On its 75th, HCC lauded as educational pioneer

HOLYOKE — The party was well worth the wait. After delays and uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Holyoke Community College finally celebrated its 75th Anniversary on May 4 at the oldest two-year college in Massachusetts.

Throughout the day, HCC hosted a series of events on campus and online, drawign the college’s students, faculty, and staff, who gathered in person, on Zoom, or both, to celebrate the college’s milestone. “This has been an extraordinary year,” said college President Christopher Royal, as he welcomed the college’s largest graduating class. “We worked through a pandemic, and we did it together.”

HCC was founded in 1946 as Holyoke Technical Institute, changing its name to Holyoke Junior College, and finally becoming Holyoke Community College when it joined the state college system in 1964.

“The college has changed in the past 75 years,” Royal said, “but what hasn’t changed is our core mission: to provide students with a high-quality education that will allow them to succeed in their chosen field.”

Holyoke city councilors David K. Barley (incumbent) and Will Poullet (D-First Ward) were the first and only two students to graduate from Holyoke Technical Institute.

“Congratulations to Holyoke Community College, in recognition of their 75th anniversary,” Royal said. “We are proud of your achievements and are excited to see what the next 75 years will bring.”

Several HCC alumni and students were invited to take their place at the podium.

Matthew McCauley, a high-achieving student from the class of 2019, talked about his experience here at HCC. “I never thought I would be able to attend college, but HCC allowed me to become a scholar.”

Harry Hill graduated from HCC in 2013 with a degree in graphic design. He now works as a graphic designer in the college’s marketing department. “I want to work here to serve my community,” he said. “Today is a special day for all of us, and I’m honored to be a part of it.”

Hill was one of several former students who were invited to attend the event.

HCC has been named one of the top community colleges in the country by several publications, including Business Insider and U.S. News & World Report. The college has an enrollment of about 10,000 students, and offers over 100 degree programs and certificates.

The college is located on a 150-acre campus in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and serves students from across the state. HCC is a member of the Massachusetts state college system and is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

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