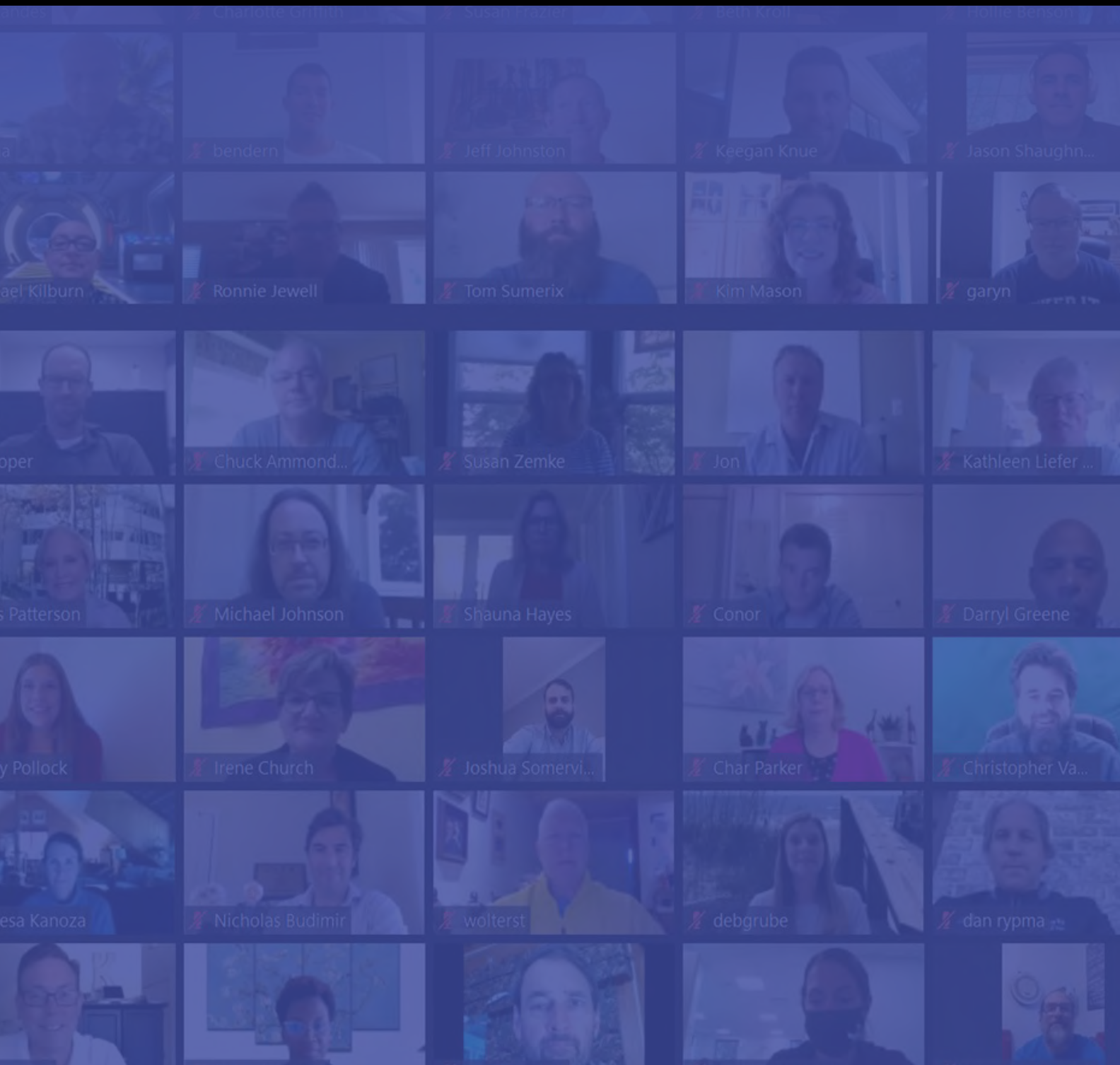


# REFLECTIONS

Muskegon Community College Magazine

For Alumni, Retirees & Friends of MCC

December 2020



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MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE | REFLECTIONS MAGAZINE | DECEMBER 2020

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Muskegon Community College

Reflecting upon 2020, I am confident that very few of our students, faculty or staff have faced a more challenging year in their lives, given tumultuous events such as the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, major civil rights actions across the nation, and a contentious presidential election.

In just nine months, more U.S. citizens (240,000 as of Nov. 9) have died of COVID-19 than during the entire Vietnam Conflict. By comparison, only during the Civil War (640,000) and World War II (407,000) has the U.S. experienced more combat and related fatalities.

## A New Direction

The world is not waiting for COVID-19 to run its course, nor are we at Muskegon Community College. Governors and leaders across the nation are moving to protect their residents by extending work-at-home orders, implementing health and safety measures, and limiting gatherings to stop the spread of COVID-19.

At MCC, we began our planning for the pandemic in January, finalized our "closing" plans in early March and made the switch to fully online/remote on Friday, March 13. Among our actions, we:

- shifted the great majority (80 percent) of its courses to an online/remote format;
- established an Emergency Planning and Response Team, meeting daily initially, to respond to student, faculty, and community needs;
- convened more frequent virtual gatherings of faculty, students, and administration to assure operational functionality during the transition, including our now weekly All-Campus Meeting, which has drawn up to 230 employees; and
- invited national and regional health care experts to educate the community, including Trinity Health Systems MI Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Rosalie Tocco-Bradley and our own MCC Trustee and Muskegon County Health Department Director Kathy Moore.

## The Year Wasn't All COVID

Several new and exciting opportunities for current and prospective students were launched during the second half of the year.

**The Futures for Frontliners** program, unveiled by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, will assist those eligible Michiganders who served as essential workers during the state COVID-19 shutdown in April, May, and June. The initiative provides them with the opportunity to earn tuition-free their first associates degree or industry-related certificate at a local Michigan community college.

In October, McDonald's restaurants and MCC announced their **Archways to Opportunity** partnership. The comprehensive education strategy with multiple programs gives McDonald's employees an opportunity to grow and learn – no matter where they are on their journey. Eligible crew members who work a minimum of 15 hours per week for more than 90 days – have \$2,500 available per year in tuition assistance. Eligible McDonald's managers who work 30 hours per week have \$3,000 available per year in tuition assistance.

Also, in October, Little River Casino Resort and MCC announced their **Seven Directions** partnership. The two-year management development program, which begins in January 2021, combines experiential learning onsite at the Resort with academic studies at MCC leading to a related associate degree or certificate.

On Sept. 30, the State of Michigan funded the **Michigan Reconnect** program, which will provide financial support for students over age 25 to attend community college or attain a GED.

At this writing, MCC is working with several other large regional employers on joint program partnerships to help enable their employees to achieve their educational goals. MCC, which in recent years has been recognized as the Best Community College in Michigan and nationally as a Top 30



community college, remains committed to preparing students, building communities and improving lives.

As a result, we have enhanced our graduation rate, and successfully completed the largest (\$3.5 million) fundraising initiative in our 94-year history, as well as the largest infrastructure improvement investment since 1967.

## How May You Help?

Our alums comprise the most powerful constituent group at MCC. You walked our halls, learned well, and are doing great things in your communities. This is your opportunity to make a difference during this singular moment in history. You can volunteer your time, donate to your favorite College program, and spread the good word about MCC.

While we do live in extraordinary times, your talents, resolve, and positive spirit are critical aspects of what bonds us together as a community and what will help us succeed in the days, months and years ahead.

As always, contact me at any time and Go Jayhawks!

**Dale K. Nesbary, Ph.D.**

*President*

*Muskegon Community College*

## Be in the know, at home or on the go!



News and opportunities  
for MCC alumni

[facebook.com/mccalumni](https://facebook.com/mccalumni)



President's Blog  
Dale Nesbary, Ph.D.

[presidentblog.muskegoncc.edu](https://presidentblog.muskegoncc.edu)



News and updates from  
all MCC athletic teams

[twitter.com/jayhawkathletic](https://twitter.com/jayhawkathletic)





MCC students during an in-person class meeting under new restrictions including smaller class sizes and face masks.

# MCC Responds, Adapts to the Coronavirus

By Kelley Conrad, MCC Vice President for Academic Affairs

In the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, Muskegon Community College is not the same college it was in the first months of 2020. We will never be that college again.

In January, we started Winter 2020 semester strong, preparing for our 10-year reaccreditation review and bolstering our student success agenda. The coronavirus was far away and the chances of it affecting us seemed remote. That all changed in February as the virus spread to the United States. Michigan confirmed its first two cases on March 10.

Two days later, after much communication and deliberation regarding COVID-19, we made the difficult but inevitable decision to suspend face-to-face instruction at MCC. We were just over halfway through

the Winter semester, past spring break, and looking forward to completing the semester and the year with our annual commencement celebration. Although we have a long history of quality, online classes made up only 16% of the course sections. The move to remote meant hundreds of courses and instructors, and thousands of students, were thrust into a situation no one expected.

With hope and, in hindsight, naiveté, we thought we might resume face-to-face classes in early April. The campus remained open. The Health and Wellness Center, Tutoring, Counseling and Advising,

Financial Aid, Student Success Office, Testing Center, the Library and more continued to serve students. Students who did not have internet access or a computer used computers on campus or at the MCC Ottawa Center in Grand Haven.

Faculty who were skilled in delivering online classes, as well as the Center for Teaching and Learning staff, were called upon to support the Herculean task of shifting faculty and students to remote instruction. Faculty were asked to focus on the learning outcomes they wanted to achieve and to be as flexible, transparent, creative, and kind with students as possible.

On March 18, we closed all campus locations and continued to navigate still more

**“...from the outset our overarching goal has been to keep MCC students and employees safe and healthy as we all continue to learn and work.”**



*MCC Respiratory Therapy Instructor, Keegan Knue, worked the frontlines as a respiratory therapist in April to assist with the escalating cases of COVID-19 while continuing to teach his MCC classes online. Nearly 85% of registered Respiratory Therapists in the greater Muskegon and Grand Rapids area are MCC Alums.*

uncharted territory. We scrambled that day to distribute loaner laptops, webcams, and document cameras to faculty, staff and students who needed them. All services to students and prospective students, including tutoring, counseling, and advising shifted entirely online. We became acutely aware of the number of households without broadband internet access, especially those in rural areas and impoverished communities. We thought we might be back the first week of April. Then, on March 23, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued the first stay-at-home order.

MCC faculty and staff did a tremendous job transitioning very quickly from in-person classes and services to remote learning and student supports. Many instructors used Blackboard, our learning management system, while others used email, phone calls, Zoom videoconferencing, and the U.S. Postal Service - whatever worked.

We heard from our students and they were stressed. Many had school-age children at home, worked as first-responders, or were newly unemployed. Some asked if we could end Winter semester five weeks early or switch to pass/fail instead of grades. Others withdrew from their classes, finished their classes over the summer, or just drifted away despite our best efforts to keep them engaged. Although the vast majority passed their classes, it wasn't easy for anyone.

In early April, we made the decision to continue Summer semester working

remotely and providing classes online. Course schedules were reworked and converted to online, and students who had already registered were notified that their summer courses were shifting. One significant concern was our ability to offer in-person classes for programs that must be in-person: nursing, respiratory therapy, medical assistant, applied technology, and the science classes that support those programs. The irony of our inability to educate students for the frontline health care positions that were so desperately needed was not lost.

Although Gov. Whitmer extended the stay-at-home order several times, each iteration became more nuanced. On May 7, in the third extension of the stay-at-home order, workers necessary to train first responders and health care workers could return to work, provided as much instruction as possible was done online. This paved the way to start critical respiratory therapy classes on May 11 and additional healthcare, biology, and applied technology face-to-face courses later in the spring and summer.

In addition to the disruption in classes, we cancelled every event scheduled through the spring and summer – concerts, plays, lectures, field trips, sporting events, high school senior visit days, and more. In place of our annual grand commencement at the Mercy Health Arena in downtown Muskegon, we held a week-long virtual commencement and a drive-through ceremony.

In June, we decided to continue offering most of our course sections, about 80%, in an online format for Fall 2020 semester. Over the summer, MCC faculty worked to convert face-to-face classes to

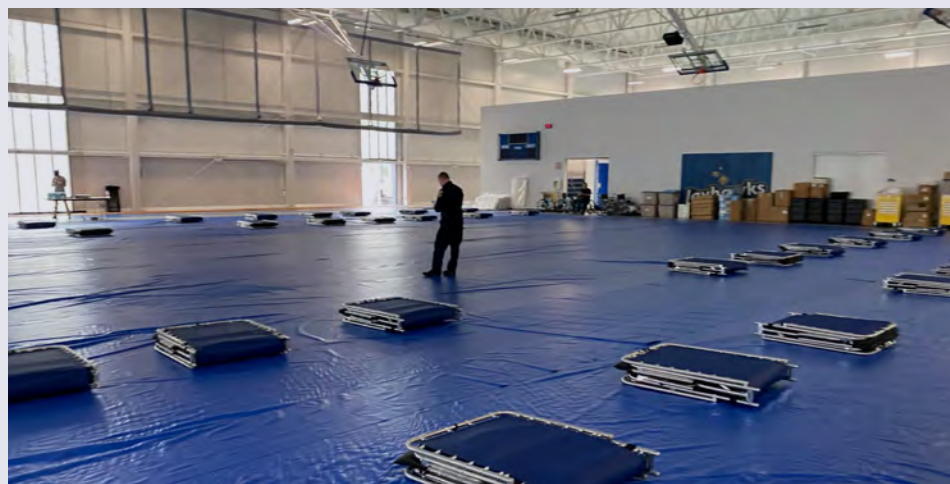
online formats and we developed new approaches to online. We now offer:

- asynchronous online - the traditional approach with all work online and no common meeting time;
- synchronous online - with students and instructors meeting at set times through videoconferencing;
- hybrid - with a portion of the class as asynchronous online; and
- traditional face-to-face with small class sizes, social distancing, and required face coverings.

Faculty members also spent the summer learning to use new technologies and techniques so we could continue providing high-quality courses to our students.

As we approach the end of our fall semester - the first time ever that 80% of our classes are online in some shape or form and our services are mostly online - we are preparing for a Winter 2021 semester that will look very similar. We would much rather see our students on campus, and most would rather be there. But from the outset our overarching goal has been to keep MCC students and employees safe and healthy as we all continue to learn and work. It has been challenging to continuously adapt and shift to meet our students' needs, but we've never lost sight of our college-wide focus on helping our students succeed in the classroom and in life.

Crises are great opportunities for growth, and we are growing during this pandemic. We will return to campus with many more resources, tools, and strategies to engage our students in college life and learning.



*In March, MCC partnered with the State of Michigan and Mercy Health to use the Health and Wellness Center as hospital overflow to free up space for the possible influx of critical COVID-19 cases.*



# In Memoriam: The Legacy of Richard Kraft

*By Rachel Gorman  
Alumni and Donor Relations Manager*

Richard Harold Kraft, a Muskegon Community College Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient and one of the College's most generous philanthropists, passed away on September 25, 2020.

Born in Ludington, Michigan, he moved with his parents to Muskegon, where he graduated from Muskegon High School in 1947 and from Muskegon Junior College in 1949. He earned a degree from Michigan State University's College of Civil Engineering.

His successful professional career spanned 54 years. He worked as a land surveyor and civil engineer. He established the

Richard H. Kraft Engineering Inc. in Flint, MI. He retired in 2006 and sold the business, which still exists as Kraft Engineering and Surveying Inc.

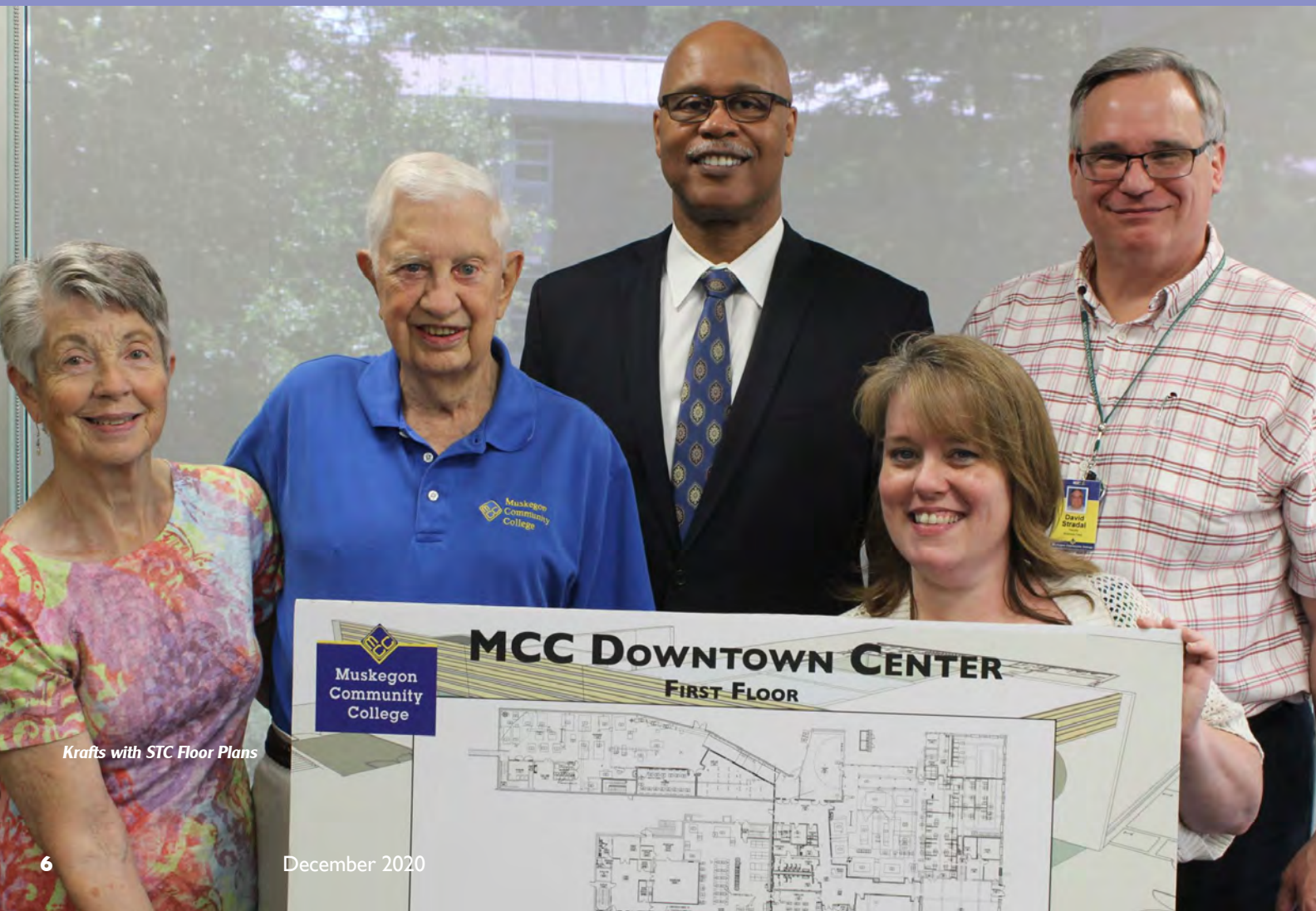
In 2008, he and his wife funded construction of the Richard and Ann Kraft Student Life and Alumni Center on campus. He created and funded the Richard Kraft and Susan Kraft Mateer endowed scholarship, named for his sister and himself, to help Muskegon-area students prepare for their careers at MCC. In 2016, a then-record donation of \$300,000 from Ann and Richard Kraft supported the Rapid Prototype Center located in the Rooks/Sarnicola Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies.

Richard reached for the stars with his donation to the renovation of the Carr-Fles Planetarium, participated in all of the College's Founders Day, Jayhawk Scramble, and Donor Appreciation Day events. He was always matching donations and creating challenges for his fellow alumni friends and other donors. A long-time Foundation for

MCC Board member, his insights and advice were always welcome.

"Alumnus Dick Kraft was a passionate supporter of Muskegon Community College," said MCC President Dr. Dale Nesbary. "His robust humor and kind words always made my day, as well as of those around him. He bragged about the Jayhawks, whether at an event, a meal or even when attending an MSU football game (our mutual 4-year undergraduate school). MCC was top of mind for him. I will miss him greatly."

"Richard Kraft was one of the most delightful and down to Earth people I have known," added Diana Osborn, the MCC Board of Trustees Chair and a MCC Foundation Board Member. "My first encounter with him was at MCC's 75th Anniversary Celebration, at which time he wrote a generous check to the Foundation for Muskegon Community College. This was only the beginning of his generosity and demonstration of his love for Muskegon Community College. It continued from there."



*Krafts with STC Floor Plans*



Richard is survived by his wife, Ann Ullrey Kraft; foster daughter, Frances Ann Nance; sister, Suzanne Mateer (Bruce); sister-in-law, Janyce Robson (Gerald); nieces, nephews and friends. He was preceded in death by son, David Edward Kraft.

Richard will be greatly missed by the entire MCC family and community, but his legacy of supporting access to higher education at his alma mater will live on for generations to come.



Former home of Muskegon Junior College



Ribbon cutting ceremony for the Sturuss Technology Center







## MCC's 2020 Virtual Commencement

*By Rachel Gorman, Alumni and Donor Relations Manager*

As the reality of COVID-19 continued to upend the activities of Muskegon Community College, one critical event that could not avoid disruption was the 2020 Commencement Ceremony. The in-person event traditionally held in May was overhauled into a week-long, virtual celebration in an effort to properly honor and congratulate the MCC class of 2020.

"The decision to hold a virtual Commencement Ceremony was not an easy decision," noted Aaron Richman, MCC Registrar and 2020 Commencement Committee Chair. "The Commencement Committee considered all possible options, but as the COVID-19 situation quickly worsened, a virtual celebration became our only viable option."

The virtual celebration premiered a new video each day with various messages to the 2020 graduates in an effort to still provide key moments of the Commencement Ceremony.

The schedule went as follows:

### **Day 1**

Video messages to the Class of 2020 from MCC President Dale K. Nesbary, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, and U.S. Senator Gary Peters.

### **Day 2**

Video messages to the Class of 2020 from MCC faculty, staff and alumni as well as

acknowledgements of this year's faculty and staff retirees.

### **Day 3**

Video message from Provost/Executive Vice President John Selmon, video addresses to the Class of 2020 by student speakers William Vauters and Matthew Torrenza, and video messages from Class of 2020 graduates to their family and friends.

### **Day 4**

Video recognition of the 2020 nursing graduates and messages from the MCC Nursing Faculty.

### **Day 5**

Video address and formal awarding of degrees and certificates by MCC Board of Trustees Chair Diana Osborn. A scrolling list in the video of every Class of 2020 graduate was followed by a virtual tossing of the graduates' mortar boards

The MCC Faculty Association also organized the MCC Class of 2020 Student Graduation Drive-Thru event. Traditionally, MCC graduates begin the Commencement ceremony walking between two rows of applauding faculty. This event allowed graduates to drive through the main campus south parking lot, where they were congratulated by MCC faculty who lined the driveway at a distance.

"Graduation commemorates the achievements of both our students and faculty. In this challenging time, we needed a way to be safe, yet keep honored traditions such as graduation. The MCC faculty were eager to support the drive thru. We all wanted to see our students' smiles, as we cheered to convey congratulations! Every honk of the horn, every 'WhoooHoo', the clapping, and the gift in us being together marked a successful Graduation Drive Thru!"

Finally, the 2020 graduating class was mailed a special Graduate Package. This package included a diploma cover, the 2020 Commencement Program, a letter from MCC President Dale K. Nesbary, and the invitation to participate in an in-person MCC Commencement Ceremony when possible.

The Virtual Commencement videos and photos are still available to view on the college website at [www.muskegoncc.edu/commencement](http://www.muskegoncc.edu/commencement)

The MCC Commencement Committee once again thanks all the speakers for their participation, faculty and staff for their enthusiasm and creativity, as well as alumni and friends of the college for their support to pull off this historic commencement celebration. Congratulations again to the MCC Class of 2020—Go Jayhawks!







# 2020 MCC Retirements

By Rachel Gorman,  
Alumni and Donor Relations Manager

"Start, Stay, Succeed" a tagline not only applicable to Muskegon Community College students, but to numerous employees with longstanding careers at the institution. Amidst the challenges and changes of 2020, MCC also said farewell to many of these employees as they entered a new chapter of their lives: retirement.



**Sherri DeBoef Chandler**

-Faculty, Social Science  
-21 Years of Service  
-Sherri is one of the first people I met on campus back in 2007! She has always been a big supporter of the social sciences. While on my hiring committee and subsequent committees she would always write the most detailed teaching evaluations anyone has seen! You know what I mean Sherri! Dr. Chandler has an enthusiasm for teaching and for course development. Congratulations on your retirement.



**Sche Cornelius**

-Continuing Education Coordinator, has also held other positions at MCC  
-24 Years of Service  
-"Sche has displayed excellent customer service to students, staff, and the community; offering enrichment classes, activities, and events on campus. Her dedication has been evident in Enrollment Services and most recently, in the Office of Community Outreach. Sche always serves others with high regards and accommodations."



**Carol Briggs-Erikson**

-Faculty Librarian  
-25 Years of Service  
-Carol is a skilled professional librarian that ensured that the Hendrick Meijer Library always stayed current on the academic resources, her years of service at MCC were dedicated to leading her team to provide those resources with the highest customer services to faculty and students.



**Stephen Hall**

-Custodian at the Lakeshore Fitness Center  
-4 years of Service  
-"If Steve was on the Titanic, he probably could have fixed it based on his abilities and our building. Even after the countless leaks, clogging the piping, fire alarms going off for some mysterious reason and so many more, Steve kept our building afloat and physically running. Steve was a modern-day MacGyver, able to fix any challenge that came up in our big old building with limited resources. He was as selfless as they come, always up for whatever challenges sprang up. He has a wealth of knowledge and will be missed."



**Tom Harryman**

-Faculty, Theater  
-12 Years of Service  
-From Sheila Wahamaki "It was said when Tom Harryman was a student here at MCC that he was going to 'ruin the theater program!' Tom did not ruin the theater program in fact as a faculty member he 'raised the bar' in everything he did - as a teacher, designer, actor, and director. Tom instilled knowledge and professionalism in every student he taught. He touched not only our minds but our hearts too. For me he has been the best collaborator and friend I have ever had. You will be missed Tom Harryman and we thank you!"



**Scott Longmire**

-Custodian  
-20 Years of Service  
-From Tonette Brown Gamer, "Thank you for your dedicated service and commitment to MCC. You have been a joy to work with and supervise but, the added bonus was becoming your friend. I am so incredibly happy for you and what your future holds. Many times people retire early and do not get the opportunity to enjoy those things that they have waited so long for but, you look like you are one of the lucky ones. I know that you have many projects and things that you will find to keep busy with, however, don't forget to slow down and enjoy the roses. You may be leaving these "hallowed halls" of MCC but you will never leave the hearts of those that you truly touched, especially mine."



**Trynette Lottie-Harps**

-Dean of Community Outreach  
-20 Years of Service  
-Trynette is calm and composed under the most challenging circumstances. She is fair, positive, and, by example, makes me want to be a better person. Her concern for our students, the college, and the community is legendary. She has worn many hats over the years and MCC is better for her having spent her career here. Trynette is a great colleague who will be missed."



**Tom Martin**

-Faculty, Applied Technology  
-22 Years of Service  
-Tom started his career in engineering after obtaining his Engineering Degree from Western Michigan University. His life-long ambition was to provide his knowledge and skills to students teaching both at Orchard View and Whitehall before settling into his final assignment as an Instructor for MCC. Tom is a great mentor and provided visional leadership in the new downtown Sturges-Technology Center. He will be greatly missed by his colleagues in the Applied Technology Program.



**Brenda McClain**

-Librarian  
-19 Years of Service  
-Brenda shares that her greatest career milestone accomplishment was actually 30 years in the making - it was having the privilege to hire, mentor, and work with well over 100 students employed in the library over the years while they attended MCC, Brenda was able to watch their personal growth and educational accomplishments. She helped to instill a positive work ethic and be a part of a team that led by example. This helped them realize that everyone they meet is important in any and all aspects of their lives and deserves respect. Students who worked in the library will always be very special to Brenda and she is fortunate to remain in contact with many of these amazing individuals to this day.



**Carol Neal**

-Paraprofessional, College Success Center  
-39 Years  
-My fondest MCC memory is my mentor Donald J. Goodman. He acknowledged my abilities and encouraged my endeavors for success in making a positive difference at MCC. He taught me the meaning of education. As my instructor, when I attended MCC at age 16, he challenged me over and above what was expected of a college reading student. When I returned after graduating High School, he hired me as a student worker in the PAL Lab. He acknowledged my willingness to successfully assist students with the knowledge he had taught me. When he hired me as the Reading Paraprofessional in 1981, he encouraged me to grow and share the knowledge. One of the abilities listed on the job description was the ability to have Empathy for the student. He believed in that, and so do I.



We continue to congratulate and celebrate each member of this “class” and welcome them to their new cohort of MCC Retirees. Before parting ways with the college, the following comments from the retirees and their colleagues were collected and shared at virtual college-wide celebrations.



**Tim Norris**

-Faculty, Art Department  
-24 Years of Service  
-I greatly enjoyed introducing the universe of art to nearly 3,000 students over the years and having the very unique opportunity to team-teach two interdisciplinary experiential learning courses- the Art of Gettysburg and the Civil War, and the Art and History of the Celts-with my wonderful colleagues Kurt Troutman, George Maniates, and Mike Johnson. Even though I am retiring from teaching, I am not retiring as an artist. I will remain active in the art scene and will assist my wife, Patti Opel (retired MCC adjunct art instructor) with the operations of our gallery, Kook's Eye, in Pentwater



**Magnolia Sanders**

-Upward Bound Coordinator  
-13 Years of Service  
-Maggie's warmth and care for the students enrolled in the TRIO Upward Bound program and their families is evident to all involved in the program. Maggie started at MCC at the beginning of the grant in the late 2000s. Through the years many families would encourage their younger siblings, cousins, friends to enroll in Upward Bound because they knew the care and attention Maggie gave each and every student.



**Sandy Osborn**

-Faculty, Nursing Department  
-36 Years of Service  
-From Sandy's colleagues in the Nursing Department “Your retirement is well deserved! Even though you will have a lot more Vegas time, we hope you don't get too rich where you would decide not to come back and be an adjunct with us! Enjoy every minute of retirement...” “Sandy time” finally will be a real thing!”



**Theresa VanVeelen**

-Faculty, Life Sciences  
-21 Years of Service  
-Theresa was a champion of preserving our natural areas as well as educating not only students, but also fellow colleagues and administrators about the importance of preserving these areas, having always been passionate about connecting people to the environment. She was instrumental in many projects around campus including reinstatement of the Land Use Committee, establishing riparian buffer zones, delineation of the natural area, maintaining the trails and coordinating guided tours, and creating and maintaining an online directory and educational guise to the natural area.



**Joyce Piggee**

-Library Specialist  
-25 years  
-My greatest MCC memory is, when I had personal issues with a family member. The outpouring of love, cards, hugs and tears from colleagues was so overwhelming. My greatest career milestone has been hours of hard work. Being able to provide great customer service to students and staff has been a blessing.



**Donna Warner**

-Records Technician Specialist  
-31 years  
-Out of the 36, 110 course equivalencies that have been built in Colleague, Donna Warner has built 21,042 of them. Prior to eTranscripts, Donna and team members produced over 9, 000 MCC transcripts in one year that were distributed to institutions, businesses, and students. Donna was instrumental in the implementation of eTranscripts that allows students to order transcripts 24/7. Donna is one of the most dependable employees that I have ever worked with.



**Jean Roberts**

-Dean of Student Success and Registrar  
-39 Years of Service  
-Jean Roberts, the ultimate professional, has had an outstanding 39 years of service for MCC. Her fingerprints are on many of MCC's major innovative initiatives spanning nearly 4 decades. She has been an incredible professional, administrator, supervisor, colleague, and friend to many of MCC's administrators, faculty, staff, and students. Her most recent position was as Dean of Student Services, but she spent a lot of years as the Registrar for the college where she earned a stellar reputation by her colleagues around the region and the state as one of the experts in her field. Jean took MCC from long, in-person lines to register for classes, to phone registration, to online registration, and to Student Planning. She will be missed at MCC and in Michigan community colleges' higher education circles. Thank you Jean Roberts...we will do our best to keep your legacy going.



**Jay Zarowitz**

-Faculty, Social Science  
-31 Years of Service  
-Jay shares that his greatest accomplishment during his time at MCC is “lasting 30+ years”. He wishes his best to all those who are also retiring.



**Cathy Rusco**

-Faculty, English Department  
-20 Years of Service  
-One of Cathy's favorite memories of her time at MCC is starting the ESL Corner for International students. Cathy noticed some had difficulty connecting with local students, and some of her students needed time to practice speaking English. The Corner was a cozy hang out with current events reading material, snacks and a coffee pot. Lynda Ferry and Cathy showcased the home countries and had fun seeing it become a special, popular hangout for 3 or 4 years.



**Sue Zemke**

-Faculty, Nursing Department  
-18 Years of Service  
-Sue could always be trusted to give advice to others straight and not mince words. She has developed so many incredible nurses and her legacy will live on in all those who care for so many in the community.



## The Living Legacy of Rosemary Kelley at MCC

By Rachel Gorman  
Alumni and Donor Relations Manager

Discovering and rekindling the unique stories and accomplishments of our alumni allows the Muskegon Community College family to express our collective pride in their achievements. In some small way, we hope we are able to help shape and guide these graduates as they began or advanced their professional lives.

Rosemary Kelley, who just celebrated her 101st birthday, and her four-generation Jayhawk legacy that lives on today at the College are part of a long history of students growing into a career on campus.

In 1968, Rosemary joined MCC, newly relocated to Marquette and Quarterline, as a housekeeper. She quickly advanced to a position as a telephone operator. A proud member of the Muskegon Heights Community and member of the Christ Temple Church, Rosemary became a pillar of the College.

"Rosemary was the face and the voice of MCC," shared Jean Roberts, the recently retired Dean of Student Success and Registrar who devoted nearly four decades of service to the College. "She was the first

person that you saw when you walked in the front entrance and also the first person that you spoke to if you called the College because she managed the switchboard."

"She was a mother figure and she made students feel very welcomed. Rosemary is one of the reasons so much of the culture of MCC is that of a family."

A year after Rosemary's arrival, her son, Marshall, began his college education at MCC.

"It was nice coming through the doors seeing my mom sitting at the front desk," recalled Marshall, who quickly became accustomed to hearing himself defined as "That's Miss Rosemary's son!"

Continuing the Kelley family legacy, Leisha Kelley, Marshall's daughter and Rosemary's granddaughter, enrolled at MCC in 1981 and, after a hiatus, returned in 2002 as a student and student worker in the Bookstore.

"Everyone knew I was Rosemary's grandchild and I felt extra special because of her," recounted Leisha. "People at the College always talked to me about how much they loved her and what a wonderful woman she is. She is a very special lady."

"She was kind of like a mother to many students. If they needed something before a class, she would always help them. Granny was active in the Muskegon Heights Community, so many students, who knew her from there, knew they could go to her at the College."

Today, Ashley Battle, Leisha's daughter and Rosemary's great-granddaughter, works at MCC as a well-respected Enrollment Services Representative. At the beginning of her MCC career, though, Ashley's relation to Rosemary was an unintentional secret.

"I didn't even think about saying anything because I honestly didn't think there was anyone at the College that still remembered her," said Ashley.

"But then one day, Paula Halloran (executive assistant to the Provost/ Executive Vice President) mentioned that Lori Bailey (administrative assistant in the Physical



Rosemary's granddaughter, Leisha Kelley, on the far right

Plant Office) had some photos of my Granny. When looking at the photos, someone asked who else was photographed and it was my Mom!"

"After that, word just kind of spread that I was Granny's granddaughter and people started coming to me asking questions about how she is doing. It started bonding me with some colleagues that I had not gotten close to yet."

Rosemary's knack for connecting to and with people remains one of her most beloved and endearing traits to those who knew her both on and off campus. She cared and people never forget that. For the past half century, she has been a goodwill ambassador for MCC.

Ashley hopes that she embodies Rosemary's spirit and dedication in her admissions job that takes her to schools around the region. Early on in her career, Ashley realized that she was on the right track.

"People in the community who knew me, they would say 'You're that MCC girl' and it made me feel like Granny," recalled Ashley, beaming with a Jayhawk pride that spans five decades...and counting.







## MCC Faculty Association Announces New Justice, Humanity and Equality Scholarship

By Peter D. Koryzno, Communications Manager

The members of the Muskegon Community College Faculty Association, working with the Foundation for Muskegon Community College (FMCC), have voted to increase their union dues to establish a new faculty-funded Justice, Humanity, and Equality Scholarship for a budding student activist.

Open to incoming or current MCC students who have demonstrated a commitment to fighting injustice and racism in our institutions and our society, the scholarship provides the recipient with up to \$2,000 per year (\$1,000 per semester).

"The members of the Muskegon Community College Faculty Association denounce the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and of countless other men and women of color," said MCC Faculty Association Vice President Hollie Benson in announcing the scholarship. "We deplore the injustice, inhumanity, and inequality that plague white Americans' treatment of Americans of color. And we pledge to mindfully address these injustices, inhumanities, and inequalities in our professional practice and our personal lives."

Scholarship Committee member Linda Hood pointed to observations made by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. a half century ago as both a tragic present-day milestone and a catalyst for action.

"What is it that America has failed to hear?" Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once asked in "The Other America," a famous speech about

unheeded grievances and social unrest. "It has failed to hear that [its] promises of justice and freedom have not been met. It has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice, humanity, and equality."

"The greatest tragedy of this failure to hear is that these words were spoken by Dr. King over fifty years ago, but the demands of Black Americans for justice, humanity, and equality echoing yet again in cities all across the United States are still unmet," noted MCC Faculty Association member Conor Roddy.

The scholarship for the 2020 – 21 academic year was awarded to Tyeler Garrett in September. Tyeler is a graduate of East Kentwood High School in Grand Rapids, and is currently enrolled in the Nursing program at MCC, where he is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. He volunteered as a canvasser during the 2018 Michigan Senate election, and is engaged in political activism in support of racial justice. In addition to taking college courses, Tyeler is also helping to keep us all safe by working as a Patient Care Assistant at Mercy Health Hospital in Muskegon.

Tyeler writes that the "root of bigotry is fear," but that fear can be countered "with knowledge and familiarity." To that end, he has proposed the establishment of a racial justice task force to complement the outreach work of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and of the "...And Justice For All" Community Discussion Series at MCC. The scholarship committee and the members of the Muskegon Community College Faculty Association are delighted

to have awarded the Justice, Humanity and Equality Scholarship to such a deserving recipient, and wish to offer their warmest congratulations to Tyeler. They look forward to working with Tyeler to promote understanding, opportunity, and fairness in the college and in the wider community.

The scholarship will be offered on an annual basis, and applications will be accepted again in 2021. Visit [www.muskegoncc.edu/scholarships](http://www.muskegoncc.edu/scholarships) for details.

For more information, contact Hollie Benson at [hollie.benson@muskegoncc.edu](mailto:hollie.benson@muskegoncc.edu) or Conor Roddy at [conor.rodny@muskegoncc.edu](mailto:conor.rodny@muskegoncc.edu).

**Those individuals interested in donating to the Justice, Humanity, and Equality Scholarship can contact MCC Foundation Director Amy Swope at [amy.swope@muskegoncc.edu](mailto:amy.swope@muskegoncc.edu)**



Tyler Garret, who was awarded the Faculty Association's first Justice Humanity and Equality Scholarship



Visit <http://presidentblog.muskegoncc.edu/> to view "MCC President's Remarks on George Floyd." Dr. Nesbary is the first black president of the institution's 96 year history.



# FARM Being Built on MCC Campus

By Dan Rinsema-Sybenga  
MCC Dean of Academic Affairs

**V**isitors to the MCC campus will see a new two-story structure, called the FARM (Food, Agriculture, Research, and Manufacturing), that is nearing completion.

Not an actual farm, the facility will serve as a food processing incubator and training development center to support the growth of the West Michigan food processing sector. Led by the Community Foundation for Muskegon County and the West Michigan Shoreline Food Processing Association (WMFPA), the initiative is funded through the State of Michigan.

MCC entered a ground lease with the Community Foundation in December 2019 to allow construction of the 8,000 sq. ft building on the Stevenson Center parking lot, along Stebbins Road, at the very north end of MCC's campus.

Constructed by John Grace Construction, the FARM will serve as a training resource

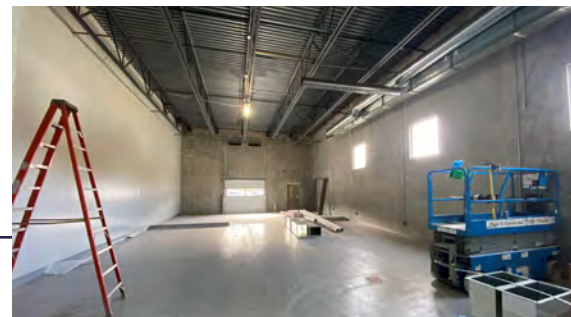
to Michigan's farmers and agribusinesses for new product innovation. In addition, the FARM will provide students, who are pursuing the joint food service certificate from MCC and Michigan State University, with the opportunity to witness innovation at the state-of-the-art pilot food processing training facility. The MSU mobile food lab semi-trailer can park onsite and connect to the building, allowing students to perfect their food processing skills using equipment in the trailer.

The FARM Incubator/Accelerator is a collaborative effort of industry, education, and government in the west Michigan region aimed at supporting new food entrepreneurs; innovators in healthier products and technologies using sustainable practices; college students and the food industry workforce, while providing a one-stop shop of resources for entrepreneurs to take food ideas to commercialization. It also will match the financial needs of successful product development with venture capital

funds. This facility will be a key resource for food processors in West Michigan and will foster, incubate and expand the food processing industry in the region.

Funding for this innovative partnership came from a State of Michigan appropriation. Then-Senator Geoff Hansen worked alongside the WMFPA, and the Community Foundation, with broad based support from the West Michigan food processing industry, to bring this resource to the Muskegon area.

The exterior of the building is complete. Interior finishes are underway with a completion date set for December 2020. WMFPA hopes to have tenants move in during January 2021.





## MCC Alumnus Receives Additional Sarnicola Award Funding

By Peter D. Koryzno, Communications Manager

Two years ago, then-Muskegon Community College student Cody Thiel won the inaugural Sarnicola Entrepreneur Award, a \$10,000 grant from Nick Sarnicola and the Next Generation Entrepreneurs (NextGen) presented to an MCC student for the best entrepreneurial concept in an annual competition.

Sarnicola started NextGen as a non-profit organization in 2011 to help young people realize their passions through entrepreneurship."

Since receiving the award, Thiel has created his own firm, Thought Bucket, which connects student graphic designers with area businesses in need of their services. Thought Bucket has generated \$26,716 in revenue – including a 60 percent increase in

its second year – while working with 18 different clients. More than two-thirds of them are return customers. The company has branded seven start-ups and has funneled \$5,227 back to the student designers.

Last week, Next Gen, after hearing a progress report by Thiel, approved an additional \$5,000 to Thought Bucket for its third year and final year of Sarnicola Award funding.

"You took this up 60 percent this year," Sarnicola told Thiel. "Take it up another 60 percent next year."

"Cody is a brilliant young man with a true entrepreneurial mindset," added Patrick Adams, the Executive Director of NextGen. "Cody has learned a lot about starting and running a successful business over the past two years and that's what it's all about. The skills he has learned are applicable in his business, relationships, and his personal life. NextGen is proud to have been a small part of his journey!"

In 2018, Thiel earned a Graphic Design Entrepreneur associate degree from MCC. He then attended Grand Valley State University for a few semesters before directing his fulltime efforts into Thought Bucket, a marketing company he conceived during an entrepreneurial class at MCC. His concept, based upon his own frustrating experience, was to empower talented students whose good ideas were being ignored by businesses because of the students' relative lack of experience.

MCC's Entrepreneur Program continues to help high school, college students, and adults to develop strong business ideas for local businesses to grow our economy.

**For more information please contact David Stradal at [david.stradal@muskegoncc.edu](mailto:david.stradal@muskegoncc.edu)**





**2017-2022 Strategic Plan: Successful Students, Successful Communities**

## **Students Supported by Institutional Goals and Initiatives**

**By Tina Dee, MS, CFRM Director of Strategic Initiatives**

### **Year Three of Strategic Plan Concludes with 46 Projects Completed**

Despite the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic, Muskegon Community College continues to meet the goals outlined in MCC's strategic plan. To help meet evolving student and community needs, the plan was expanded to include 12 objectives to support remote-working, online learning, and local health care efforts.

180 campus and community volunteers, representing 52 organizations, developed the five-year integrated plan in 2016-17. The Successful Students, Successful Communities plan identifies five institutional priorities and 25 goals, with at least one measureable objective for each goal. To date, we have completed 46 of the 62 project objectives.

"Even during the pandemic, employees remained dedicated to meeting strategic plan goals so that we can help more students succeed," commented Tina Dee, Director of Strategic Initiatives. "They have completed several objectives that are directly supporting our students and positioning MCC as a student success leader." Outcomes related to strategic plan accomplishments include:

- Students and community members can get instant answers with the addition of a "chat now" button on the website (objective 1.01.50)
- Students can search for jobs with new career services software (1.01.07)
- Students can easily outline their academic plan and review progress in meeting graduation requirements with new Student Planning software (1.01.05)
- Accessing information and online services is even easier with the completion of the MyMCC portal upgrade (1.01.04)
- It's easy for students to apply for scholarships and complete related tasks with a new online scholarship application process (1.02.04)
- Student goal attainment is supported by the implementation of a procedure to identify, measure, and report aggregate goal attainment (1.04.07)
- Supported transfers to 4-year institutions by increasing transfer guides and offering over 20 transfer information events each year (1.05.03, 1.05.06)
- We expanded and improved education options with the opening of several new facilities; Health and Wellness Center, Carolyn I. and Peter Sturuss Technology Center in downtown Muskegon, Automotive Building, Arts and Music Building, and Ottawa Center in Grand Haven (2.06.07, 3.11.01)
- Online teaching and learning was improved with expanded online training for faculty (2.06.10)
- Academic programs and courses are improved by the development of a new Academic Master Plan/Planning Guidelines (2.10.01)
- Campus navigation was improved at the main campus by renumbering and installing over 900 signs (3.12.02)
- Completion of Safety First Fall 2020 Opening Plan to ensure 33 protocols are implemented at 10 facilities to reduce the spread of coronavirus (3.13.06)
- Access to technology and facilities was improved by adding an ADA advocate to all planning teams (3.13.01)



- Our new Health and Wellness Center functioned as a pandemic overflow to support emergency plans for Mercy Health and Michigan DHHS Region 6 (3.13.10)
- Cybersecurity improvements (5.24.03)
- Campus security is enhanced with the completion of a facility vulnerability assessment (5.24.01)

Supported by Implementation Advisory Team (IAT), employees will complete the remaining 16 projects before the plan concludes on December 31, 2021. In addition to the objectives with finite due dates, the IAT measures and reports progress on 63 other ongoing objectives related to enrollment, success rates, student satisfaction, tuition, fundraising, and other institutional key performance indicators. One of the aims of the IAT is to keep the campus and community informed of progress and engaged in the implementation process. To that end, all campus and community members are invited to the annual Community Summit and are provided with quarterly updates, which are also published quarterly at [www.muskegoncc.edu/progress](http://www.muskegoncc.edu/progress).



"Muskegon Community College's Integrated Strategic Plan is an interactive tool allowing for students, staff, faculty, and the community to have continuous input into the college's success. We are able to assess institutional progress and change on the fly if need be," explains Dr. Dale Nesbary, President. "I appreciate the efforts of everyone in this important endeavor."

The IAT is also responsible for coordinating the process of updating the institution's mission, vision, and value statements when needed. After gathering input from campus and community members last summer, MCC's vision statement was updated to "An educated, inclusive community." The team is now completing the process to update MCC's institutional values. Details are available at [www.muskegoncc.edu/mission](http://www.muskegoncc.edu/mission).

## Additional Initiatives Support Students During Pandemic

In addition to the progress made in completing the strategic plan, campus members collaborated on a variety of other projects to support remote-learning over the past several months.

"During these historic and difficult times for our nation and the world, I have never been more proud of our campus community. The obstacles posed by the coronavirus have been met with resolute action by our administration, faculty, students, and employees," comments Dr. Nesbary. "Make no mistake, the transition to providing only distance education offered countless challenges to both instructors and students alike. Yet, our campus has persevered and is finding the necessary ways to move forward." Recent initiatives that help move students forward include:

- **Keeping students and community informed** – Details about our response to the coronavirus pandemic are at [www.muskegoncc.edu/coronavirus](http://www.muskegoncc.edu/coronavirus). This webpage includes a COVID-19 dashboard that's updated weekly to reflect the number of known positive cases among MCC students and employees.
- **Providing a high-quality and safe education** – MCC's fall semester commenced on August 24 with about 80% of classes online or hybrid. In comparison, only 16% of classes were online one year ago. Masks, safe distance, and other protocols are required for all those working and learning on site. To support the current need to keep students, employees, and the community safe, faculty quickly increased their training to improve the quality of online instruction. With support from the Student Success Strategy Team and MCC's Center for Teaching and Learning, faculty continues honing online instruction skills, Blackboard

use, and collaborating on how to best support our students.

- **Online support available** – Student support services, including new student orientation, tutoring, mentoring, and counseling, are available online and/or by phone and staff continues to make resources from the library, bookstore, and food pantry available as needed.
- **Tuition-free education for essential workers** – The Futures for Frontliners program provides those who served as essential workers during the state COVID-19 shutdown April through June, with the opportunity to get a tuition-free college education. For more information about the Futures for Frontliners scholarship and applying to Muskegon Community College, visit [www.muskegoncc.edu/frontliners](http://www.muskegoncc.edu/frontliners).
- **CARES fund distributed to students** – Muskegon Community College distributed nearly \$640,200 in federal emergency grants to 1,386 eligible students under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund. Visit [www.muskegoncc.edu/cares](http://www.muskegoncc.edu/cares) to learn more.
- **New scholarship available** – The Justice, Humanity, and Equality Scholarship, funded by faculty members, is added to the list of scholarships available for MCC students. Learn more at [www.muskegoncc.edu/scholarships](http://www.muskegoncc.edu/scholarships).
- **Care Team expanded** – MCC's #1 institutional priority is to "Provide comprehensive support systems to ensure student success." To that end, a Care Team is in place to assist and guide students with any issue that may affect their academic progress. Because the number of Care Reports quadrupled last spring, the Care Team added four additional members to provide one-on-one support to students.



For more information about the MCC strategic plan or other initiatives, contact Tina Dee, Director of Strategic Initiatives at [strategic.planning@muskegoncc.edu](mailto:strategic.planning@muskegoncc.edu).



## Jayhawk Teams Win Regional, National Accolades

### Coronavirus Halts Men's Basketball Historic Journey

*Article and Photographs by Peter D. Koryzno  
Communications Manager*

In mid-March, when the Jayhawks' 2019-20 intercollegiate athletics season came to an abrupt end due to the coronavirus, one MCC squad – **men's basketball** – was on the cusp of making history, while five spring sports – baseball, softball, men's golf, men's and women's track and field – never got the opportunity.

Led by All-Americans Vejas Grazulis and Kylan Shipp, the men's basketball team rattled off 21 straight victories at season's end, which included capturing the school's first men's basketball state title since the post-World War II 1946-47 team. After taking the district and regional crowns, Coach Jimmy Booth's squad was about to make MCC's first trip to the national championships since 1989-90. They were seeded third in the 16-team national finale set for March 17-21 in Danville, IL. But the tournament was cancelled, leaving

the Jayhawks with a 26-4 record and the disappointing feeling of "what could have been" that will last a lifetime.

Equally exceptional, **women's basketball** fell one game shy of also making the nationals after losing in the regional championship. Iyana Brown, just the third-ever MCC player to be named a First Team All-American, guided the 25-5 Jayhawks to the conference title.

**Women's bowling** took fifth in the nation at the NJCAA championships held outside Buffalo, NY. Megan Batka, who was the MCC Female Athlete of the Year, was the regional singles champion. In men's bowling, Brady Bowen in singles and Jonathan Garland in all events both finished in the top 50 nationally.

Boasting a roster filled with international players from several continents, **men's soccer** captured the regional championship. First Team All-Region selections Theo Clayton, Tommy Tencate and Vianney D. Mpomo-Ambeha were key cogs in the Jayhawks advancing to the 12-team NJCAA national tournament for the second year in a row.

Bryan Jones, who was voted MCC Male Athlete of the Year, earned All-America status at 141 pounds by taking eighth at the national championship meet in Iowa.

**Women's cross country**, which placed 19th in the nation, was even more impressive in the classroom. The Jayhawks were sixth nationally in the NJCAA Cross Country Coaches Association Academic All-America Team standings. Grace Sweet, who received the John G. Thompson Student Athlete of the Year Award from MCC, was all-region along with Raegen Lockhart and Adele Cory. Men's cross country, paced by all-region and all-conference runner Ben Schmidt, finished seventh in the region.

For a second straight season, **women's soccer** reigned as regional champions. Spearheading the 14-5 Jayhawk offense was All-Region Hailey Ruitter, who was among the top 10 scorers in the country and was voted the NJCAA Region XII Player of the Year. Josie Bos, Ellie Adams and Isabel Olsen were also named first team all-region.

All-region standout Jaren Smith helped lead women's volleyball to a 22-15 overall record and second place in the MCCA Western Division.

While **men's and women's indoor track and field** briefly competed, the outdoor season never happened. Meanwhile, baseball and softball played down South during Spring Break but did not compete up north. A promising fall men's golf effort was followed by a cancelled spring season.





*Men's soccer advanced to the 12-team national championship tournament for an impressive second consecutive season.*

*The men's basketball players were all smiles after winning the regional championship in Grand Rapids. The Jayhawks, winners of 21 straight games, never got the chance to play for the national championship.*

*All-region runner Grace Sweet received MCC's prestigious John G. Thompson Student-Athlete Award.*

*Ilyana Brown became just the third-ever MCC women's basketball player to be named First Team All-America.*







*The Bay Window* award-winning staff in 2019-2020 included (from left) Thomas Neff, news editor; Kara Gerard, graphic designer; Sue Martens, advisor; Serena Fairbrother, cartoonist; and Stephanie Kennert, editor.

# MCC Student Newspaper Wins 16 Statewide Awards

*Peter D. Koryzno, Communications Manager*

**The Bay Window**, Muskegon Community College's student newspaper, has won an unprecedented 16 awards in the annual statewide competition sponsored by the Michigan Community College Press Association (MCCPA).

The MCC students won eight firsts, five seconds, and three honorable mentions in competition with nine other community colleges in the state.

## Receiving first places were:

**Thomas Neff, News**, "Reactions to the ban on flavored cigarettes vary"

**Stephanie Kennert, First Amendment Reporting**, "What is impeachment all about?"

**Jeremy Wahr, Humor Column**, "Goodbye, old friend; thanks and rest well"

**Raven Lockard, Sports Column**, "Did the custom Nike running shoes just do it?"

**Kara Gerard, Front Page Design** (December issue)

**Serena Fairbrother (2), Original Cartoon** – Editorial, "The lesser of three evils?" and Original Comic – Entertainment, "Jaye and Hawk"

**The Bay Window staff, General Excellence** – Division II

## Earning second places were:

**Wahr (3), In-Depth Reporting**, two articles on MCC enrollment changes; Serious Column, "What's the point of morals if we don't act on them?"; and Editorial, "Textbook access codes an unnecessary expense"

**Neff, Sports News**, "Focused and battle-tested, Jayhawks eye nationals" (volleyball team)

**Gerard, Informational Graphic** (flu shots)

## Honorable mentions were awarded to:

**Neff, Editorial**, "FARM Project could mean great things for MCC"

**Dalton Klenk, Serious Column**, "Lakeshore Fitness Center: Nothing but a money pit"

**Amy Huber, Humorous Column**, "Frodo, my timeshare dog, causes havoc"

"We always do well in this competition," said Sue Martens, The Bay Window advisor. "Despite

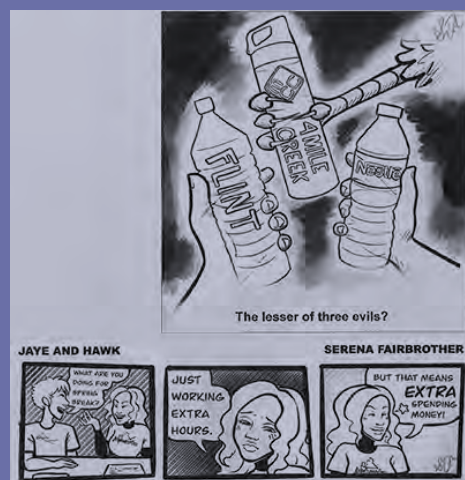
being one of the smallest schools in the association, we always win a fistful of awards and in the most competitive categories. The level of talent here continues to impress and amaze me."

Other community colleges in the competition include Grand Rapids CC, Lansing CC, Washtenaw CC, Henry Ford College, Delta College, Schoolcraft College, Monroe County CC, and Northwestern Michigan College.

Kennert, who has been editor and news editor of *The Bay Window* for the past two years, will major in journalism at Central Michigan University in the fall. Neff, news editor in 2019-2020, is majoring in media studies at the University of Michigan.

Judges for the contest included professional journalists and media personnel from MLive, The Detroit Free Press, Minneapolis Star Tribune, Cadillac News, WNEM TV-5, Hearst Michigan, The Detroit Lions, and CMU.

For more information, contact Sue Martens at [martens@muskegoncc.edu](mailto:martens@muskegoncc.edu).







Muskegon Community College

# Alumni-Owned Business Directory



In an effort to highlight the accomplishments of Muskegon Community College graduates who have moved on to start their own businesses, the Alumni Association is constructing what will be a searchable, online business directory for the MCC and greater community to utilize and consider doing business with fellow Jayhawks.

If you are a MCC graduate and business owner, please complete and submit your business information at the website address below. If you know of a MCC alumni-owned business, please share this webpage with the owner.

[www.muskegoncc.edu/alumni-biz](http://www.muskegoncc.edu/alumni-biz)



***We are building an MCC Alumni-Owned Business Directory!***



## Message from Alumni and Donor Relations Manager

Dear Retirees,

We all recognize that 2020 has been a year of uncertainty when it involves big things and little things. Our personal lives have been turned upside down, our work lives have been transformed, and our “retired” lives have seemed empty. So, how are you all coping? I believe many of us have discovered new, creative, and even fun ways of doing those big things and little things. Two days a week, I school my grandson (he is enrolled in a totally virtual program); and it is a challenge. Fourth grade studies are much different than they use to be. I am relearning the events of the American Revolution and how to write contrast and comparison papers. Because it is only the two of us, I pretend we are in a classroom with make-believe students (sometimes actually using his two dogs and cat). I require him to stand up and recite and raise his hand when a question is posed. The point is that it works and paves a way for future virtual learning. Regarding retirement, many of you have established your routine in doing what you love and makes you happy, finding that socializing provides the accurate balance. The lack of surrounding ourselves with friends and family hurts and is most likely unhealthy. With the holidays arriving, most of us are having to invent ways to connect or simply doing nothing. We have always (seems like always) had the annual MCC Holiday Luncheon for Retirees in December. With the record number of retirees this year, it would have been exciting for them to attend the luncheon as a new retiree. The food is outstanding, the music is inspiring, but most of all, the fellowship fills a void. However, as with other holiday gatherings and even informal get-togethers, we must let 2020 have its way. My hope is that next year at this time, we will all meet again. Peace and safety for all of you.



Please be sure to look for my presentation on “MCC Retirees Lost in 2020.” It will be posted on Facebook, “Muskegon Community College Retirees and Friends” later in December.

MCC Alumni,

I hope this publication has found you and your loved ones safe and healthy.

Despite the rapid changes this year has brought us all, 2020 has also been an incredible year of transformation. Many of you are professionals in industries in which work from home seemed unlikely before March, yet you are now still finding success in your new work environments. We have seen many industries adapt and change to accommodate our new way of life.

Most importantly, we have all come together as a collective to support each other and work through each day. We may not know when the end of this pandemic will be, but until we get there, remember to be kind and care for yourself.

Now more than ever we have seen how resilient our graduates are. Your words of encouragement and perseverance still carry weight to our current students. Please continue to share your stories and reach out if you need assistance!

You may have noticed throughout this publication my new last name—I am so excited to share that I got married in May this year! Although I did not have the large gathering of family and friends I had planned, like many of you, I made the best of the situation with new plans and a grateful attitude putting the health and safety of others first.



Putting others first is not new to MCC Alumni. Thank you to many of our alums that are working long hours on the frontlines to care for those that have fallen ill to this virus. Thank you to those still actively checking in on neighbors and extended family, making trips to the store for those who cannot. Thank you to those who worked on Election Day counting a record-breaking number of absentee ballots. Thank you all for wearing a mask when out in public and staying home when you can. The days may grow long, but this will not be forever. Together we will get through these trying times.

Be well and stay safe.

Go Jayhawks!

*Rachel Gorman*



# Class Notes

## Reflections Winter 2020

**Robert Jennings, '65**  
Married to Mary Sarle.

**Mabel Muhar, '73**  
Retired from Boca Raton Regional Hospital.

**Ammy Seymour, '93**  
Director of Development for the Harbor  
Hospice Foundation.

**Leslie Jolman, '94**  
Married with two sons and one stepson.

**Curtis Burdette, '98**  
Vice President of Operations at Energy  
Capital Economic Development.

**Carmeoki Strong-Levelston, '08**  
Program Administrator of AFC Homes in  
Muskegon.

**Elissa Buck, 10**  
Married with one child and currently  
working for the Michigan Department  
of Natural Resources as the Parks and  
Recreation Divisions Event Coordinator and  
Analyst.

**Jake Eckholm, 10**  
Received the first-ever Emerging Star Award  
from the Michigan Economic Developers  
Association.

**Robin Carpenter, '18**  
Now working as a bookseller at MCC's  
Barnes & Noble College Bookstore

**Erica Grasley, '19**  
Civil Processor at the Nwaygo County  
Sherriff's Office

## In Memoriam

**John F. "JD" Dursema**  
**Richard Kraft**  
**Edith Marjorie Maassen**  
**Cynthia Kay Masselink**  
**Vivian Simonelli**  
**Sharon Stewart**



*Jake Eckholm received the premiere  
Emerging Star Award from the MEDA*



*Newlywed MCC Alumnus Leslie Jolman and her family*



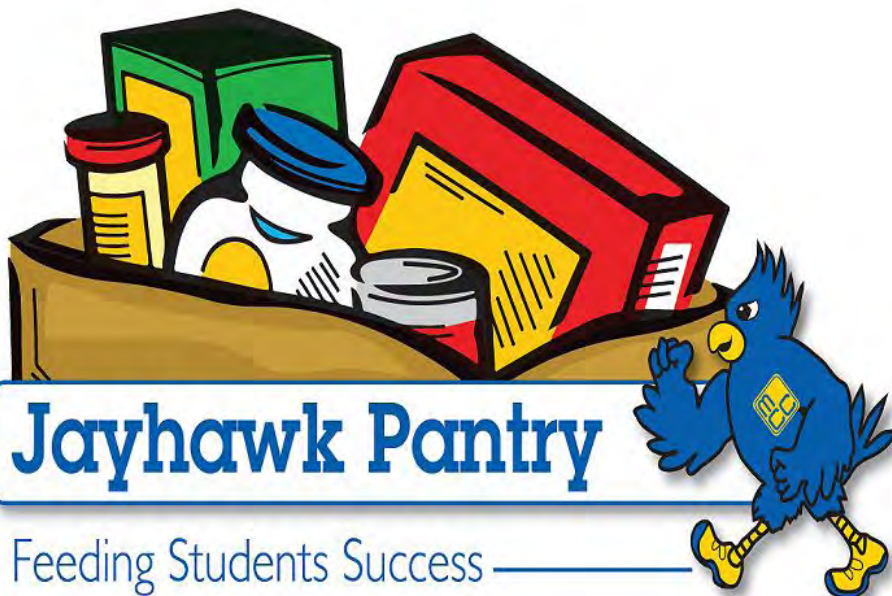
*Curtis R. Burdette was recently named  
Energy Capital Economic Development's (ECED)  
new Vice President of Operations*

*Update your alumni information online at  
[muskegoncc.edu/alumni-relations/](https://muskegoncc.edu/alumni-relations/)*



**Muskegon Community College**

221 South Quarterline ♦ Muskegon, MI 49442



The Jayhawk Pantry's mission is to alleviate food hardship among its students by providing emergency food to MCC students in need.

Please contact Heidi Romero to coordinate donation drop offs at [heidi.romero@muskegoncc.edu](mailto:heidi.romero@muskegoncc.edu).

Learn more at [muskegoncc.edu/student-success/jayhawk-food-pantry](https://muskegoncc.edu/student-success/jayhawk-food-pantry)