

# ALUMNI CONNECTION

HOLYOKE  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Futures Inspired

FALL 2011

## Putting the pieces together

Co-op Education connects academic theory with work experience





HCC President William F. Messner

**T**he 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of HCC and the first anniversary of the Picknelly Adult and Family Education Center (PAFEC) are just two of the many reasons we have to celebrate this year. Though still in its infancy, the PAFEC has already become a lively center for the surrounding community. Classes are full from early morning until late at night, with hundreds of adult learners eager to participate in basic literacy classes, GED preparation, English for Speakers of Other Languages courses, a Transition to College and Careers Program, and workforce training opportunities.

The opening of the Thomas Gill III Community Technology Center, on the first floor beneath the PAFEC, marks another milestone. Created in memory of Tom Gill, a member of HCC's IT team who sought to create opportunities for underrepresented groups in the technology field, the Technology Center will provide critical computer skills and software training for area businesses and

individuals, an important part of our goal to strengthen the region's workforce.

We reached still another milestone late this summer, when the Holyoke Community College Foundation crossed the mid-way point toward its goal of raising \$500,000 in support of the Picknelly Center's literacy programs. Thanks to the generosity of our major donors, we have raised \$308,000 toward our Embrace Education Campaign, and are now inviting participation from alumni, local individuals, families, and business owners.

I hope that every alum reading this will do something to help this worthy cause. I hope that you will also reach out to others and invite them to join you in making a powerful difference for our community.

Who might want to contribute to our Embrace Education Campaign?

- Anyone who has experienced the power of education to change his or her own life and wishes to extend that opportunity to someone else.
- Anyone who wants to eliminate the 2,000-person waiting list for basic literacy classes in Holyoke.
- Anyone who cares about the future of Holyoke, wherever they may live.

You can make your own contribution quickly and securely at [www.hcc.edu](http://www.hcc.edu) by clicking on the "Give Now" button at the bottom of the home page, or you can fill out the reply form on page 13 and send a check. You will certainly have my gratitude and the gratitude of the students who will benefit from your generosity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Messner". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

William F. Messner

P.S. Whether you live near or far, in spirit or in person, I hope you will join our community in celebrating 65 extraordinary years. Just think of what the next 65 will bring!

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News from alumni should be addressed to the Alumni Office, Holyoke Community College, 303 Homestead Avenue, Holyoke, MA 01040 or via email to [jbrown@hcc.edu](mailto:jbrown@hcc.edu).

**Letters:**

Readers are invited to submit letters and stories concerning HCC and its alumni. Contact the alumni director by phone (413) 552-2253 or email: [jbrown@hcc.edu](mailto:jbrown@hcc.edu) (put "HCC Alumni Connection" in the subject line).

**Class Notes/Change of Address:**

Please submit the reply form on page 12, or call the Alumni Office (413) 552-2253.

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Cleveland Burton, Jr. '86

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Diane Lessard '06

Elizabeth A. Murphy '74

Lucy F. Perez '87

James M. Sheehan '74

Nancy A. Spagnoli '83

Karen Thompson Brown '04

Vandelyn T. Wright '83



## Dear alumni,

**I**t amazes me to remember that in the mid-1990s, few people used email or cell phones, and no one "texted" anyone. Fast forward 15 years, and many of us communicate via Facebook, LinkedIn, or other virtual communities. Very recently, the government of Egypt was overthrown by a people's movement that communicated by using Twitter!

In July 2011, Holyoke Community College launched a beautiful new website at [www.hcc.edu](http://www.hcc.edu). Please take a moment to visit this powerful website, which connects to more than 3,000 pages of information. The site features two kinds of navigation and multiple search features to enable users to easily access news and information.

At the same time, we added four additional features to our online alumni community. Now, you can update your name, address, employer, position, email address, and phone numbers; register for alumni events; donate; and view your last three years of giving history, all via our secure website.

We have also just launched a full-color e-newsletter to send timely information about college news and alumni events, and we already have 7,000 alumni who have signed up for the newsletter. **Our goal is to have 20,000 or more alumni receive our newsletter, and we want you to join us!**

If you have access to a computer or web-enabled phone, Blackberry, iPad, or other device, I invite you to log into our new alumni online community at [foundationalumni.hcc.edu](http://foundationalumni.hcc.edu). There you will create a user name and password and provide basic information to verify your alumni identity. Within three business days, you will receive an email confirmation of your online membership that will enable you to participate in our online community.

Finally, don't forget to visit the HCC Facebook page (there are several unauthorized pages: be sure you go to [www.facebook.com/HolyokeCommunityCollege](http://www.facebook.com/HolyokeCommunityCollege).) Alumni and students can connect and post photographs and comments on the Wall.



Director of Alumni Relations Joanna Brown

Sincerely,

Joanna Brown  
Director of Alumni Relations

P.S. If you haven't yet dipped your toes into the water of online communities, you can still find out about upcoming alumni events by calling (413) 552-2253.

## Visit our new alumni pages!

Your alumni association has added new features and functionality.

- View and register for events
- Sign up for our new alumni newsletter by registering on our online community
- Update your contact information (name, address, employer, email)
- Contribute to HCC

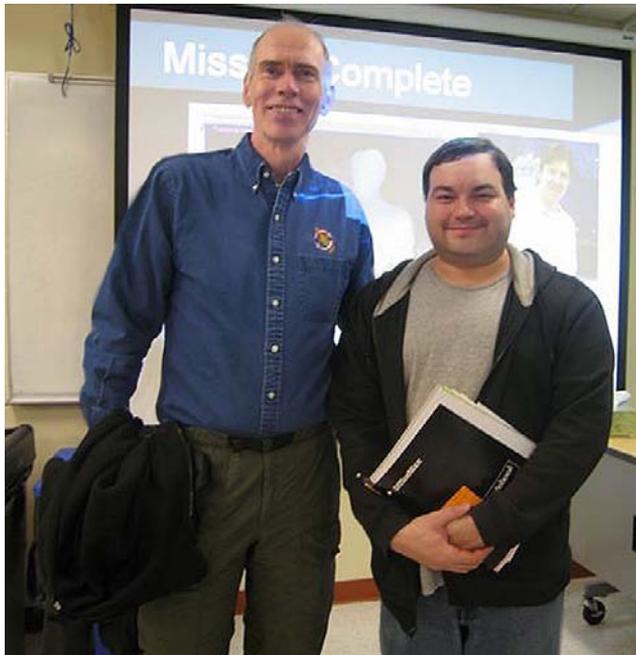
Find us at <https://foundationalumni.hcc.edu>

## Memorial Day Run/Walk for Vets Center

A Memorial Day Run/Walk Challenge drew a crowd of more than 100 and raised funds for equipment and programming for HCC's newly established veteran's center, "The Bunker," thanks to an enthusiastic crew of volunteers and participants. The Challenge was dedicated to John "Jack" Doyle, HCC Class of '51, who died unexpectedly on May 14. Doyle cherished his connection to HCC and was a dedicated member of the Holyoke Community College Foundation, serving as its treasurer and working tirelessly to make college scholarships available to students seeking access to higher education.



Competitors with (far right) Trustee Joe Wright and President Emeritus David M. Bartley.



Astronaut Dan Barry with ALC student Christian Mulero

## NASA Launches Hope at HCC ALC

Forty adult learners, who had been studying a science component on the solar system, space walks and astronomy, had the opportunity to meet NASA engineer Richard Morency and former astronaut Dan Barry, noted for clocking the longest space walk in history. Students in a class at HCC's Adult Learning Center, spoke with Morency at NASA's Aerospace Technologist-Human Machine Interaction Department in Houston via live videoconference from his office to the classroom. Morency described his work designing space suits, in robotics, and preparing astronauts for the dangerous work of spacewalking. Barry, an area resident who appeared in person, has been an astronaut for 13 years. He has gone on three shuttle missions and participated in four space walks at the International Space Station. Barry said that for many years people told him he would never be an astronaut, because he wasn't smart or strong enough. He encouraged the students to keep trying in spite of the rejections. "Your dreams can come true," he said.

## Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities Recognized

The state's first dual enrollment program for high school students with intellectual disabilities, HCC's Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE) Program received the Holyoke-Chicopee Area Department of Developmental Services Inclusion Award for outstanding programming. ICE enables students to participate fully in class and college life, with assistance from educational coaches. Maureen Conroy, director of College Disability Services (center), Thiasa (Ty) Hanson (left), ICE learning specialist, and Carla Katz, ICE program coordinator (right), accepted the award at a ceremony on March 22. Conroy said the program adheres to a model of full inclusion. "We have worked hard to assure students every opportunity to convey their needs in the first person, and offer ongoing training for coaches, who have stepped back from a high school role and given students greater independence with each term," Conroy said.





## Determination Wins Student Prestigious Achievement Award

Laura J. Hurler put her dream of attending college on hold, believing that staying at her low-wage job was best for her family. But the single mother of three, including a special-needs son, found the spirit and ability to make a way out of what seemed no-way. For her determination, Hurler was awarded the Massachusetts Women in Public Higher Education (MWPHE) Student Achievement Scholarship Award for 2011. In her application essay, Hurler wrote: "My children and I speak of the future all of the time now. We no longer say 'if' when looking ahead, but 'when'." Hurler credits HCC's New Directions program for providing the support she needed to reach her goal. Former New Directions Coordinator Deborah Levenson helped Hurler with academic advising, access to financial aid, and assistance with registration. After earning her Human Services Certificate last spring with a 3.9 GPA, Hurler is now working on completing a Liberal Arts associate degree.

## Blood pressure? Heart rate? Wheezing? Patient simulators give students a realistic, hands-on experience

Thanks to an innovative, state-of-the-art teaching tool—usually found only at medical schools—HCC Nursing and Foundations of Health students are getting hands-on experience responding to some of the most challenging scenarios that medical care providers can face. Patient simulators, housed in the Marieb building's SIMuCENTER, simulate the life signs of a living, breathing, speaking person. The simulators are an advanced technology that quickly became integrated in medical school training, Michelle Sherlin, simulation specialist for HCC's Division of Nursing, said. "It's fairly new technology and we have it here at HCC. Nowadays, medical schools require a certain amount of simulation to graduate. Here, we've embedded it in the first year curriculum. HCC students and faculty have really embraced it," Sherlin said.



## Entrepreneurial Spirit Garners Recognition For Students

HCC students Brian Bartus, Lillian Coleman, and Andrew Eaton collectively won \$2,500 from the Harold Grinspoon Charitable Foundation's Entrepreneurship Initiative Awards. The foundation annually awards more than \$65,000 to budding entrepreneurs from 12 colleges across Western Massachusetts, to encourage pursuit of their entrepreneurial dreams. Students are nominated by their faculty advisors, and judged by an advisory committee that looks for those who have acted upon their desire to own their own business. Business Division Professors Anne Potter (far right) and Ellen Majka (far left), co-advisors of the Entrepreneurship Club, nominated the HCC students. "They are wonderful students who have a passion for their businesses," Potter said.

# Putting the pieces together

Co-op Education connects academic theory with work experience.

By Kathleen Moore



Above, Mass Mutual Financial Advisor Geoffrey Croteau '99 and HCC intern Felicia Lastras. Below, Pat Grenier, CFP, BRP/Grenier Financial Services, Lindsey Arventos, Client Services Coordinator, BRP/Grenier Financial Services and HCC intern Aaron Cope '11.

Forget those cliché images of the coffee-fetching office intern. At Holyoke Community College, students who qualify for the Cooperative Education program get a chance to test drive their futures. Two alums spoke with us about their HCC interns.

“I’ve had a few college interns in my office, and I have to say that the ones from HCC are always the best prepared,” said Pat Grenier ’77, of BRP/Grenier Financial Associates of Springfield. “They are hungry, energetic, and looking for every opportunity they can find to learn the business. I wouldn’t think of giving them busy work.”

Grenier’s most recent intern, Aaron Cope, exemplifies these ideals. During the summer of 2011 he worked alongside the veteran financial planner—sitting in on client consultations, evaluating portfolios, and helping to craft new investment strategies.

“After meetings, she (Grenier) would share with me what she heard, what she thought, how she would proceed,” said Cope, who is continuing his undergraduate education in resource economics at the University of Massachusetts this fall. “She has a diverse clientele, too, so I got to see that financial services aren’t just to make rich people richer. It’s about helping people carry on their family’s legacy, with whatever they’ve put together. That’s what I want to do.”

Grenier also gave her protégé high marks.

“We went over all of the basics—the different types of investments, how to put a portfolio together, what different risks mean, and how to speak with clients,” she said. “But Aaron is a very worldly student. He was always making connections with the big picture. He brought a lot with him to the office.”

According to Mass Mutual Financial Advisor Geoffrey Croteau, his first-ever HCC intern also hit the ball out of the park.

“She doesn’t just answer the telephone. She’s making contact with people, getting them to consider financial planning services when they might never have thought about it before,” he said.

“I plan to continue recruiting student interns from HCC in the future, because I want to build a pool of confident, well-trained agents,” says the 1999 HCC alumnus, who drafted his first HCC intern, Felicia Lastras, this past summer. “It’s a great resource.”

Those assessments ring true for HCC Experiential Education Coordinator Andrea Picard, who, in addition to matching students with appropriate work assignments, recently co-authored *The Handbook for Practitioners and Administrators* that outlines the learning outcomes and legal issues, as well as the standards, pedagogy and planning that support successful experiential learning programs. Endorsed by state education officials, the manual will soon serve as a guidebook for the Massachusetts community colleges seeking to create and expand their own experiential learning programs.



“Students aren’t just working in the field,” says Picard of the program that is celebrating its 40th year at HCC. “They’re required to attend a weekly seminar where they develop a variety of technical and professional communication skills, learn about organizational structures, and reflect how their work experience relates to academic theories. The process strengthens critical thinking, research, and problem-solving skills. And when they are finished, they have something that many of their fellow students would love to have: a network of professional colleagues and potential work references. It’s a win-win situation.”



## POD Opens with a Flourish

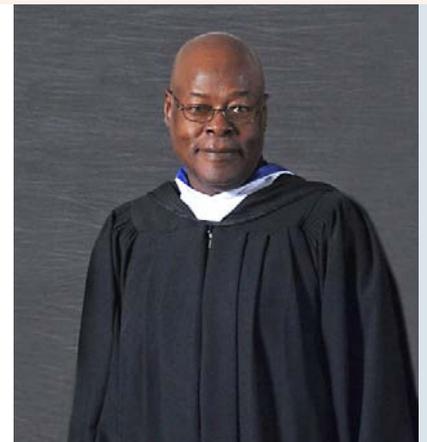
Alum and HCC Food Service Director Mark Pronovost '81 kicked off the opening of the college's new POD express food service outlet by providing music, food, t-shirts, giveaways, and prizes. The opening of the new dining services site drew HCC students, faculty, and staff in droves and earned enthusiastic praise for Pronovost and his team.

"It was a fun way to thank the college community for their support," said Pronovost. "We knew there was a lot of enthusiasm for having a place to grab something to eat in this location—between Frost and Donahue buildings—and we've gotten overwhelmingly positive feedback from everyone who's stopped by." The POD complements the renovated dining service in the Campus Center, which has also received high marks from HCC students, faculty, and staff.



## Landing on Mars

David Gruel '91 is the Assembly, Test, and Launch Operations Manager for NASA's Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) project. MSL is scheduled to launch from Kennedy Space Center on November 25 and will land a car-sized rover on the surface of Mars during the first week of August 2012. The team wears protective garments to avoid contaminating the extremely sensitive scientific instruments on board the rover.



## 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award Recipients

Steven Lefebvre '79, CFO of the Jones Companies in Bloomfield, CT, and Gail Sherman '81, president of the Chicopee Chamber of Commerce, were honored at the 34th annual Distinguished Alumni Award Dinner on June 8 at the Log Cabin Banquet and Meeting House in Holyoke.

Underwritten by the Log Cabin, the event drew 145 friends of the college to honor Sherman and Lefebvre and raise needed funds for scholarships for HCC students.



## Alumnus Receives Distinguished Service Award

Cleveland Burton, Jr. '86 (second from left) received the Distinguished Service Award during commencement ceremonies on May 28. The award recognizes those whose dedication and service to HCC have enhanced the value of the undergraduate experience and improved the quality of life for all on campus. A member of HCC's Alumni Council, Burton has been a dedicated supporter of the college and community organizations, including the Dunbar Community Center, United Way of Pioneer Valley, and the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County. Chair of the Youth Council of Hampden County, Burton is busy crafting opportunities for the next generation.



## A Peaceful Place to Study

Steve H. Chevalier '89, president and CEO of the NLC Hingham Group of Insurance Companies, has created a beautiful study area that is used on a daily basis by HCC students. During a visit with Joanna Brown, HCC director of alumni relations, Chevalier learned of plans by the Alumni Association to improve the older buildings on campus. He decided to endow a study area on the second floor of the Marieb building, overlooking the campus plaza. If you would like to learn more about creating a study area on our campus, please call Joanna Brown at (413) 552-2253.

# Bridging the Gap

By Kathleen Moore

An employment forecast recently produced by Boston's Federal Reserve Bank predicts something of a perfect storm in the New England economy: If changes in demographics and educational attainment are not addressed, the region's workforce will be unable to grasp new opportunities in what it calls "middle-skills jobs."



**H**CC's Vice President of Business and Community Services Jeffrey Hayden has read that report—and similar research—but sees more than gloom and doom. For him, the research lights the path future workforce development efforts ought to take. It's a direction HCC has been pursuing for awhile.

"HCC is committed to its traditional mission—helping people to pursue a four-year degree so they can get the better-paying, middle-skill jobs," he says. "This research lets us know that there are other things we do that will expand opportunities."

The report, "Mismatch in the Labor Market: Measuring the Supply of and Demand for Skilled Labor in New England" indicates that over the coming decade, most of the job growth will be in middle skill jobs—those that require more than a high school diploma but not a four-year degree. These include jobs in health care (including nursing, hospital technicians, EMTs and paramedics), construction, installation and repair, high-tech manufacturing, biotechnology, transportation, computer information technology, and office and administrative support.

The report warns that, without appropriate education or training, the labor force in southern

New England will be ill-equipped to take advantage of new jobs. By the year 2019, the report predicts that demand for middle-skilled workers in the region will outpace the supply by as much as four percent. And that gap could widen.

"We want to be aware of this gap, because we want to attract those middle-skill jobs to the region," says Hayden. "And we can't expect businesses to locate here unless there is a workforce ready to take the jobs they are offering."

All told, the report concludes, the supply of middle-skill workers needs to grow by 30 percent over the next decade if the region is to attract and keep jobs.

Hayden says HCC can prepare current and future workers to seize this opportunity. The key, he says, is to provide employers with an educated workforce. Here are some of the ways HCC is doing just that:

## Enhance your career at HCC There are plenty of options!

Accounting  
Adobe® CS5® Suite: Dreamweaver, Photoshop,  
InDesign & Illustrator  
Certificate in Interpretation/Translation Practices  
Commercial Drivers License

Emergency Medical Technician Basic Course  
Green Jobs  
K-12 Education  
Law Enforcement  
Microsoft® Office® 2010 Certification

Nursing  
Quickbooks  
Radiologic Technology

For more information (413) 552-2320, 2324; [alingham@hcc.edu](mailto:alingham@hcc.edu), or visit [www.hcc.edu/community-and-business](http://www.hcc.edu/community-and-business)



**First Year Matters.** Completing a college program can be a struggle for many of the students who will one day compete for middle-skill jobs. HCC has joined a national initiative to increase college retention and completion rates by improving students' first year experience by providing academic and career counseling and fostering a sense of connection and community. "If we can make the college experience a successful one, we can turn around the trend," says Hayden. "We can prepare people to take advantage of future job opportunities."

**Career Readiness Certification.** HCC has joined a national effort to increase job readiness by profiling jobs, identifying the needed skills, and assessing the skill levels of potential candidates. Workers and job seekers come to HCC and take a test that will earn them (depending on the test results) Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum Career Readiness Certification (CRC). The CRC is a portable credential that can be more meaningful to employers than a high school degree or a resume. "And if someone does not have the needed skill level, HCC can address that through additional job training, or education," adds Hayden.

**Language programs.** For many college students or would-be job trainees, language can present a major stumbling block. HCC is aggressively addressing this situation with English as a Second Language (ESL) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs, held on campus and at sites like the Picknelly Center. "We are focusing on raising basic English skills beyond the developmental stage, so they are ready for college-level work or professional jobs," says Hayden. "We find that people who take lots of developmental classes have less success moving on, and we want them to do just that: move on to the next step, whether that's a better-paying job, a training program, or college."

**Community Collaborations.** As a member of the Juntos Collaborative, HCC participates in community-based education initiatives designed to draw first-generation and other underserved groups into the educational and workforce development pipelines. Many of the services are provided via the neighborhood-based Picknelly Adult and Family Education Center. Services include day care, adult basic education, GED preparation and testing, college classes, career training, and counseling.

**Fast-track math and technology classes.** Mathematics can be a stumbling block for the growing number of adult learners who pursue job training or college, and those who must split their attention between work, family, and school sometimes find that a semester is simply too long. HCC is taking a new approach to this conundrum, offering fast-track math classes that offer intensive training over a shorter period of time. The college is also partnering with CareerPoint to offer basic computer technology courses in both Spanish and English.

**Smart and Connected Initiatives.** A new partnership with Cisco Systems will soon allow HCC to offer its campus-based academic programs to students at other sites via video conferencing technology. "We could use this to capture all of our classes on video, so that students—a lot of whom are working while going to school—can catch up if they miss a class. That makes college a more practical possibility for many students," says Hayden.

# CLASS NOTEBOOK

1956

**Arthur LaMirande** gave an organ recital on May 1, 2011, at the famous St. Thomas Church on Fifth Avenue in New York City. The principal work on the program was a rarely performed Chaconne by the Austro-Hungarian composer Franz Schmidt. It was the first time this work had been performed in New York City since LaMirande performed it on January 28, 1973 at St. Alphonsus Church in Lower Manhattan—a church which no longer exists.

1961



**Bill Brooks** is the owner and director of the Amesbury Playhouse, in Amesbury, MA, the oldest dinner theater in New England. His theater troupe, The Valley Players (named after the Mt. Park theater group), puts on twelve or more productions per year. A founding member and president of the HCC drama club, while at HCC he directed a Saturday night youth program at the Second Congregational Church that drew hundreds. After graduating, he ran and was elected a Holyoke alderman at-large. He would love to see HCC alumni. Call (978) 388-9444 or visit [www.amesburyplayhouse.com](http://www.amesburyplayhouse.com) for a listing of productions.

1963

**Patrick E. O'Toole** is retired and lives in Puerto Rico, where he is raising sheep, ducks, and over 100 varieties of tropical fruits, nuts and vegetables. In his spare time, he brews beer and wine.

1971



**Ted Hebert** is president of Teddy Bear Pools Inc. in Chicopee Falls. One of the largest pool and spa stores in the world, the company was one of the first ten companies inducted into the Aqua Hall of Fame. He and

his wife, Barbara, sit on many non-profit boards and have sponsored 250 teams in Western Mass. and CT. They have also gone to Namibia, Chile, Tunisia and other countries with Rotary International.

1976



**P.J. Perry** is the buyer of ladies' sportswear for Wilson's Department Store in Greenfield, MA, which has been on the corner of Main and Davis St. for 129 years. Wilson's is the last multi-level, family-owned department store in New England. Perry studied with Anne Potter and Elaine Ironfield and graduated from HCC with a Retail Management degree. A two semester co-op placement at Steiger's, arranged by John Donnellan, became an 18 year career. When Steiger's closed in 1994, she began her career at Wilson's. PJ invites alumni to drop by the store and say hello. She can be reached at (413) 774-4326 or visit [www.wilsonsddepartmentstore.com](http://www.wilsonsddepartmentstore.com).

**Thomas A. Wilkinson** was promoted to the rank of Captain of the West Springfield Police Department in March 2011. He joined the department in 1981 and became a Sergeant in 1994. He holds an associate's degree from Holyoke Community College, a bachelor's degree from Western New England College and a master's degree from Westfield State University.

1979

**Dr. Stanley J. Swierzewski III** is Chief of Surgery and director of the Continence Center at Holyoke Medical Center. Dedicated to providing quality care to his patients through his urology practice, Hampden Medical Urological Associates, he has focused on the treatment of voiding dysfunction, female urology, and urinary incontinence, as well as minimally invasive treatment for enlarged prostate. Swierzewski is the founder and chairman of [www.healthcommunities.com](http://www.healthcommunities.com), whose goal is to build community around health by offering extensive online medical

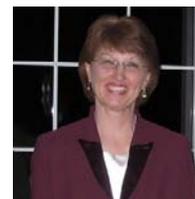
information and referrals to thousands of patients in the fields of urology, cardiology, women's health, oncology, neurology, and other specialties.

1981



**Fran O'Connell, RN**, has more than 27 years of experience in home health, hospice, palliative, dementia, and geriatric care. Founder of O'Connell Professional Nurse Service, Inc., he continues to manage O'Connell Care At Home & Health Care Staffing, which provides nursing care, geriatric healthcare management, advocacy, and transportation services from their new office on Bobala Road in Holyoke. O'Connell received a BS in Nursing from Columbia University, and an MS as a Family Nurse Practitioner from UMass. He is a former officer in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps. For more information, visit [www.opns.com](http://www.opns.com) or call (413) 533-1030.

1983



**Denise Devine** owns Devine Overhead Doors, in Hadley, MA, with her husband Gerry Devine. They do residential and commercial garage door installation and service as well as repairs to automated garage door openers. They can be reached at (413) 586-3161 or [www.devineoverheaddoors.com](http://www.devineoverheaddoors.com).

1988

**Rexene Picard** is the Executive Director of FutureWorks One Stop Career Center in Springfield, MA. Picard holds a Master of Science in Counseling Psychology with a Minor in Industrial Organizational Psychology from Springfield College and undergraduate work in Human Resource Development. She is an Advisory Board member for the High School of Science & Technology NAF Academy, board member of Valley Radio Reading and a Springfield School Volunteer.

1992



**Mark Lawson** earned his BS at Westfield State College in Management Information Systems, then earned an MS in Information

Management at Stevens Institute of Technology in 2003. With more than 15 years of senior management experience in the world of information technology, he works for EMC Consulting, the world's fifth largest technology service company. As a senior consultant/enterprise architect, Lawson has traveled to client locations in Japan, England, and Australia, providing leadership in technology services to Fortune 100 companies. He credits his success to the strong foundation and learning culture he experienced during his days at HCC. From 1990-1994, he worked at the HCC Library and Audio/Visual Department, and he considers the library staff an extension of his family. He regularly visits to see how current students are leveraging what the library has to offer. Ten years ago he donated first-generation eBook readers to the HCC Library, introducing the future of how people would consume literary content. He continues to donate material to the library's technology collection, to enable students to prepare for technology careers.

1993



**Maura E. Greaney** is director of development at Asphalt Green (AG), a nonprofit organization that empowers New Yorkers to live healthier, stronger lives through sports and fitness. AG serves

more than 14,000 at-risk kids for free through its core community programs. Waterproofing, a nationally recognized learn-to-swim program has taught more than 30,000 kids to swim since 1993. The Recess Enhancement Program, (REP) brings "structured, cooperative play to

impossible spaces" at 35 inner-city public schools from Chinatown to the Bronx. AG's community sports leagues offers a competitive, team experience to more than 400 kids in eight Harlem schools. [www.asphaltgreen.org](http://www.asphaltgreen.org).

1995



**Lynn Starr** has been in the banking industry for 33 years. She holds an MBA in Executive Bank Management and has extensive experience

in retail banking, information technology, and deposit operations. She currently holds the position of vice president of Systems and Operations at Easthampton Savings Bank, where she has worked for the past 10 years. Easthampton Savings Bank recently opened its ninth banking center, in Agawam, and will open a new loan operations center in 2012 in Easthampton. For more information, please visit [www.bankesb.com](http://www.bankesb.com).

1997

**Jessica Berger** recently taught two programs at HCC through the division of community services: The RelaxAbility Technique™, which supplies twenty-eight proven methods to reduce stress, anxiety, panic, addictions, pain, and insomnia; and, "Making Peace with Body Image", a course which demystifies the weight-loss industry and teaches skills for improving body image, no matter what shape or size. Both workshops will be offered again and they will be open to individuals, as well as counselors, doctors, nurses, physical therapists, psychologists, teachers, and other health professionals seeking skills they can use to help patients. To register for these courses, visit [www.hcc.edu](http://www.hcc.edu)

2001

**Joseph M. Emiterio** was one of 37 men and women to graduate from the Springfield Police Academy in May 2011. After graduating from the Criminal Justice Program at HCC, he earned his bachelor's degree in criminal justice and sociology from UMass in 2005. He worked within the

Department of Homeland Security from 2005-2007 and since then has worked for the Hampden County Sheriff's Dept.

2002



**Nathalie Vicencio** is a legal intern at the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD), assisting MCAD in its mission to prevent and

eliminate discrimination by enforcing state anti-discriminatory laws and educating the public about their rights. Vicencio worked as a fair housing specialist at the Mass Fair Housing Center from 2004-2010. A native of Ecuador with a passion for social justice and the arts, this past May she graduated from Bay Path College with a BA in Liberal Studies.

**Rahman Alim Strum** is dedicated to implementing healthy lifestyles and health career exploration programs targeted at underserved segments of the population. Strum earned a BA in education and human sciences, a MA in public health, and a MA in public administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, as well as a certificate in nonprofit management. He is currently enrolled in a PhD program in medical sciences with a focus in biomedical informatics at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. He is the executive director of the Omaha Area Health Education Center in Omaha, Nebraska, where he develops programs that expose students to careers in health care, facilitates emergency preparedness trainings, and conducts community health education. He is also on the faculty at the University of Phoenix, where he teaches a course on the US health care system.

2008

**Josh Venne** has worked at eleven different food operations collectively in Cape Cod, NY, RI, and FL since graduating from the Culinary Certificate program at HCC. He graduated from the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in Hyde Park, NY with an AOS degree in December 2010. He is also currently working on his

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BPS degree at the CIA and is on track to graduate in July 2012. In addition to working full time and attending classes, Venne caters events. He can be reached at jvennej3mv@gmail.com

**2009**

**Mauricio Abascal** participated in the 2010 UMass Entrepreneurship Initiative Stage Contest, according to an article in Business West. Mauricio Abascal and his teammate competed in the contest that coordinates the collection and removal of food waste from commercial kitchens. They received \$500 from the judges and an additional \$250 as the audience's favorite.

**Colleen A. O'Connor** was featured in a video marketing campaign by Amherst College about five transfer students from community colleges. O'Connor is an English major who hopes to become a writer.

**2011**

**Ruben Sepulveda** of Amherst, was honored by the state Board of Higher Education in May 2011 as part of its "29 Who Shine" event. Each of the State's 29 public higher educational campuses selected one student based on their academic achievements and contributions to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A high school dropout who was once homeless, Sepulveda is now pursuing a degree in psychology at Amherst College.

**In memoriam**

We are saddened to learn of the passing of the following members of the HCC community:

- Allan B. Sonoda, Sr. '58
- Timothy P. McCarthy '70
- Paul H. Racine '72
- Stephen T. Makowski '74
- Michael J. Polansky '74
- Linda Wytrych Mol '83
- Dino J. Dalmolin '92
- Kerri A. Ishler '96
- Pamela Katsounakis Reed '04
- Dave Shapiro, former music faculty member
- Dr. Lora Sussel Simon, retired dean of women and professor of psychology
- Dr. Janet Polvino, music faculty

**Allan B. Sonoda, Sr.** '58 died on June 29, 2011. The first president of the Holyoke Community College Alumni Association, Sonoda served on the Alumni Council for more than two decades. His leadership was instrumental in building the strong HCC Alumni Association of today. Sonoda was honored with the Holyoke Community College Distinguished Alumni Award in 1978 and received many other accolades throughout the years. At the family's request, gifts in Sonoda's memory may be made to the HCC Alumni Association, c/o HCC Foundation, 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA 01040.



Shown (in the photo at left) breaking ground for the new HCC campus: Sonoda, unknown, David M. Bartley and William Taupier.

**Class Notes/Change of Information/E-newsletter sign up**



**Tell us about your work or other activities in a class note (see below).**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Former name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes! Sign me up for the new e-newsletter

**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

Class note to be published in the **Alumni Connection**.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:  
 Alumni Office, HCC, 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA 01040, fax to (413) 552-2479,  
 or email to jbrown@hcc.edu with subject line of "HCC Notes." by December 10, 2011.



**M**y application to law school three years ago felt surreal, given my background. I was removed from public school after seventh grade. I got my GED at seventeen years old. I always thought of myself as a bright person, but without a degree I knew it would be hard to ever have a satisfying career or even a job that supported my daughter and me. By the time I was thirty I was unemployed and a struggling single mother. My life changed in a flash, though.

In 2000 my brother, who had originally only completed the fourth grade, started at Holyoke Community College. He told me all the exciting things he was learning, but I ignored him. Finally, in May of 2004 I was sitting in the Fleet Center at his commencement ceremony from Northeastern University. As my brother crossed the stage to graduate, my eighteen-month old daughter started to fuss, and I bounced her on my lap. I looked down at her and tears filled my eyes. I looked down at myself. Who was I? I was a thirty-one year old single mom with a seventh grade education who lived with her parents and struggled to find a job. My big dreams were gone but she had not even formed hers yet, and I had some for her. I could envision a little girl who was to grow into a bright woman, who could do anything she put her mind to accomplishing. Was I seeing her or myself? I guess I am still not sure, because I think my daydreams were really my own way of encouraging myself to see myself as better than I felt at those moments.

One thing I felt in those moments was that I was not setting a good example for my daughter, as a woman, a mother, or as a person. How could I tell her the importance of graduating high school and going to college if I never went? How could I be a model of a productive citizen in society if I really was not? I also realized I could no longer blame my situation entirely on everyone else. I needed to find a way to improve our lives.

Change did not happen overnight, but it did happen. As the summer went on, I wondered if I had what it took to go to Holyoke Community College. I was not sure they would let me in considering my lack of education. One day in September I went online to their website, I panicked. It was the last day to register for fall classes. It suddenly felt like now or never, do or die. When I got to HCC there were only two hours left to register. I sat down with a kind counselor and told her I needed to sign up for four classes. After listening to my story, she strongly urged me to take only two classes, three if I really felt up for a challenge. I insisted on taking four classes. I earned a 4.0 that semester.

I have since earned my associate degree with honors as a member of Phi Theta Kappa at HCC. While at HCC I served my community for one and a half years as the student member of the Board of Trustees, a student elected and Governor-appointed position. I received several awards and scholarships for my participation within the HCC community. After graduating from HCC, I transferred to Mount Holyoke



Leanne Steinberg '06

College as a Frances Perkins Scholar. Frances Perkins Scholars are non-traditional students whose academic achievements merit transfer of credits, from a qualifying institution (like HCC) in order to complete a Bachelors Degree.

On May 21, 2011, I graduated from Western New England College School of Law with my Juris Doctor. It has been a long hard road, but one that was not insurmountable. I am proud of who I am and where I have been. HCC was integral in helping start this long journey and providing me the support to start off on the right foot. I am indebted to the help and support I received there.

Thank you,

Leanne Steinberg '06

## Fall 2011 Events

For the most up-to-date information, be sure to check our events listings at [www.hcc.edu](http://www.hcc.edu) or call (413) 552-2253

### Wednesday, October 12

#### Augusten Burroughs

11-noon Fine & Performing Arts Building (Forum)

HCC is celebrating National Coming Out Day with a reading and talk by the acclaimed author of *Running with Scissors*. Free and open to the public.

### Thursday & Friday, October 13-14

#### Forest Summit

9 a.m.-5 p.m. Fine & Performing Arts Building (Forum)

Sponsored by Holyoke Community College and the Eastern Native Tree Society, the 7th Annual Forest Summit features workshops and presentations on forest health, loss of habitat, species displacement and the developmental pressures that impact the forests of the Northeast. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. David Stahle, Distinguished Professor in the Department of Geosciences, University of Arkansas. Free and open to the public

### Wednesday, November 9

#### CALLED TO SERVE: Stories of Men and Women Confronted by the Vietnam War Draft

3 p.m. Fine & Performing Arts Building (Forum)

Local author Tom Weiner conducted 61 interviews with men and women who chose different responses to the Vietnam War draft in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In this talk, he will discuss themes that emerged from these interviews and answer questions from the audience.

## What is it?

(BACK COVER)

On the back cover: "Celestial Dance," sculpture by Obie B. Simons, located outside the Fine and Performing Arts building (formerly C building)



### Professional Career Counseling— and it's free!

HCC Alumni who are in career transition are welcome to discuss possible career choices with Richard Powers, HCC Career Center Coordinator. The center offers help with exploring possible career fields, finding full-time or part-time work, résumé writing, and job interview preparation.

Call (413) 552-2597 or visit Kittredge 322

### HCC Alumni: Get 10% off Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 Community Services non-credit classes

(except EANE/Gould/Tri-State programs). Select from hundreds of courses. For a complete listing, go to [www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/BCS\\_FA11.pdf](http://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/BCS_FA11.pdf)

To register, call (413) 538-5815.



Affordable 20 Month Bachelor's Programs  
Now Offered on the HCC Campus

HCC graduates can earn a bachelor's degree in accounting and information systems, business management, psychology, early childhood leadership, or health services administration through a 20-month accelerated weekend program offered by Elms College on the HCC campus. Financial aid and scholarships are available. For information call: Joyce Desorcy, HCC/Elms College Coordinator, 413-265-2470 or email [desorcyj@elms.edu](mailto:desorcyj@elms.edu).

**Dear Alumni,**

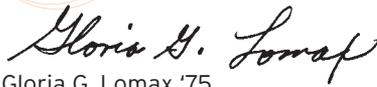
**In this issue of the Alumni Connection, we focus on the many ways in which Holyoke Community College helps people prepare to enter the workforce or learn new skills.**

Over and over again, we hear that Holyoke Community College has made a difference in the lives of our alumni. Your story is unique, yet it probably shares this common thread with others who have gone on to improve their lives and accomplish their goals.

Our Alumni Association can be thought of as a tapestry woven with threads of inspired stories. Our tapestry is not only colorful and beautiful, but it is also useful! Alumni contributions ensure that every student at Holyoke Community College will have the opportunity to fulfill their highest potential.

Please take the time to fill out the coupon below and send it with your donation today. By doing so, you strengthen the fabric of our Alumni Association and this institution.

Sincerely,



Gloria G. Lomax '75

President, Holyoke Community College Alumni Association  
Professor Emeritus

P.S. The mission of this college has never been more important than it is today. Therefore, we ask that you donate online at [www.hcc.edu/donate](http://www.hcc.edu/donate) or that you send your most generous contribution today.



Alumni Association President Gloria G. Lomax '75, Professor Emeritus

The HCC Foundation 2011 Giving report is now online. To view it, please visit [www.hcc.edu](http://www.hcc.edu) and then click on "Alumni"

**2012 HCC Annual Fund (closes June 30, 2012)**

Enclosed is my contribution of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_  \$25  \$35  \$50  \$100  \$300  \$500  \$1,000  \$2,500  \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I/we wish to contribute to the following fund:

**Where the need is greatest**

**Scholarship fund**

**Embrace Education fund to support the Picknelly Adult and Family Education Center in downtown Holyoke**

**Equipment for classrooms & labs**

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation year or years attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home/Cell telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

My/our check is enclosed, payable to **HCC Foundation Inc.**, (2012 fund drive ends June 30, 2012)

My/our gift will be matched by: \_\_\_\_\_ (please submit matching gift form)

**To charge a gift, please call (413) 552-2546 or visit our secure donation page at [hcc.edu/donate](http://hcc.edu/donate)**

**I wish to give anonymously. Please do not publish my name in the 2012 Annual Giving Report**

Please mail to: HCC Foundation, Inc., 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA 01040. For more information please call (413) 552-2253.

# ALUMNI CONNECTION

Holyoke Community College Alumni Office  
303 Homestead Avenue  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
[www.hcc.edu](http://www.hcc.edu)

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**What is it?**

See page 12 for the answer!

**HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
Futures Inspired