

In The News

HCC celebrates Pride Month with flag raising

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College celebrated Pride Month June 10 by raising the rainbow flag over the campus for the first time in its 75-year history.

Dressed in a black, Pride Month shirt, HCC President Christina Royal, the first openly queer community college president in Massachusetts, presided over the flag-raising ceremony, which was attended by faculty, staff and students at the main campus entrance by the Frost and Donahue buildings.

"I'm very excited that at Holyoke Community College we have a very active group of faculty, staff and students who are engaged and interested in continuing to further the progress that we made to ensure that HCC is an LGBTQ-plus friendly campus and institution," Royal said in her introductory remarks. "One of the things we're very excited about this year is to be able to raise the Pride flag on our campus in celebration, not only of Pride Month, but also in recognition of our LGBTQ-plus employees and students."

Royal noted that for the last two years, many Pride parades, festivals and concerts have been cancelled because of COVID-19, making small celebrations like HCC's flag-raising even more important.

"We very much feel that diversity is a huge asset to this institution and this region, and we believe very deeply in being able to ensure that we have a wide variety of representation, and that everyone can be seen and heard as they come to HCC," Royal said. "I feel very honored to do this as the first queer president of Holyoke Community College."



HCC President Christina Royal raises the Pride flag over the campus during a June 10 campus celebration. *Submitted photos*

The Pride flag will fly over the HCC campus through the end of June.

"Thank you all for being part this community, for being supportive of those in the LGBTQ-plus community," Royal said after raising the flag. "Let's all remember that June is not the only time to celebrate, but it's nice that we have a month to be able to highlight and bring more visibility to those in the LGBTQ-plus community."

To watch a video of the flag-raising celebration on HCC's Facebook page, please visit: hcc.edu/pride-video

HCC will be celebrating Pride Month throughout June.

Other events include a reading and conversation with author Lesléa Newman on June 22 at 5:30 p.m. Newman will read her book *Sparkle Boy* and answer questions over Zoom.

On June 24 at 11 a.m., Daniel

Giraldo-Wonders, assistant professor of Language and Latin American Literature at Bard College at Simon's Rock, will lead a "queer conversation" on Zoom about Pedro Lemebel's poem "Manifiesto: Hablo por mi diferencia" (Manifesto: I Speak From My Difference). Lemebel was an openly gay Chilean essayist, chronicler, and novelist who died in 2015.



Christina Royal, right, gathers with HCC faculty, staff and students to celebrate Pride Month with a flag raising on the HCC campus.

More information about HCC's Pride events, including registration links to the June 22 and June 24 events, can be found at: hcc.edu/pride.

Public invited to B-17 Memorial anniversary

HOLYOKE – The B-17 Memorial Committee cordially invites the general public to join us on July 10, as we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the B-17 tragedy on Mt. Tom in Holyoke.

This year's ceremony also recog-

nizes the 25th anniversary of the B-17 monument unveiling. We ask that attendees arrive at 8:30 a.m. for the 10 a.m. ceremony. Parking for the ceremony can be accessed by Mt. Park Rd followed by a right turn to Mt. Tom Ski Rd.