor Cook has said about you and your capabilities,” Cook said, “you can be anything and anyone you want to be.”

“For me personally, from an early age, GCSU, and the world it represents, was home,” she added. “I grew up here in the 20th century and the world was my backyard. The world was my home, and I grew up speaking English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Russian, Chinese, Japanese and Korean. My feelings about GCSU begin with immense gratitude,” she added.

“African-American woman or man, particularly in rural Georgia,” she said. “In many ways, it was Georgia College...that was my home...I grew up speaking English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German, Russian, Chinese, Japanese and Korean. My feelings about GCSU begin with immense gratitude,” she added.

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In 2005, she became a professor of economics and international relations at Michigan State University. Under President Barack Obama (in 2011-12), Cook served on the White House Council of Economic Advisers.

Throughout her career, Cook has been an advocate of advancing underrepresented groups in the fields of economics. She worked several years as director of the American Economists Association Summer Training Program and was awarded the Impartial Master Award. The annual recognized Cook for mentoring graduate students through AAAS Mentoring Pool program.

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President Cathy Cox (left) and Provost Dr. Costas Spirou (right) present Gov. Lisa Cook with an honorary degree from Georgia College & State University.