

► In The News

Student, alumni veterans honored at HCC

“Educate, Inspire, Connect,” the new three-word mission statement of Holyoke Community College, was also the theme of HCC’s 2019 Veterans Day celebration, which featured three guest speakers who exemplified each of those directives.

Speakers at the Nov. 6 event on HCC’s Homestead Avenue campus were:

- U.S. Army veteran Joselmang Leon of Holyoke, who graduated from

HCC with an associate’s degree in computer information systems in 2019 and is now working on a bachelor’s degree at Westfield State University — “Educate.”

- U.S. Army veteran Jesus Pereira of Holyoke, director of veterans services for the city, and founder and pilot for Vet Air — “Inspire.”

- U.S. Air Force veteran Mark Hudgik of Hadley, HCC’s director of

admissions, and an HCC alumnus from the class of 2002 — “Connect.”

“All three of our speakers have raised their hands to take an oath to serve our country,” said event organizer and HCC student Robert Vigneault of Belchertown, a U.S. Air Force veteran and assistant in The Bunker, the HCC veterans resource center. “They have since hung up their uniforms but their

stories are a testament to the hurdles they have overcome to be here today.”

The program also included an honor guard from Westover Air Reserve Base, the national anthem performed by HCC student Isabel Vigneault of Belchertown, and Taps performed by Steve Bailey, technical director of the HCC’s Leslie Phillips Theater, and an HCC alumnus from the class of 1977.



Joselmang Leon of Holyoke, a U.S. Army veteran and Holyoke Community College graduate, gives a talk on the theme of “Educate” at HCC’s Veterans Day celebration on Nov. 6.

Submitted photos



An honor guard from Westover Air Reserve Base presents the flag during the opening ceremony at Holyoke Community College’s Veterans Day celebration on Nov. 6.



Jesus Pereira, Holyoke’s director of veterans services and the founder and pilot for Vet Air, speaks on the theme of “Inspire.”