Winter 2008 - 2009

Reflections

News from Muskegon Community College

New Student Services Center Big Hit with Students

After months of mess and inconvenience, the new Student Services Center has made its debut for Fall 2008, and has reached its goal of removing service barriers to MCC's students. The renovated area includes the main entrance and both primary hallways. Other renovations recently completed include the Nursing area and former library space.

Interim President Diana Osborn, alumnus Richard Kraft, Vice President of Student Services Janie Brooks, and Associate Vice President of Student Services Joe Doyle oversee construction of the Richard and Ann Kraft Student Life and Alumni Center.

Dear Friends of MCC:

Muskegon Community College is well poised to play an important role in helping West Michigan achieve a bright and sustainable economy. A more educated citizenry leads to better paying jobs, a higher tax base, and more importantly, the growth of local businesses. Unquestionably, MCC presents the best opportunity to acquire an excellent education at an affordable cost.

Of course, the meaning of the word "affordable" as it pertains to higher education has changed along with the local employment situation. For the first time in my career we are working with many students who find that even with MCC's tuition set at one-fourth the cost of many institutions, the investment is still well beyond their means. This is why we are asking MCC alumni and friends to invest in the future of our community by supporting the Foundation for Muskegon Community College.

Support for MCC in the form of scholarships for needy students reaps benefits for Greater Muskegon that will last for many, many years. Indeed, a researcher we contracted with recently estimates that "every dollar of state or local tax money invested in MCC today returns $15 over the course of the students' working career." The Foundation is also working to acquire the resources necessary for a much-needed renovation of the equipment that produces the star shows for the campus Planetarium. For these reasons and many others, your contributions will be put to good use, particularly during this period of lower than expected state funding.

To be sure, there are many positive and exciting things happening on campus. You are always welcome to visit campus to take stock of the many physical changes that complement the learning environment for MCC students. The newly opened Student Services Center and Richard & Ann Kraft Alumni/Student Life Center are being enjoyed by many, thanks to the generosity of our graduates.

Thank you for your past and future support. Together, we can make a positive difference in the quality of life that we enjoy here in West Michigan.

Cordially,

Diana R. Osborn
Interim President
Muskegon Community College

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Reflections is published for the alumni of Muskegon Community College.

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Parents: The Alumni Office appreciates updating records on MCC alumni. If this publication is mailed to your residence, and your son or daughter no longer resides with you, would you help by furnishing the correct address? Please call the Alumni Office at 231.777.0461, or mail to: Alumni Office, 221 S. Quarterline Road, Muskegon, MI 49442. Thanks!

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MCC Class of 2008 Graduates Honored at Commencement Ceremonies

On the 25th of April, 2008, Muskegon Community College President Dr. David L. Rule presided over the 80th Commencement Exercises to recognize and honor the 513 students who completed their degree or certificate program in Summer 2007, Fall 2007, or Winter 2008 semesters. The ceremonies were highlighted by a Commencement Address from West Coast radio personality Tanya Hart, as well as a talk and vocal performance from U.S. Army Sergeant Major Joel T. Dulyea, who was honored as MCC's 2008 Distinguished Alumnus.

Dr. Rule acknowledged the participating 126 graduates who had just marched into the Frauenthal Theater by noting that "We – Board of Trustees, the faculty, staff, and honored guests – are all here for many purposes. One purpose is to acknowledge your accomplishment. This ceremony is for you, but in the larger context it also belongs to Muskegon Community College, the state of Michigan, the United States of America, and the world." He encouraged the graduates to "Apply your knowledge with wisdom and compassion…Share your skills freely and without prejudice…Give back to your family, communities, and all of humanity…Honor your accomplishment, and us all, by giving of yourself to a life of love, service, and lifelong learning."

Vice President for Student Services Janie P. Brooks introduced graduating student Julie Smith, who spoke on behalf of the MCC Class of 2008. Following the Commencement Address by Tanya Hart, Sergeant Major Joel T. Dulyea, who attended Muskegon Community College in the 1970s, was presented with the 2008 Distinguished Alumnus Award. SMG Dulyea brought the audience to its feet with his vocal rendition of "Make Them Hear You," from the Broadway musical Ragtime.

Dr. Rule presented to the audience of the students' family and friends the "Class of 2008." Dorothy M. Lester, Vice Chair of the MCC Board of Trustees conferred the degrees, which were then awarded by the Board of Trustees. Concurrently, as degrees were being awarded, Director of Nursing Pamela K. Brown awarded Nursing Pins to those students who earned their nursing degree.

The students' joy and pride of accomplishment was palpable. Rick Merrick reflected on his time at MCC as an adult student: "Going back to college as part of the Trade Readjustment Act (TRA) was one of the best moves I ever made. When Eagle Ottawa Leather moved operations (and my job) out of town I wondered what my future would hold. After 27 years working in industry, I now have the education, and more importantly the confidence, to pursue a career in Marketing Management."

Musical accompaniment to the proceedings was provided by the MCC Singers under the direction of Catherine Gilson, and the West Michigan Concert Winds directed by Gail Brechting. This year's event also included the introduction of a new tradition to Muskegon Community College--the official MCC Mace to mark the beginning and end of the ceremonies, and the Medallion of Office worn by President Rule. The honor of carrying the Mace this year went to retiring faculty members Richard Oman, William Sikkenga, and Daniel Yakes. The Mace was crafted in large part by MCC Theater Set Designer Brian Goodman, and the Medallion of Office was created and cast in bronze at the College through the collaborative efforts of several MCC technical instructors.

FOUNDATION FOR MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Supporting MCC students, programs, and facilities, since 1980.

MCC FOUNDATION

Foundation for MCC Seeks Donations to Renovate Carr-Fles Planetarium

Muskegon Community College's Carr-Fles Planetarium may have to close its doors (and skies) in the near future. The Planetarium has served the college and the greater lakeshore community well since 1972, with thousands of area visitors and local students having viewed sky shows, free of charge. The Planetarium is also utilized for astronomy instruction at the College, as it has an excellent capability to model the night sky.

With the growing popularity of digital cameras and projection systems, however, MCC's 35-year-old facility is fast becoming obsolete and its continuing usefulness is threatened. Since the Planetarium uses analog technology, and new programs are only being produced digitally, MCC is not able to purchase new shows. Furthermore, it is becoming more and more difficult to find replacement parts to make repairs when the system breaks down.

Fortunately, the Planetarium has its supporters, including local physicians Drs. Wayne and Nancy Brenneman. Nancy is the daughter of Dr. Robert Fles, the former MCC Board Chair for whom the Planetarium is named. Nancy and her husband jump-started the campaign last year to upgrade the Planetarium with a cash gift that will go toward new equipment and renovation of the facility.

What is needed to return the Planetarium to a modern footing? At the very least, a basic digital planetarium projection instrument and new sound system will be required. The cost of such an upgrade would be over $180,000. With additional funding, MCC could purchase a higher quality instrument as well as new seating.

As the only Planetarium along the lakeshore, the Carr-Fles facility serves an important purpose for our students and community. If you would like information on how to help the Carr-Fles Planetarium Renovation Project, please contact Diana Osborn, MCC's Executive Vice President for Administration and Interim President, by calling 231.777.0350.

TRiO
UPWARD BOUND

The TRiO Upward Bound program at Muskegon Community College is one of 774 programs that are in operation throughout the United States. Upward Bound is funded through a grant from the United States Department of Education. As mandated by Congress, two-thirds of the students served must come from families with incomes under 150% of poverty level and where neither parent graduated from college. The other one-third of the students must meet one of these two requirements. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from the college or university of their choice.

The Muskegon Community College TRiO Upward Bound Program currently serves 62 students in the 9th – 12th grades at Muskegon High School. The program provides academic instruction, tutoring, academic advising, and all other necessary support to help students enter into and succeed in college. Participants spend six weeks during June and July attending classes on the campus of Muskegon Community College and are involved throughout the year in community service activities. The program staff includes **Robert G. Ross**, Director; **Magnolia Knox**, Advisor; and **Heather De Nio**, Administrative Assistant. For more information about the TRiO Upward Bound program at Muskegon Community College, please call our office at 231-777-0425 or visit our website at www.muskegoncc.edu/upwardbound.

MCC Graduate Dr. Benjamin B. Bolger Reflects on MCC

Dr. Bolger at Oxford University

Because I was severely dyslexic, my mother homeschooled me before I began college. At age 12, I began my studies at Muskegon Community College. MCC uniquely provided me with a learning environment that enabled me to engage in critical analysis, creative exploration, and interdisciplinary discovery. When I graduated from MCC with my associate's degree I was well prepared to attend the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where I completed my bachelor's degree. Because MCC helped me prepare for success, I went on to graduate from Michigan with a perfect 4.0 GPA, Phi Beta Kappa, and as a James B. Angell Scholar.

Interested in politics and still a teenager, I worked as in Intern in the White House Press Office for Press Secretary Mike McCurry in the Clinton Administration after I completed my studies at Michigan. When I was 19, I began my studies at Yale Law School but failed to complete even a year. I realized that I needed to confront my dyslexia and do a better job of managing my learning disability. The next year, I began my graduate studies at Oxford. After completing my first graduate degree in sociology, I was left with many questions that I wanted to explore in more depth. I began another graduate degree at Cambridge that involved politics and sociology. After completing my second master's degree, I again had more questions about society, social change, and government accountability.

Since I was still young and filled with questions, I decided to spend several more years pursuing additional studies. I went on to complete a number of graduate degrees in diverse subjects, I studied: education at Stanford, politics and education at Teachers College, real estate development at Columbia, real estate at Harvard, development studies at Brown, liberal studies at Dartmouth, coexistence and conflict at Brandeis, and liberal studies at Skidmore. I completed my doctorate at Harvard. Eleven graduate degrees later, I am grateful to have a unique interdisciplinary perspective on the complex social, political, and economic issues that confront our nation.

I am currently a Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, which is the nation's second oldest college. I also run a boutique academic and strategic consulting practice. While I still have a lot of plans for the future, I want to thank Muskegon Community College for making a difference in the trajectory of my life. American's community colleges provide important opportunities for many students each year. In my view, MCC stands out as a quintessential example of an institution that helps support those who seek the American Dream. Indeed, I am proud to be a Jayhawk.

The 32-year-old Bolger's drive for degrees has made headlines not only in Muskegon, but also around the U.S. and the U.K.

Bolger received his Bachelors degree from the University of Michigan at age 19, and from there began accumulating more impressive degrees: University of Oxford, MSc, sociology, 1997; University of Cambridge, MPhil, sociology and politics of modern society, 1998; Stanford University, AM, education, 2000; Teachers College, Columbia University, MA, politics of education, 2001; Columbia University, MS, real estate development, 2001; Harvard University, MDes, real estate, 2002; Brown University, MA, development studies, 2004; Dartmouth College, MA, liberal studies, 2004; Brandeis University, MA, coexistence and conflict, 2007; Skidmore College: MA, liberal studies -- history, philosophy and psychology, 2007; and his latest, a Ph.D in design from Harvard University, 2008.

MCC Mourns Alumnus Jim Stibitz

Jim Stibitz, well known in the Muskegon community where he resided his entire life, died at the age of 59 after a battle with cancer.

Stibitz was on the wrestling team at Mona Shores High School, which earned him a place on the Muskegon Community College wrestling team. In 1968, he endured a tragic wrestling accident which left him paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

That wasn't enough to deter him from his college goals. He graduated from Muskegon Community College, Grand Valley State University, and Western Michigan University.

His work in the public sector included: Finance Director of the City of Muskegon Heights; Assistant Managing Director of the Muskegon County Road Commission; Interim City Manager of the City of Muskegon Heights; and the Muskegon County Chamber of Commerce.

Stibitz was also secretary of the Fruitport Township Planning Commission, and was active in many professional organizations including the County Road Association of Michigan (CRAM), the Muskegon Area Labor/Management Committee, and the Michigan Municipal Finance Officers' Association (MMFOA).

MCC Loses (the last?) Alumnus from the First Graduating Class of 1928

Muskegon Community College has lost one of their first graduates, Trena Wyn Gross of Muskegon. Ms. Gross passed away in March 2008 at the age of 99 at Village of the Oaks.

An article in the Fall 2004 issue of Reflections interviewed Gross at her home with MCC Public Information Director Bill Loxterman, and former MCC President Frank Marczak. In the article, Gross was said to still have many fond memories of her days at MJC. The college, then known as Muskegon Junior College, began classes in 1926 and graduated its first alumni (a class of 26 students) in 1928.

At that time, MCC classes were held on the third floor of the newly-built Muskegon High School. In her 2004 interview, Ms. Gross recalled working summers at Brunswick to earn money for tuition, and also working during the school year for room and board. After graduating from MJC, she completed her college studies at Western Teachers College in Kalamazoo, and then taught for eight years in Schoolcraft, Michigan in a facility with no indoor plumbing.

After her marriage, Ms. Gross moved back to Muskegon, where she was employed as an x-ray technician. Later she taught for Muskegon Christian Schools, as well as adult education classes at both Craig and Nelson Schools.

Another of the Class of 1928 was lost a few years ago: Elmer L. Andersen, statesman, civic leader, and activist, died November 15, 2004. A former Minnesota governor, Andersen was also an advocate for and champion of the University of Minnesota and its libraries.

According to "A Diamond in the Rough," a book written by Donald Goodman and Jack Rice on the history of Muskegon Community College, the class of 1928 started in 1926 with 62 students. Only 26 of them graduated, and records exist for only 24. Graduates for that year were: Elmer Andersen, Dorothy Christie, Helen Cook, Ryna DeJonge, John Dolfin, Jr., Katherine Evart, Kenneth Godschalk, Nathan Gould, Marvin Gudelsky, William Haglund, Harold Hathaway, Clarence Hill, Mary Anne Holmes, Malcolm Hoos, Fredrick Iverson, Nelis Kampenga, Edward Kuehn, Frederic Luther, Olive McCrea, Raymond Meier, Charles Silky, Nellie Walker, Mildred Whitehead, Edward Wickland, and Trena Wyn.

Our alumni always impress us with their letters and warm memories—please keep them coming! Send in the "What About YOU?" form to keep in touch with your college friends.

1930s

Howard R. Johnson (1936) – Majored in engineering at MCC, and then earned a Bachelor's degree in engineering from the University of Michigan in 1940. Howard remembers his "great classmates" at MCC, and notes that going to MCC was the only affordable way he could attend college at the time, which was during the Great Depression.

1940s

Edward E. Schultz (1946) – Started at MCC in 1940, graduated in 1942, was called to active duty from the U.S. Air Corp Reserve where he served as 2nd Lieutenant navigator, and then returned to MCC and graduated (again) in 1946. Edward then graduated from the University of Michigan in 1948 with a major in forestry, and then achieved his Master's degree from UofM in Wildlife Biology in 1950. Edward worked as a Fisheries Research Biologist after college for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. He designed electro fishing, radio tracking, and other environmental assessing equipment. He retired in 1979, and then served as the biologist in charge of the Bioelectronics Lab in Grayling. He has fond memories of being the stage manager for college plays at MCC, and was editor of the 1946 yearbook and college paper. He notes, "I am the only one pictured with a pipe in my graduation picture."

1950s

Rodney W. Atkins (1956) – Unlike most who attend MCC, Rodney did not continue his education after graduating from MCC. However, he says, his MCC diploma gave him a "foot in the door" for several exciting jobs. Rodney worked for Lear in Grand Rapids, then Bendix Systems Division in Ann Arbor, then the Engineering Staff Division of General Motors. In 1966 he moved to Seattle to work for the Boeing Company, rising into upper management at Boeing. He retired in 1995 from Boeing and he and his wife now travel extensively in their motorcoach. Rodney says he has many fond memories of staff and classmates at MCC. Rodney's father, A. Earl Atkins, was also an MCC alum, class of 1932.

Mary Anne (Meyers) Mulder (1953) – Majored in elementary education at MCC; then earned a degree in English/Education from Hope College in 1955. She recalls playing bridge in the girl's lounge, and singing in the chorus. She received a scholarship to Hope College (where she met her husband) and her degree there enabled her to teach elementary education for over 20 years.

1960s

Marvin L. Anderson (1966) – Majored in business/accounting at MCC, and received a Bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University in 1968. Marvin recalls walking between the Catholic Central area to Vanderlaan School many times, where he was involved with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. He credits his education at MCC and WMU as a major factor in his 30-year employment at what was then Inland Steel in the Chicago area.

Richard Beebe (1965) – Richard earned an Associates Degree from MCC in 1965. He recalls attending classes in the old red brick buildings near Muskegon High School and the beautiful, old, castle-like Hackley Building downtown with many fond memories. "We had great instructors and enjoyed the small campus atmosphere with Hackley Park directly across the street where we ate lunch while reading or socializing with other students and classmates," he says. "It was a wonderful time in my life and instilled in me the fact that new, expensive, multimillion dollar buildings have little to do with quality education.

"MCC prepared me for full-time campus life and I graduated from Western Michigan University in 1967 with a BA in Industrial Technology from the engineering school. While in a Drafting class, I distinctly remember the announcement over the PA system informing us of President Kennedy's assassination."

Richard would enjoy hearing from MCC friends and long-lost classmates via email at: bwcdouglas@aol.com.

Brent Bleier (1962) – Graduated from MCC, and went on to earn a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from University of Michigan in 1965. He graduated from the Detroit College of Law in 1969, and also passed the Michigan Bar Exam in 1969.

"I met my wife (a graduate of Central Michigan University) while I was at Michigan and we were married for 39 years, until her passing in 2003. We had two children, a son who is also an attorney and a Supervisory Special Agent with the FBI at its headquarters in Washington DC and a daughter who is a TV reporter/anchor in Western Kentucky.

"In my career, I worked as an executive in the mortgage banking industry in the Detroit area for about eight years and then relocated my family to northern California for the better quality of life here. In California, I had my own mortgage banking firm in Palo Alto and then I served as a state prosecutor for four years and chief counsel for the Sacramento Redevelopment Agency for three years before entering private practice and establishing my own law firm in Sacramento in 1982. My firm specialized in the representation of local government entities in cable television and eminent domain matters. I retired from the practice in 2003.

"MCC's impact upon me and my career cannot be overestimated. Not only did MCC fire my imagination in academics (where I had the very best instructor of my entire collegiate experience -- Louis Grossman, an executive of the then-dominant department store in Muskegon who taught philosophy and ethics at MCC part-time), but it gave me the opportunity to develop other skills as well. I was elected President of the Student Government while at MCC and that experience aided my social growth and development immensely. Most importantly, in the era before the federal government undertook to unconscionably burden students with immense amounts of 'student loans,' MCC enabled me to continue to work and save and ultimately work my way through my entire college and law school education without debt

(*Brent Bleier Continued*)

"As a result, although at the time of my high school graduation I felt disadvantaged by having to go to a junior college (rather than Michigan which had accepted me), I later came to see how much my MCC experience aided my development in ways that the full four years at Michigan could not have. I am a strong advocate of the junior college experience and have always had a fondness for MCC."

Jerry Brower (1965) – Started his extensive academic career at MCC, and transferred them to what was then Grand Valley State College, majoring in Physics and graduating in 1968. Brower then attained a Master's degree at the University of Michigan, and a PhD in Physics at Kingston University, London, England.

"MCC opened my eyes (and mind) to education," Brower wrote. "I whole-heartedly endorse junior colleges." Brower fondly recalls attempting to gather 15 cents between himself and a friend to buy a pop from a machine at the Vanderlaan or Hackley buildings of the MCC campus.

Phyllis G. East (1965) – Majored in Accounting at MCC.

John Hedstrom (1965) – Majored in Business at MCC, and then went on to earn a Bachelor degree from Ferris State University in marketing education, and a Master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in educational administration. He fondly recalls great instructors he had at MCC like Bob Miner, who taught economics. Attending a community college made a big impact on John: "I have used my experience with MCC to encourage students here in Wisconsin to consider attending our vocational-technical schools (we don't have community colleges) for their basic courses and then transferring to a four year school," he writes.

William LeTarte (1968) – Majored in Business at MCC, then went on to earn his Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate degrees from Western Michigan University. He remembers the move to MCC's current campus as being very exciting. Bill is currently Superintendent of the Mar Lee School District in Marshall, Michigan. He is also the ex-Director of the Michigan Small and Rural School Association.

John F. Lodzinski (1966) – Majored in Engineering at MCC, and then went on to Michigan State University and earned a degree in Civil Engineering in 1968. He moved to Benson, Arizona where he was a transmission engineer, and was also a city of Benson council member. John fondly remembers MCC's friendly instructors, who encouraged him and showed him he was capable of doing college-level work and studying.

John Ricco (1967) – Majored in liberal arts at MCC, earned a degree in accounting from Michigan State University in 1969, then attained an MBA in 1974 from the University of Detroit/Mercy. He remembers going all over Muskegon for classes, before the current campus was finished, and doesn't feel MCC's "good basic college classes" can be improved upon. John recently published a book, "The Ride of Your Life – Fighting Cancer with Attitude."

Wilma A. Sikkenga (1969) – Earned her LPN from MCC classes, and worked at Hackley Hospital. She went on to Ferris State University and graduated as an RN in 1974, working for migrant programs and the District 5 Health Department. She credits MCC for a "wonderful beginning of my nursing career," and has many fond memories of her friends and instructors.

Vic Varin (1967) – Majored in pre-education at MCC, then received his Bachelor's degree in Secondary Education from Western Michigan University in 1969. He credits MCC for a good "basic" education, and remembers walking around to various buildings around town for his classes (before our current campus location).

1970s

Elizabeth S. (Glenn) Giammarco (1979) – Majored in English and biomedical science at MCC, and earned a Bachelor's degree from Grand Valley State University in Biomedical Science in 1981. She attained her Master's degree in Psychology from the University of Southern Maine in 2005, and is currently a PhD candidate there. She credits MCC with having a major impact on her life. "(MCC) allowed me to continue studies I would not have been able to otherwise."

1980s

Lee (Giddings) LaPointe (1986) – Majored in Elementary Education at MCC, and went on to earn a Bachelor's degree from Grand Valley State University in 1988, and a Master's degree from Western Michigan University in 1996. Lee credits MCC for helping her to be well-prepared for GVSU. "My MCC profs were as qualified and expectations were as high as any profs I had."

Brian Obits (1982) – Majored in English at MCC, transferred to Michigan State University and earned a Bachelor's degree in Advertising, 1984. Brian also earned a graduate certificate in Non-Profit Leadership from Grand Valley State University. He credits MCC as being a good foundation for further studies, and fondly recalls playing in the jazz band and the "Boogie Brothers Last Stand" concert in the Overbrook Theater.

Carol (Stahl) Timmer (1983) – Studied Nursing at MCC, transferred to Grand Valley State University where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Nursing, and is currently working on her Master's degree in Nursing. Carol's memories include MCC's instructors, who she describes as "very caring, and wanted their students to succeed." She credits MCC with having a huge impact on her career.

Tom Wiersma (1980) – Graduated from MCC, and then transferred to Grand Valley State University where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Finance in 1983. Tom credits MCC as a "great place to start your education," along with "great" MCC instructors and a lot of fun times.

1990s

Chris Houghtaling (1990) – Majored in Business at MCC, then earned a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Grand Valley State University inn 1991, and a Juris Doctorate from Valparaiso University

School of Law in 1999. Chris fondly recalls his "excellent" education at MCC, and many great friendships that continue to today.

Jennifer Jacobs (1999) – Studied Nursing at MCC, and credits her Associate's degree for helping her land a "wonderful" job at a busy hospital in Tennessee, where she is a Critical Care Charge Nurse. She has fond memories of the "family atmosphere" of the MCC Nursing Department. "MCC's clinical program is astounding," Jacobs said. "All of the hands-on care and learning we received really prepared us for the 'real world'."

Duane Kelley (1998) – Received his Associate Degree in Nursing at MCC, Bachelor's degree in Nursing from Ferris State University in 2003, and a Master's degree in Nursing from Michigan State University in 2007. In August 2007, he passed the national certifying exam and became a Family Nurse Practitioner. "I really enjoyed my classmates and the nursing faculty at MCC. Going through nursing school was the toughest thing I had ever done at the time. I was 24 when I started at MCC and was on (and still am I guess) academic probation at Wayne State University in Detroit. School always seemed so overwhelming to me. My classmates and faculty became like family and many of those relationships that started back in 1994 continue today.

"MCC got me started in a career that is personally rewarding, technically challenging and always changing. It has also welcomed me back as an adjunct faculty for the nursing program. It sharpened my study skills and habits and helped me to grow up."

Karla Pankow (1999) – After MCC, Karla earned a BBA in Marketing from Grand Valley State University in 2001. Although she currently works for Novartis Pharmaceuticals in Grand Rapids, her "side job" involves volunteering for Habitat for Humanity. She was recently highlighted in a GVSU "Alumni Spotlight" for her fall 2008 trip to Tajikistan where she served as a Habitat for Humanity Global Village volunteer. She considers her volunteer work "a life-changing experience," and has more trips planned in the future.

Julie Stone (1991) – Earned two Associate degrees from MCC; the latest an Applied Science degree in Automotive. Julie recalls the "good, caring" counselors and instructors at MCC. "My education gave me the skills to earn a living," she writes. "I now own my own tire business."

Michael Videtich (1996) – Majored in Business at MCC, then attained a BBA in Management from Grand Valley State University in 2002, and a Masters of Science in Administration (MSA) in HR Administration degree in 2007. Michael has many fond memories of friends made while attending MCC. "I think that MCC had a huge impact on my life," he writes. "Before attending MCC, I first attended Eastern Michigan University. I didn't like it there and dropped out. After a break, I attended MCC. I think that the leap from such a small high school to such a large school was too much for me at the time. MCC was a great school that was definitely bigger than my high school, but smaller than most of the four-year Michigan public universities. MCC provided me with the personal attention and helped me build the confidence that I needed to continue with my education.

"After completing my Masters, I had the privilege of having an abstract of my original thesis published with the International Academy of Business & Economics (IABE) and did an academic presentation of the work at the IABE conference in Las Vegas, 2007," he added.

Although Michael appreciates his MCC experience, is there room for improvement at MCC? "The customer service level. Although staff is typically willing to help, I think that there is not a true "customer focused" attitude at the college from all staff members," he writes. "I have personally talked to staff recently (my son is now attending) and was not impressed with the lack of follow-through and the unwillingness to go the extra mile to help make things work. The staff is clearly very knowledgeable. However, I think that a little more student-centered focus from the support staff would be great. From what I have seen, the counselors were and are still great at getting students on the right path."

Dan Witkowski (1993) – Earned his general credits at MCC, and then transferred to Ferris State University and earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Marketing/Public Relations in 1996. Dan fondly recalls "great instruction and class size, caring staff and approachable professors" at MCC, and credits the college with getting him started on his professional path.

2000s

Marguerite (Megan) Arthur (2005) – Marguerite was a dual-enrolled student at MCC from 1996-2000, and then returned to complete her Associate's degree with additional transfer credits. She earned a Bachelor's degree (Magna Cum Laude) from Western Michigan University in Applied Mathematics in 2007, and is currently pursuing a PhD from the University of Kentucky. Now teaching mathematics courses herself, she fondly recalls her time at MCC. "I definitely remember the support, encouragement and guidance of the math-physics faculty, especially Maria Andersen, Diane Krasnewich, Tom Wolters and Hayden Smith," she writes. "I wouldn't be where I am now without these instructors."

"The math-science faculty at MCC helped me to find my passion, inspiring me to go on to graduate school so that I, too can teach and help people find and reach their goals. And Kurt Troutman made sure I knew how to research and support my opinions and then communicate them clearly. Without passion and the ability to express myself, I would not be able to navigate the rigors of graduate education," Arthur said.

"The one thing I would improve about MCC is its view on the importance of mathematics and science classes," she writes. "It seemed that whenever there was a budget cut, these areas were among the first to go. And while I realize that most people who attend MCC are not majoring in these areas, and indeed may never need to factor an algebraic expression again, the critical thinking and problem solving skills these courses teach are absolutely vital to succeeding as a college student. They stretch to all areas of academics; graphs and effective planning in business and econ, logic in philosophy, understanding the learning process in education and social work, crisis management and effective triage in health care, and the ability to see a problem and create a plan to solve it, which is helpful in academics as well as life.

(Marguerite Arthur Continued)

"MCC has a wealth of great instructors in these areas, most of whom will do anything they can to help students master the material, and indeed use technology and other novel approaches to enhance their effectiveness in teaching," says Marguerite. "The more thinly (instructors) are spread, the less effective these instructors become. And in my years as a tutor, the number one reason I heard for students considering dropping out of MCC, was worry about being able to pass mathematics classes. Given enough instructors and resources, this need not continue to be an issue, and MCC could graduate students who are uniquely prepared for higher education and careers."

Zoumana Coulibaly (2007) – Majored in Computer Science at MCC, then went on to the Polytechnic Institute of New York University and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree there. "The warmth of the MCC community was unforgettable," says Zoumana. "Also, its diverse body of students and faculty made me feel at home.

"MCC gave me the preparation I needed in order to attend a larger college. Moreover, my speaking and writing abilities as well as my confidence have been largely sharpened thanks to my years at MCC," she writes. "MCC offers its students the ability to interact with students from across the country and the world through programs such as the Model United Nations and Model Arab League among others. As a veteran of these models, i believe that they should be maintained and expanded to areas other than politics."

Tawanda McDaniel (2007) – After graduation from MCC, Tawanda enrolled at University of Phoenix. She fondly remembers MCC staff, and credits MCC for preparing her for "higher studies."

Jordan Mundt (2000) – Jordan was dual-enrolled in high school and MCC, and graduated from MCC six weeks before graduating from high school. He went on to the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, and earned a Bachelor's degree in 2002 (summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa) in English and History. Jordan also achieved an MA in English, and Juris Doctor degree from Notre Dame in 2005. Jordan fondly recalls taking writing and Shakespeare classes from MCC English instructor Mary Tyler, and going to Stratford, Ontario for theater performances. "(MCC) encouraged me to be a writer," says Jordan, "and prepared me for studies at Notre Dame." Jordan is currently on the Board of Directors for the MCC Alumni Association.

Jed Roberts (2002) – After graduating from MCC, Jed earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Geography from Western Michigan University in 2005, and an M.S. in Geography from Oregon State University in March 2008. He considers biomedical ethics with Blair Morrissey and astronomy with Jon Truax his most influential courses. "MCC provided me a great and affordable introduction to higher education," he writes. "I will forever be a proponent of community colleges and may one day teach at one. I am now a GIS Database Coordinator working for the State of Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries."

Lisa Yager *is a recent graduate of MCC and Central Michigan University. Here is an interesting story contributed by Lisa that started here at MCC! She is now living and working in Germany.*

I am 23 years old and recently completed my Bachelor of Science degree at Central Michigan University with a major in German and minors in Anthropology and Mathematics. During the past year, I took part in a yearlong study abroad program in Mainz, Germany, where I attended the Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz. This particular study abroad program is sponsored and funded by the Federation of German-American Clubs, an organization founded after World War II to encourage positive relations between the two countries. Full scholarships are provided to German and American students to study in the other country.

I not only attended classes, but was able to take advantage of many other opportunities. I completed an internship at the Roman-Germanic Central Museum, one of the leading archaeological research institutes in Europe. They are very well-known for their archaeological restoration workshops, where famous finds like the equipment from Ötzi, the 5,300 year-old mummy found in the Alps, was researched and restored. During my internship, I translated the entire German-language website of the research institute and corresponding museums into English. In addition, I wrote press releases for the museum, proof-read German and English texts and, by doing so, increased the museum's presence in the English-speaking and international realm. This has created the opportunity for me to do contracted translation work for the museum in the future as a freelance translator.

I have also been offered work as an English instructor for the Berlitz Language School in Offenbach, Germany, just outside of Frankfurt. Berlitz is a leading language institute with schools all over the world, also known for its language-learning books and materials. I will be teaching English to all levels and age groups, from children and students to adults.

I am looking forward to relocating to Germany to begin this new phase of my life. I am glad I was first able to discover and develop my interest in German at MCC. I took German there simply out of interest but it later developed into my major. The high quality instruction and small class size at MCC contributed to my success. I would like to extend my gratitude to Kathy Tosa, professor of German, for sharing her enthusiasm and knowledge with her classes. *(Story reprinted from GLOBAL AWARENESS - the International e-Newsletter of Muskegon Community College.)*

Local Students Receive Scholarships Funded through the Foundation for Muskegon Community College

Scholarship awards to assist students attending Muskegon Community College were made in 2008 from Foundation for MCC funds administered by the Community Foundation for Muskegon County:

- Whitehall High School student **Katie Lombard** was awarded a $950 scholarship from the Richard Kraft/Suzanne Kraft Mateer Scholarship fund. This fund assists graduating seniors or MCC students pursuing a college degree.

- **Alyssa Benedict** from North Muskegon High School was awarded $450 from the Edward & Wilma Kyvig Scholarship, created to assist students of good academic standing.

- Four William H. Young Memorial Scholarships, to assist associate degree-seeking students who have demonstrated academic excellence, were awarded to Mona Shores High School student **Stephanie Schouten** ($2,000), MCC student **Wendy Kops** ($500), MCC student **Patrick Champagne** ($750), and Whitehall High School student **Kristy Becklin** ($500).

- Muskegon High School Class of '46 Scholarships going to future MCC students were awarded to **Pashion Ford** and **Keonna Burks** ($1,000 each).

- **Melissa Benderman** received a $550 scholarship from the Muskegon District Nurses. This fund assists nursing education students who plan to work in Muskegon County.

- **Megan LaNore** was awarded $500 from the Leone Derezinski Nutt Scholarship fund, providing scholarships for second-year nursing students at MCC.

- Holton High School student **Brittney Jack** was awarded the William and Velva Riggs Scholarship to study nursing.

- The F. Charles Raap Public Service Scholarship was awarded to Fruitport High School student **Cailey Loring**. Ms. Loring plans to use the $300 award to study graphic design.

- The August VanEerden Scholarship, created to assist a Muskegon High School graduate in acquiring a degree in the field of education, was awarded to **Courtney Hayes**.

Katie Lombard

Alyssa Benedict

Stephanie Schouten

Pashion Ford

Keonna Burks

Brittany Jack

Cailey Loring

Courtney Hayes

Muskegon Community College
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Muskegon, MI 49442

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What About YOU?

Your friends and classmates from MCC would like to hear from you. Please fill out and return the following survey:

What years did you attend MCC?

What was your major area of study?

Did you graduate from MCC? If yes, what year?

Did you enroll in a 4-year institution following your time at MCC? If yes, where? What was your major field of study? When did you graduate?

Did you pursue a Masters or Doctorate? If yes, what, when, and where?

What fond memories (events or people!) do you have of MCC?

What impact has MCC had on your life and/or career?

If you could improve anything about MCC, what would it be?

Other comments:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Return to MCC Alumni Office, 221 S. Quarterline Road, Muskegon, MI 49442
OR
Fax to: 231.777.0531
OR
Email: webmaster@muskegoncc.edu