

THE CONNECTION

FALL 2022

INSIDE

**HCC celebrates
75 years**

**Family Pride: a
mother, daughter,
and their HCC
connection**

FROM THE HEART

HCC mourns the loss of Joe Wright '54



One day.
Four
hundred
donors.
Amazing
student
support.



Mark your calendar and plan to join us on April 25, 2023 in supporting our students through a Day of Giving at Holyoke Community College.

Your donation will show students who are following in your footsteps how much you believe in them. You can provide life-changing scholarship support and relief to someone experiencing food insecurity and help them discover what inspires them.

#TogetherHCC

#TOGETHERHCC
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President Christina Royal

Dear Friends,

As we head into the winter season, I am mindful of the beautiful weather we've had this fall and the many ways it has allowed us to gather and reconnect. This institution has come far, even during the pandemic, and we have seized on many opportunities while navigating a most difficult time in the history of the world. Most meaningful to me have been the efforts to better this institution and to better our connections to each other.

Holyoke Community College is addressing the challenges of today the only way we know how: by taking care of our community as we push forward into the future. During the pandemic, we revisited and refreshed our Strategic Plan, re-committing to our mission to "Educate, Inspire, Connect," and break down the barriers that can make these a challenge.

It is no accident that this magazine is called *The Connection*. Establishing connections is the most important thing we do here: cultural connections that afford us the richest, most diverse experiences; connections to quality education; connections to academic and student resources; and connections to housing, food, child watch, and transportation, the necessities that make life – not just college – possible.

We have accomplished some amazing things since I accepted this post in 2016, and I could not be more proud of our students and what our community does to help them succeed. In August, I announced that I would retire from HCC next summer, but we should remember that no one person will ever outlive an institution. While I have been honored to hold the seat of the presidency for this time, our mission and vision are stronger than ever, and this college will continue to grow and thrive because of the work we have done together.

Our connections are deep – across the campus, across the greater Holyoke community, and across the generations. Those were very apparent when the whole community came together to support our friends and families in Puerto Rico who were impacted by hurricanes Fiona and Ian this fall. The HCC community casts a wide net of care and compassion, and that's why I have been so proud to lead this institution.

So, as you read this issue of *The Connection*, I ask you to reflect on what that word means to us; how partnerships and relationships and community are in the DNA of this institution, and the many ways that HCC continues to show up and contribute on behalf of our students and our community.

Sincerely,

The Connection is published two times per year by the HCC office of Marketing & Communications, Holyoke, Massachusetts, and is distributed without charge to alumni and friends of HCC.

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**HOLYOKE
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

THE CONNECTION



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VOICES CHIRPY

On Feb. 24, the day Russia invaded, a call went out to college radio stations around the world seeking support for the people of Ukraine. Over the next 24 hours, representatives from some 50 college stations on three continents responded the best way they knew – by recording their own voices. One of those stations was HCC’s. “We are the students from 103.5 WCCH in Holyoke, a city in western Massachusetts in the U.S.A. We stand with you in Ostroh and all across Ukraine. Please know we

are in solidarity with the Ukrainian people, and we wish you safety, unity, and eventual peace for you and your homeland.” The voice on the WCCH clip belongs to Stevie Converse (above), adjunct professor of communications and advisor to the HCC Radio Club, who sent the message on behalf of the club. “We were the only station in Massachusetts to participate,” Converse said. “It was just something we could do, and I thought it was important for WCCH to take part.” The College Radio Foundation compiled the audio clips and posted them to SoundCloud. They were broadcast on STUD Radio in Lviv and sent to universities throughout Ukraine.



‘Whatever You Bring Is You’



YOU ARE SO WELCOME HERE

In English, Bienvenidos literally means “welcome.” Culturally, though, the Spanish word means much more than that, says Julissa Colón '14, director of HCC’s El Centro program: “It’s more like a welcome where you grab someone by the hand and lead them into the house.” That was the feeling Aug. 27 as HCC held its second annual Bienvenidos celebration for Latinx students. “Our Bienvenidos is about seeing new students and returning students and prospective students and saying, ‘You are so welcome here. We are so happy to have you here, and we want to show

you that there exists a community here that wants to help you and support you.” The event featured food from the Dominican/Puerto Rican restaurant Sabor Latino, entertainment from the music and dance troupe Bomba de Aquí, a panel discussion with HCC Latinx alumni, and a “Language as Placemaking” workshop led by Raúl Gutiérrez, coordinator of HCC’s Latinx Studies program. “Whatever you bring is you, and you should be proud of that,” Gutiérrez said. “This is what placemaking means, that you are comfortable with what you bring and are respected for what you bring.”

CORE

Values

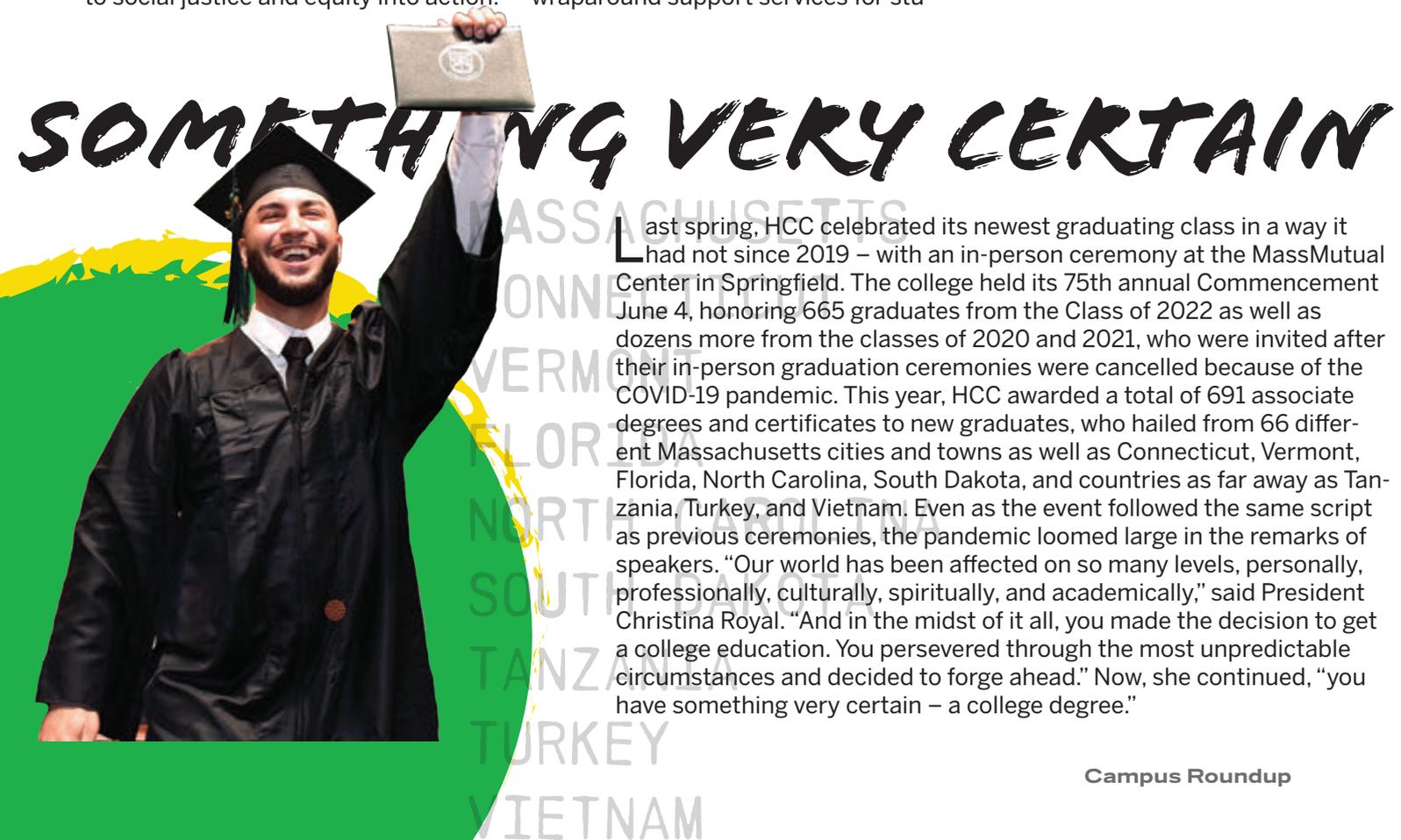


President Christina Royal; Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs Sharale Mathis; professors Mary Orisich and Nicole Hendricks, and Hampden County Sheriff Nick Cocci at the grand opening.

Over the years, professors Nicole Hendricks (criminal justice) and Mary Orisich (economics) have been frequent teaching partners in HCC Learning Communities. Their courses tend to focus on the link between socioeconomic conditions and incarceration, or what Orisich calls “the carceral world.” A few years ago, during a joint sabbatical, they starting building a program that put their commitment to social justice and equity into action.

The result is Western Mass CORE – “community, opportunity, resources, and education.” Its mission: help incarcerated individuals transition into higher education. In partnership with the Hampden County Sheriff’s Department, CORE runs classes at the Hampden County Correctional Center in Ludlow and the Western Massachusetts Regional Women’s Correctional Center in Chicopee and also provides wraparound support services for stu-

dents. “Our main objective is to facilitate an academic pathway and provide support for incarcerated people,” Hendricks said. “We’re building a pathway to college.” Although CORE launched in 2019, just prior to the pandemic, it opened the doors to its campus offices and lounge on the first floor of the Frost building in April, celebrating with an open house attended by Hampden County Sheriff Nick Cocci.



Last spring, HCC celebrated its newest graduating class in a way it had not since 2019 – with an in-person ceremony at the MassMutual Center in Springfield. The college held its 75th annual Commencement June 4, honoring 665 graduates from the Class of 2022 as well as dozens more from the classes of 2020 and 2021, who were invited after their in-person graduation ceremonies were cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, HCC awarded a total of 691 associate degrees and certificates to new graduates, who hailed from 66 different Massachusetts cities and towns as well as Connecticut, Vermont, Florida, North Carolina, South Dakota, and countries as far away as Tanzania, Turkey, and Vietnam. Even as the event followed the same script as previous ceremonies, the pandemic loomed large in the remarks of speakers. “Our world has been affected on so many levels, personally, professionally, culturally, spiritually, and academically,” said President Christina Royal. “And in the midst of it all, you made the decision to get a college education. You persevered through the most unpredictable circumstances and decided to forge ahead.” Now, she continued, “you have something very certain – a college degree.”

itsy bitsy

HCC celebrated the grand opening of its free Itsy Bitsy Child Watch Center on May 4, and students like accounting major Kara Torres couldn't be more excited. The mother of 8-year-old twins plans to take full advantage of the program to help relieve some of the stress of being a college student and a parent. Last semester, for instance, she had to stay home for a week during her kids' spring break so her wife could go to work. "I had to miss some classes," she said. "If anything happens now, I'll be able to bring my kids with me to school." State Sen. John Velis of Westfield and state Rep. Pat Duffy of Holyoke helped President Christina Royal cut the green ribbon after adding their hand prints to an Itsy Bitsy Child Watch poster. "So many students have to make a choice between an education and child care.

GRAND



That shouldn't be a choice they have to make," said Velis, who was key to securing \$100,000 in state funds to get the pilot program running." The Itsy Bitsy Child Watch Center is located in Marieb 103 and accepts children three months to 12 years old.

HCC President Christina Royal, state Sen. John Velis (Westfield), and state Rep. Pat Duffy (Holyoke) get ready to add their handprints to a poster during the grand opening celebration for the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch Center.

'That shouldn't be a choice they have to make'

Direct Connection

A new agreement means HCC students who continue their educations at American International College will find the transfer process smoother – and a lot more affordable. The accord, called Direct Connect, aligns academic programs between HCC and AIC to ensure a seamless transition for HCC graduates who transfer to the four-year college in Springfield. Administrators from the two colleges met at HCC on June 23 to sign the agreement. "We are excited to develop more transfer opportunities for our HCC students by expanding our partnership with AIC and providing students with even more pathways to a four-year degree," said HCC President Christina Royal. Direct Connect students automatically receive a \$4,000 scholarship in addition to any merit scholarships they might qualify for. Direct Connect transfer students can earn up to \$18,000 in grants – not loans – before being evaluated for additional need-based aid. The program allows students to earn a degree in any major at HCC. "In this time where the value of education is being questioned, we are ensuring that students do not lose time or credits in the transition," said AIC President Hubert Benitez. 

HCC President Christina Royal and AIC President Hubert Benitez sign an articulation agreement between the two schools June 23 at HCC.



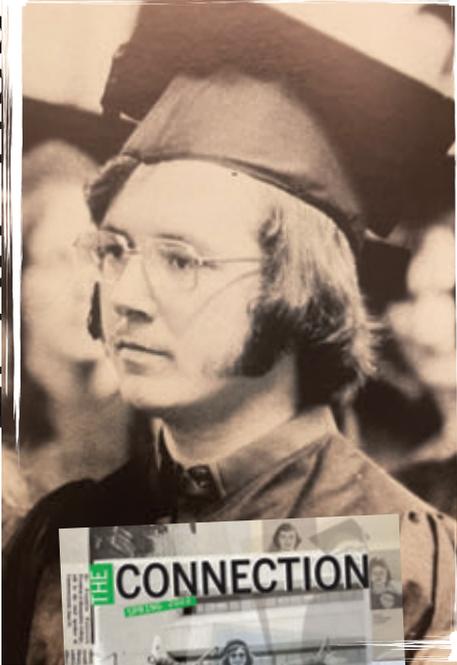


PHOTO CALL

Marc St. Onge '75 saw something familiar on the cover of the spring 2022, 75th Anniversary edition of The Connection – a photograph he took while he was a student at HCC. He remembers the subject, another student, telling him that he never walked down those stairs, but slid down in all seasons.

I was surprised to see the picture on the cover with the “75 years” theme. It hasn’t been THAT long (whew!). I definitely remember shooting the photo but not that it was shot in color. You must have a color negative or transparency which you used for the cover image. In those days, I shot lot of pictures for the Drama department (pages 78-82 of the ‘75 yearbook). If I remember correctly, I was doing a one-credit, special project involving the Drama Club under Leslie Phillips and Roy Faudree. There’s even a picture of me on page 36 (left photo). At the time, I was working for the Holyoke Transcript-Telegram, so I did a lot of the processing in their darkroom. I was also playing around with a fisheye lens attachment, so any fisheye shots in that yearbook are probably mine. I’m retired now but still work part time as a sports and news photographer for the Westfield News.

Marc St. Onge '75
 Marc St. Onge Photography, Russell, Mass.

From Art Director Will Murphy: “You’re right, Marc. To get that secondary color image, we ran your photo through a Photoshop filter, just for added interest.”

FUNDAMENTAL CONNECTION

I went to HCC after I was discharged (honorably) from the U.S. Navy and attended from 1978 until 1979 after which I transferred to Bridgewater State College, now a university. Although I did not “graduate” from HCC, it provided me with the fundamentals I needed to succeed at BSC and also in attaining my master’s degree from the University of Washington. I have fond memories of my speech and French classes as well as my other classes and professors. Thank you.

Fair winds and following seas,

Brian LaFlamme, Bethlehem, Penn.

EXTRA CREDIT

I entered HCC as a 22-year-old in 1972 after serving in South Vietnam and being discharged from the U.S. Army. Back then, the college was divided into three buildings. Two were on Sargeant Street and one on South Street. I majored in liberal arts with a minor in corrections. I became involved in student government and was elected to vice president of the Student Senate and served as chair of the judicial, budget, and election committees. Many of my fellow senators were also Vietnam veterans. My second year I was appointed to student advisory commissioner to the governor. In 1973, we veterans actually moved furniture to the new Homestead Avenue campus during our winter semester break. There were only two buildings then, A and B. I played soccer and baseball and was manager of the hockey team. During my time on the senate, I met Dean Butler, who was a great influence on me. I also met Dr. Frost, who was a great leader and also influential in my life. I went on to Westfield State College and graduated in 1976 with a B.S. in criminal justice. In 1992, after having several types of employment, I continued my education at Springfield College and received a certificate of advanced study and a master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling in 1995. After 16½ years with the U.S. Postal Service, I was hired as the veterans’ benefit counselor at the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home. In 2001, I became veterans’ agent for the city of West Springfield and was appointed



to the Governor’s Veterans’ Counsel, where I served for 13 years, retiring in 2013. Today, I have been married for 42 years and have three children, three grandsons, and one granddaughter. I owe all my success in life to those two great educators, Dean Butler and Dr. Frost, who were inspirational in my life. God bless them both.

James G. Berrelli '74, West Springfield



**FOR ME,
HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
WILL BE ALWAYS
HOME. THAT'S
WHERE MY
PATH TO SUCCESS
STARTED.**

Liuginsa Rosa '20

In 2012, my husband was promoted and transferred to North Carolina. I wanted to do something productive in our new state, so I volunteered with the American Association of Retired Persons and trained to be a tax preparer. I fell in love with what I was doing.

Time passed. Our oldest daughter got married and had two daughters. My husband and I decided to move closer to our family in New York. We settled in East Longmeadow, Mass.

For many years, my husband has been the sole provider, and he does so with grace; he has never ever made me feel inferior for being a stay-at-home mom. However, inside of me was the desire to make our young adult children proud of me and to take control of my personal finances. I knew I wanted to go to UMass and decided to start my journey at a more affordable community college.

Why did I choose HCC? I found plenty of information and resources on the college website, and when I visited the school for the first time I was welcomed like I had been a student there for many years. I felt like I was home. Even though the courtyard looked a little messy when the Campus Center was being renovated, the people I met made the difference.

I always received outstanding support at HCC. My mentor, Professor Leah Russell, always had an open door and guided me through my accounting courses. Through Klara Karol, my career advisor, I learned about the Mass Transfer Program. We met regularly to speak about my progress and became good friends. Transfer Affairs coordinator Mark Broadbent sent me frequent reminders about the courses I needed to take to comply with the requirements for Mass Transfer. Andrew Fletcher, the director of CAPS – the Center for Academic Program Support – gave me the opportunity to work as an accounting tutor and supplemental instructor.

The Green Key and the Phi Theta Kappa honor societies allowed me to connect with other students and contribute to the causes that matter to HCC. I was also a New Student Orientation leader, and that was a door to developing my leadership and public speaking skills, which gave me the

On May 13, 2022, Liuginsa Rosa'20 gave the commencement address to her fellow graduates at the UMass Isenberg School of Management.

confidence at UMass to raise my hand in class. I was never afraid or ashamed to ask for what I needed.

From day one, I was committed to studying hard and keeping good grades so I could transfer to UMass and make my dream a reality. I graduated from HCC in August 2020 with an associate's degree in business administration and a 3.9 GPA. Two years later, on May 13, 2022, I earned a bachelor's degree in business administration in accounting from the Isenberg School of Management at UMass. It was a magical day, where I experienced something that, once upon a time, was just in my dreams.

I am now continuing my education in the Master of Science in taxation program at Bentley University, which will allow me to meet the educational requirements to become a certified public accountant. At UMass, I had the privilege to do two internships at PricewaterhouseCoopers, and I am very proud to tell you that after finishing my master's degree, I will start my professional career at PwC as a full-time tax associate.

My family had immigrated to the United States from the Dominican Republic in 2003. We settled in the Bronx. At that time, we only had a couple of pieces of luggage but lots of dreams. My husband and I agreed that the best way to support our three children was for me to be a stay-at-home mom.

None of us knew English. I took a couple of ESL courses at Lehman College. We made a commitment that even though we didn't understand what we heard we would only watch TV in English to make our ears familiar with the sound of the language. Our house looked like a museum with Post-it notes everywhere labeling all the parts of our house in English. We learned very fast.

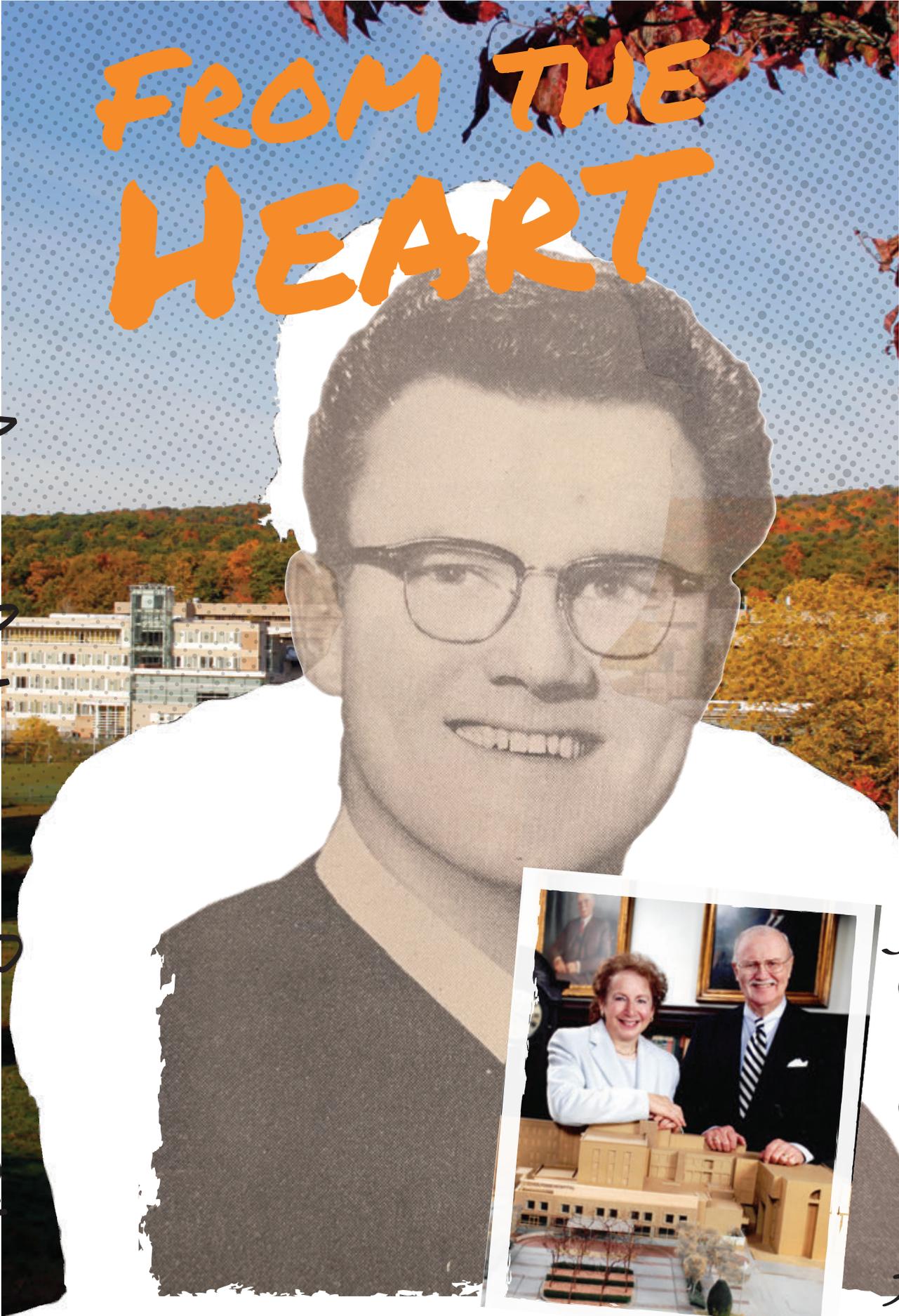
'I FELT LIKE I WAS HOME'

OF HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The success of the non-profit he founded, FRIENDS

FROM THE HEART

later to become the HCC Foundation, paved the



HCC mourns the loss of Joe Wright '54 – alum, trustee, HCC Foundation founder, donor, community leader

By DOUG SCANLON

In 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, also known as the G.I. Bill. With its passage, thousands of World War II veterans who otherwise could not have afforded college now had the opportunity to attend.

One of them was Joseph T. Wright of Northampton, Mass.

During the war, Wright had served in the U.S. Air Force. In 1952, using the G.I. Bill (and under the guidance of President George Frost), Wright enrolled at Holyoke Junior College. That began a 70-year relationship with the school – now HCC – that ended on April 24, 2022, with his death at the age of 92.

"Joe's impact on HCC is immeasurable," said Amanda Sbriscia, vice president of Institutional Advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation. "I remember him saying that his heart belonged to HCC. In so many ways, Joe was the heart of HCC. He brought incredible joy and passion to his service as a board member, donor, and alum. In the 75-year history of the college, Joe Wright stands out."

Indeed, Wright poured his heart into everything he did. During his first year at HJC, he was elected to student council; sophomore year, he served as president. He served as co-editor of Latch Key, the college yearbook, and participated in the annual variety show. At graduation in 1954, he was awarded the William Whiting Prize for excellence in public speaking and the Stanley Ross Prize for outstanding citizenship.

Most importantly, he found his heart at HJC – classmate Angela Cataldo '54, whom he married and whose hometown of Holyoke he adopted.

"They were a match from day one," said Frances Kane '56, a member of the HCC Foundation Board of Directors and a longtime friend. "They were just a great couple, and they never left Holyoke."

After finishing school and getting married, Joe and Angela Wright built their new home in Holyoke and raised three children there. Wright began to work for his father-in-law, Frank Cataldo, founder of the Food Mart chain of grocery stores. As senior vice president, Wright oversaw the construction and growth of the supermarket chain to more than 40 stores in western Massachusetts and Connecticut.

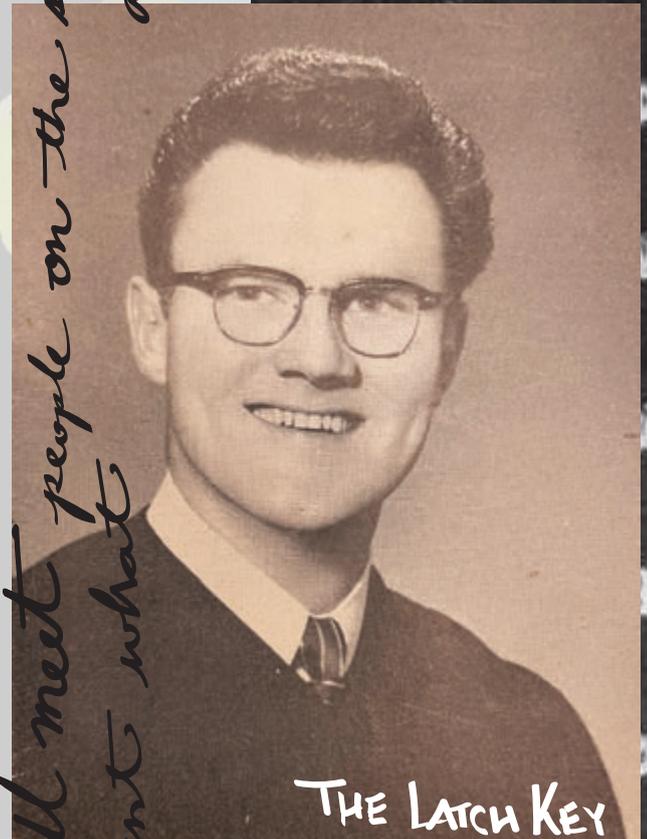
"Joe had 5,000 employees at Food Mart, and he knew everybody – knew their first names, knew their kids' names," said Angela. "I still meet people on the street all the time who comment on what a joy it was working for Joe."

Through the years, the Wrights became even more embedded in city affairs.

"When someone mentions Holyoke, the two people I think of are An-

school.

I still meet people on the street all the time who comment on what a joy it was working for Joe



THE LATCH KEY



Joseph Wright '54, center, and his wife Angela '54, left, with 2017-2018 scholarship recipient Manpreet Kaur and HCC Foundation board member Frances Kane '56.

When someone mentions Holyoke, the two people I think of are Angie and Joe Wright

gie and Joe Wright,” said Paul Boudreau ‘67, former member of the HCC Board of Trustees and the HCC Foundation Board of Directors, and longtime friend of the couple. “They just don’t make people like Joe and Angie anymore – the commitment, the devotion, the motivation to give up their time and parts of their life to make where they live a better community. That’s what made them so unique.”

Wright served on numerous boards and committees in Holyoke. Angela recalls many nights during bad snow storms when her husband, as commissioner of Public Works, would ride in one of the city’s plows to ensure the streets were clear and safe. In particular, she said, her husband wanted to be certain local doctors could respond to calls when needed.

In January 1968, after the fire that burned HCC’s main building, the former high school on Sargeant Street, Wright trudged through the charred remains with his mentor, HCC president George Frost, searching for whatever files could be salvaged. (Many of those scorched documents survive to this day in the archives of the HCC Library.)

Wright and Frost were determined to keep the college in Holyoke when such an outcome was far from assured. Frost tapped Wright for help organizing local business, education, and civic leaders to raise money for a new HCC campus. The success

of the nonprofit he co-founded, Friends of Holyoke Community College (later to become the HCC Foundation), saved the school and proved Wright’s knack for fundraising.

“When Joe believed in a product, he could convince you to buy it,” said Kane. “And he believed in the product of whatever he was fundraising for. If he was involved, he was 100 percent in.”

Wright served on the HCC Board of Trustees from 2007 to 2013 and on the HCC Foundation board of directors from its inception in 1968 until 2017, remaining affiliated thereafter as director emeritus. (Angela was also a long-serving member of the HCC Alumni Council.)

Through their efforts, and their own private donations, the Wrights helped build the Foundation’s endowment into what it is today – the largest of any community college in Massachusetts.

In addition to his work for HCC, Wright led fundraising efforts for Holyoke Hospital, Blessed Sacrament School, and the United Way, and many other organizations. When Mountain Park, the beloved local amusement park on Mount Tom, was closing, the Wrights organized a campaign to save the Merry-Go-Round and relocate it to Holyoke’s Heritage State Park, where it remains. At the time, they even volunteered to help paint the horses.

Wright was always curious and engaged. According to Angela, when their son Joe entered the U.S. Naval Academy, Joe studied up on the Navy. When their daughter, Jo-Ann Davis, started practicing labor law, he began learning about labor law. If he became friends with a doctor, Wright wanted to learn everything there was to know about their field of practice.

“He had a passion for traveling the world and meeting people, learning how they thought,” said Sue Ellen Panitch, a former HCC trustee and current member of the HCC Foundation board, “and he had a remarkable ability to draw them out.”

Providing monetary support to the college was never enough. Wright was also an unflinching advocate for HCC and never forgot everything George Frost had done for him when he was starting out as a student. During an interview

Never forget the opportunity you got here that laid the foundation for the rest of your life

about the 50th anniversary of the HCC Foundation for the spring 2019 issue of *The Connection*, Wright recounted what he told HCC students through the years: "Never forget the opportunity you got here that laid the foundation for the rest of your life."

In that article, Wright credited HCC for preparing him for transfer to Boston University and launching his career in retail, from which he retired as executive vice president of the New England division of the Waldbaum's supermarket chain.

Over eight decades, Wright's devotion to HCC never wavered. Once, during a meeting with a friend from B.U., he brushed aside any notion of donating to his other alma mater.

"Don't send me any appeals," Wright told his former classmate. "My heart belongs to Holyoke Community College."

Wright had HCC's heart as well. In 1984, the college honored him with a Distinguished Service Award at Commencement and did so again along with Angela in 2003, when they delivered a joint Commencement address.

Joe Wright may be gone but his many contributions to HCC live on through the three scholarships he and Angela set up through the HCC Foundation: the Elena and Frank Cataldo Scholarship (for business students); the Rosemarie Cataldo Fitzpatrick '56 Scholarship in Nursing; and the Joseph and Angela Wright Scholarship – the first scholarship ever endowed by the HCC Foundation. There are now 165.

"Joe was a great guy, who brought his joy of life and his enduring love of family and friends to all of us," said Angela. "He lived a full life. He really did."

And he will be missed. 🍷





Maylene Rodriguez
Scott and her mother
Jennifer Scott '10, '12

Family Pride

By LAURIE LOISEL



How one alum's HCC education inspired her daughter to pursue her own college dreams

When it comes to Jennifer Scott and her daughter, Maylene Rodriguez Scott, it's hard to say who inspires the other more.

Growing up, Maylene watched as her mother, a single parent working full time, pursued an associate degree at Holyoke Community College.

After Maylene graduated from Amherst Regional High School in 2015, Jennifer watched her daughter put herself through the University of Massachusetts, where she graduated in 2020 with honors, a bachelor's degree in sociology and educational policy, and minimal debt while working in the university's financial aid office.

Theirs is not only a story of perseverance but one that illustrates the profound power a community college education has to transform individual lives – and families.

Maylene, now 25, was a toddler when her mother entered HCC. After dropping out of Chicopee High School and leaving a troubled relationship, Scott was getting by on public assistance, but she wanted a job.

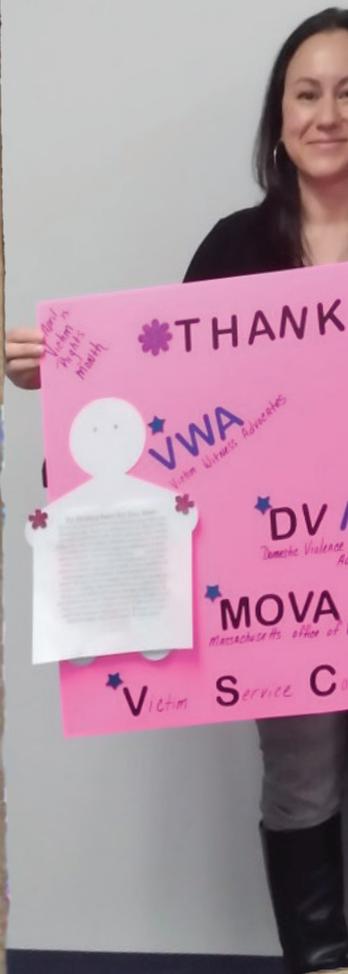
Eventually, Scott found Jump Start, a free HCC program created in the mid-1990s that provides specialized job training, job skills preparation, career placement services, and support for disadvantaged people looking to join the workforce. It was perfect for her.

Scott, 42, says the program provided an essential foundation that helped build her confidence. In addition to specific job skills, Jump Start instructors taught her how to prepare resumes and cover letters, how to dress for interviews and communicate with potential employers.

"They never were judgmental and that was a really big thing," she said. "They were teaching you what you needed to know in the real world to be successful. They treated you with kindness and respect. I was never discouraged."

At the time, Scott was on her own and found their gentle support and the connections she made with other students to be just what she needed.



A woman with dark hair is smiling and holding a large pink sign. The sign features the word "THANK" at the top, a white silhouette of a person, and several logos and acronyms: "VWA" (Victim Witness Advocate), "DV" (Domestic Violence), "MOVA" (Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance), and "Victim Service Center". There is also a small white card with text pinned to the sign.

“There wasn’t anybody pushing me to do it except the people in the Jump Start program,” she said. “I don’t think I’d be where I am if I wasn’t able to get that foundation. It was really a savior.”

The effort paid off. After completing Jump Start’s customer service training track, she was offered jobs in banking and medical billing.

“The main goal of the program is to get participants off public assistance by preparing them with immediate, marketable work skills,” said Jump Start coordinator Aimee Funk.

But before that can happen, she said, staff individually assess each participant to identify barriers to success – and work with them to make sure their needs are met.

“It’s not one facet that makes a student,” she said. “It’s a circle of things.”

Although Jump Start is all about putting people into the workforce, the staffers there hope participants will return to HCC at some point to continue their educations.

That was the case for Jennifer Scott.

While thrilled to find a job after Jump Start, she eventually returned to HCC, where she began to chip away at her associate’s degree in human services, working full time, taking two or three classes each semester at night, and occasionally taking a semester off, until she had finally earned enough credits to graduate in 2010. Later, Scott returned to HCC again for a certificate in addiction studies.

Maylene has vivid memories of her mother’s years at HCC, often tagging along to campus when she was a young student at Wildwood Elementary School in Amherst, where she grew up.

“It was the first time I’d ever seen another school,” Maylene said, “and I remember walking through the halls and thinking ‘Wow! This is Mom’s school. It’s so big!’”

Over time, she came to understand how hard her mother was working, especially when, for example, Scott would collect Maylene from her after-school program following a day’s work, and then head off to a night class.

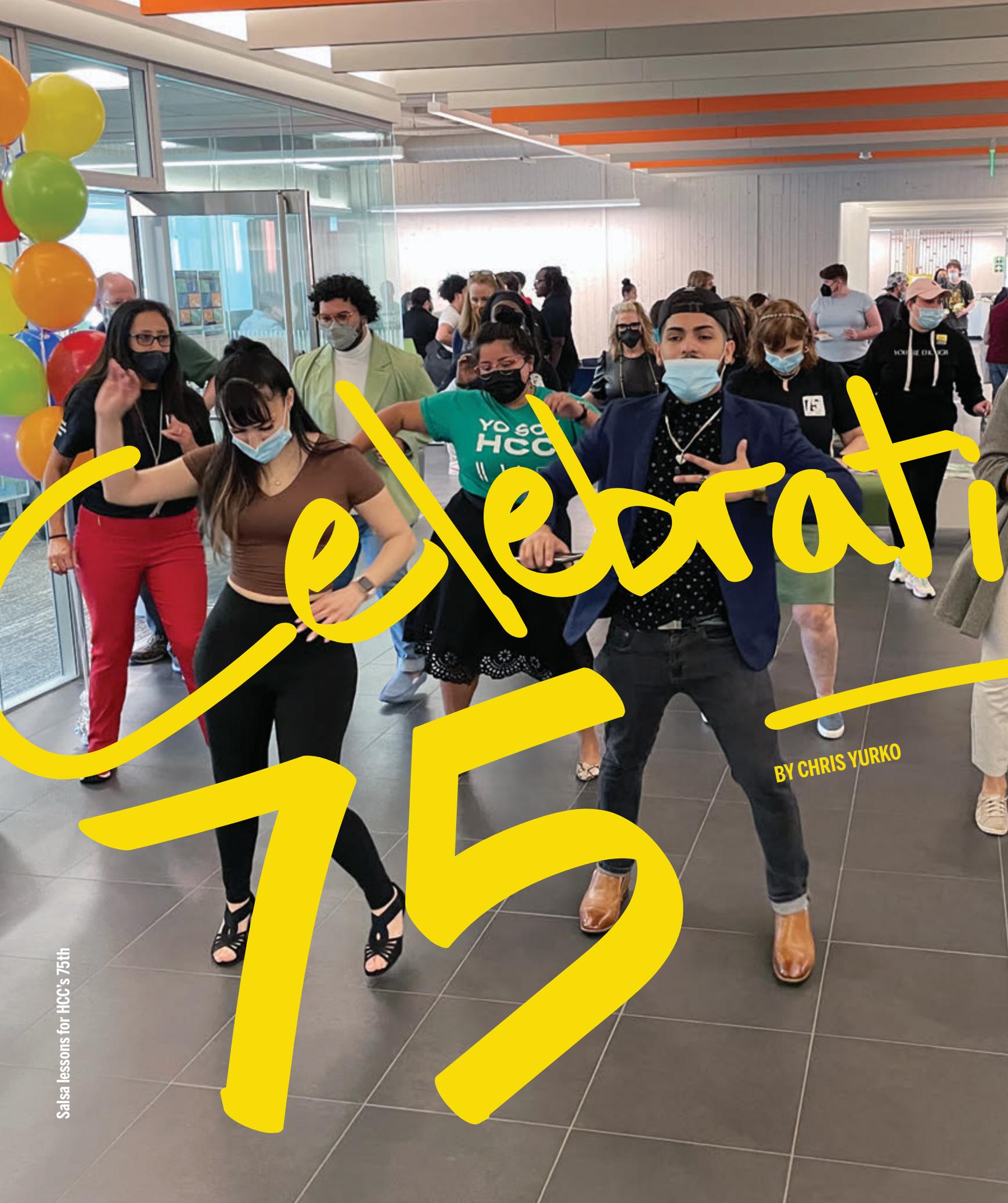
She remembers, too, the sweet rewards: The day her mother received her HCC graduation tassel, she placed it on her rearview mirror, where it still hangs – a symbol of her achievement.

That is something I can do for myself, Maylene realized.

After Scott earned her associate’s degree, a YWCA internship working with people leaving relationships marred by domestic violence led to a job in Palmer District Court as an advocate for victims and survivors. Eventually, she earned a promotion to supervisor, managing advocates in several courts in western Massachusetts.

Two years ago, she got a job as a case specialist in the Eastern Hampshire District Court Probation Department in Belchertown. When Scott saw the job posting, she was intimidated, but her daughter encouraged her to apply, and, in the end, Scott was selected out of a field of 90 applicants.

“She couldn’t be prouder of me,” Scott said of Maylene.



75th Anniversary

BY CHRIS YURKO

Salsa lessons for HCC's 75th



After delays and uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, HCC students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends finally had the opportunity to celebrate the college's 75th Anniversary as the oldest two-year college in Massachusetts.

On Thurs. May 5, HCC hosted a series of events on campus and online showcasing the work of HCC students and programs. WCCH 103.5 FM, the college radio station, welcomed alumni into the studio as guest DJs. Teachers, alumni, and students met over Zoom to discuss the programs that have most impacted their lives. There were tours of the college's early childhood education suite, art demonstrations, theater and literary exhibitions, free cupcakes in the courtyard, music, salsa dancing, and more.

The daylong festivities concluded with a community reception on Race Street at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute catered by students in the college's culinary arts program.

**HCC LAUDED AS 'PIONEER' **

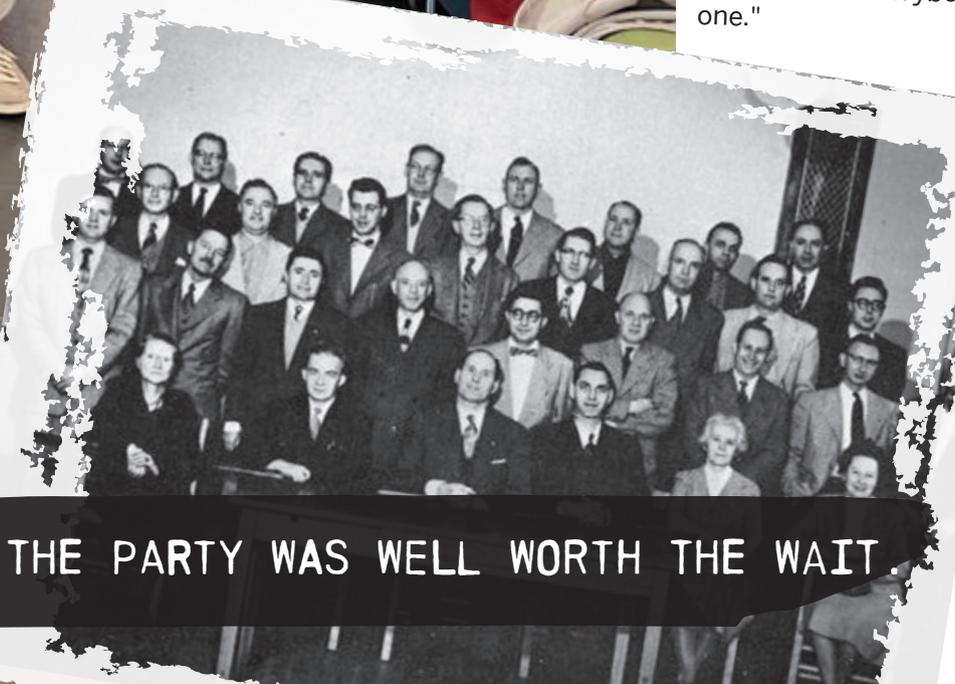
"This has been an extraordinary day," said President Christina Royal, welcoming the crowd at the college's downtown facility. "Seventy-five years – that's a lot to celebrate."

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

"A lot has changed in 75 years," Royal said, "but what hasn't changed is our core and central purpose. HCC was created by faculty from prestigious four-year colleges who wanted to make education more accessible and bring it to the working class so that everybody who wanted an education could get one."

Holyoke city councilor David K. Bartley (son of HCC's second president, David M. Bartley) presented President Royal with an official resolution from the Holyoke City Council: "Congratulations to Holyoke Community College, in recognition of their seventy-fifth anniversary educating thousands and stands today as a pioneer of higher education."

"We recognize that there's a lot of different ways that we can make a difference in the community, but there's no better way than improv-



THE PARTY WAS WELL WORTH THE WAIT

ing the lives of our citizens through the power of education," Royal said.

"It is still today one of the most transformative ways that we can increase social and economic mobility for people, their families, and communities at large."

Royal, who had met with a group of alumni over lunch earlier in the day,



I will forever be grateful to this college. It is a c



noted how moved and humbled she was to hear stories of those who could speak firsthand about the origins of the college, its founding president George Frost, and the great fire that consumed the original downtown campus building in 1968.

"They didn't have to rebuild HCC," Royal said. "There were other options, other colleges. But there was something distinct enough that the community decided to fight for HCC and to ultimately buy the Sheehan dairy farm on Homestead Avenue to rebuild it in a space that would allow the college to grow and become what it is today."

Several HCC alumni and students were also invited to take their turns at the mic. Matthew McMahon '06, a cybersecurity analyst, talked



community with an indomitable heart.



about the importance of HCC's interdisciplinary Learning Community classes in his education and career trajectory.

"HCC gave me the tools to implement lifelong learning and a growth mindset," he said. "The Learning Communities taught me that I can approach complex topics from different perspectives. I have implemented this cross-discipline strategy repeatedly throughout my life. It has been a big factor in my success, especially now with my work in the field of emerging technologies. I've taken classes at six different colleges. I've got several degrees. I've never seen anything that really compares to HCC."

Yannelis Cruz '22, a biology major, STEM scholar, and student trustee from Springfield, came from a family where, as a woman, she was not expected to go to college.

"HCC gave me hope for me and my family, so that in the future I can make an impact," she said.



HCC alumni, students, faculty, and staff enjoy the festivities for HCC's 75th.



"HCC allowed me to become a leader."

Harry Hill graduated from HCC in 2013 with his degree in graphic design. He now works as a graphic designer in the college's Marketing and Communications Department.

"I want the world to know that HCC is as liberating as you make it," he said. "Today's themes and those of the past 75 years are academic excellence, innovation, and opportunity, themes that HCC has embodied completely. Without these foundational ideas, HCC would be just another institution where performative measures outweigh impactful actions. I crafted my future using the skills I learned at Holyoke Community College."

Soon after graduating in 2021 from HCC's culinary arts program, Brianna Couture started a business called Brinny's Hand Pies in Agawam. Along with several other culinary arts alumni, Couture spent much of the night behind the scenes, helping to prepare appetizers in the kitchens.

"Without the fantastic and supportive staff and instructors at this college, I would not be the chef I am today," Couture said. "They gave me the foundation to feel confident and secure within myself to explore all different types of food and culinary techniques. I will forever be grateful to this college. It is a community with an indomitable heart." 



“I’ve taken classes at six different colleges. I’ve got several degrees. I’ve never seen anything that really compares to HCC.”



FULL CIRCLE

Ainsley Murdock '19 thrived in the supportive environment at HCC. Now she's back and helping current students find success.

By DOUG SCANLON

As a student in 2017, Ainsley Murdock '19 took what turned out to be one of her favorite HCC classes, Climate Fiction with English professor Elizabeth Trobaugh.

Last spring, five years later, Murdock, a liberal arts major who went on for a bachelor's degree at Bay Path University, found herself back in the same HCC class. This time, though, she was there as an educational coach, working with a current student through HCC's MAICEI program.

MAICEI, which stands for the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative, is a state-funded program that supports disabled high school graduates from the age of 18 to 22 as they progress through college and helps them transition to their next stage in life.

In her role, Murdock assists students like Nikayla Rogers, who was enrolled in Trobaugh's Climate Fiction course. Outside of class, Murdock helps Rogers and other MAICEI students process lectures, organize their assignments, develop time-management plans, set up appointments for tutoring, and otherwise manage their day-to-day campus activities.

The work is extremely personal, says Murdock, who remembers her own struggles as a college student with ADHD.

"I had to do things a little differently to accomplish the same things as other people," she said. "So now that I work with students with disabilities, I feel like the work I'm doing is important and impactful. These students have so much drive and so much passion and they just want to live a life like everybody else. And being a part of helping them gain the skills they need to do that is meaningful for me and I really enjoy it."

Murdock is employed as a paraprofessional by Agawam High School, from which she was assigned to work at HCC with Rogers, who lives in Agawam.

"I knew I was going to end up at either HCC or Westfield State, and I was really hoping that it would be HCC," said Murdock.

She got her wish.

Trobaugh remembers Murdock as a student who was enthusiastic about learning and helping others.

"Ainsley modeled good classroom citizenship with her participation in class discussions and activities and her spirit of goodwill," Trobaugh said. "It is no surprise to me that she is devoting herself now to helping other students learn and succeed."

The final assignment for Climate Fiction requires each student to write a short story demonstrating their understanding of climate change hazards and storytelling techniques. Just for kicks, Murdock dug up her own final from 2017, and Trobaugh invited her to read it to the class.

"To this day, taking that class was probably one of my favorite experiences at HCC," Murdock said. "Professor Trobaugh helped me realize that I enjoy going to school and learning new things. And she was also one of the easiest professors to talk to when I needed help with anything."

As a student, Murdock appreciated the supportive environment at HCC. Although she was reserved in high school, she gained confidence in HCC's intensive Learning Community classes.

"Because you're with the same small group of people, it helped me break out of my shell and made it easier to form relationships with my classmates," she said.

As Murdock became more comfortable, her grades improved. In thinking about life after HCC, she talked to her visual arts professor, Victor Katz, about transferring to a four-year school.

"I was very thankful that someone had actually cared to ask me what my plans were and to sit down and help explain to me what options were available," she said.

Eventually, she transferred to Bay Path, where she made the Dean's List each semester and graduated with her bachelor's degree in psychology and a 3.7 GPA.

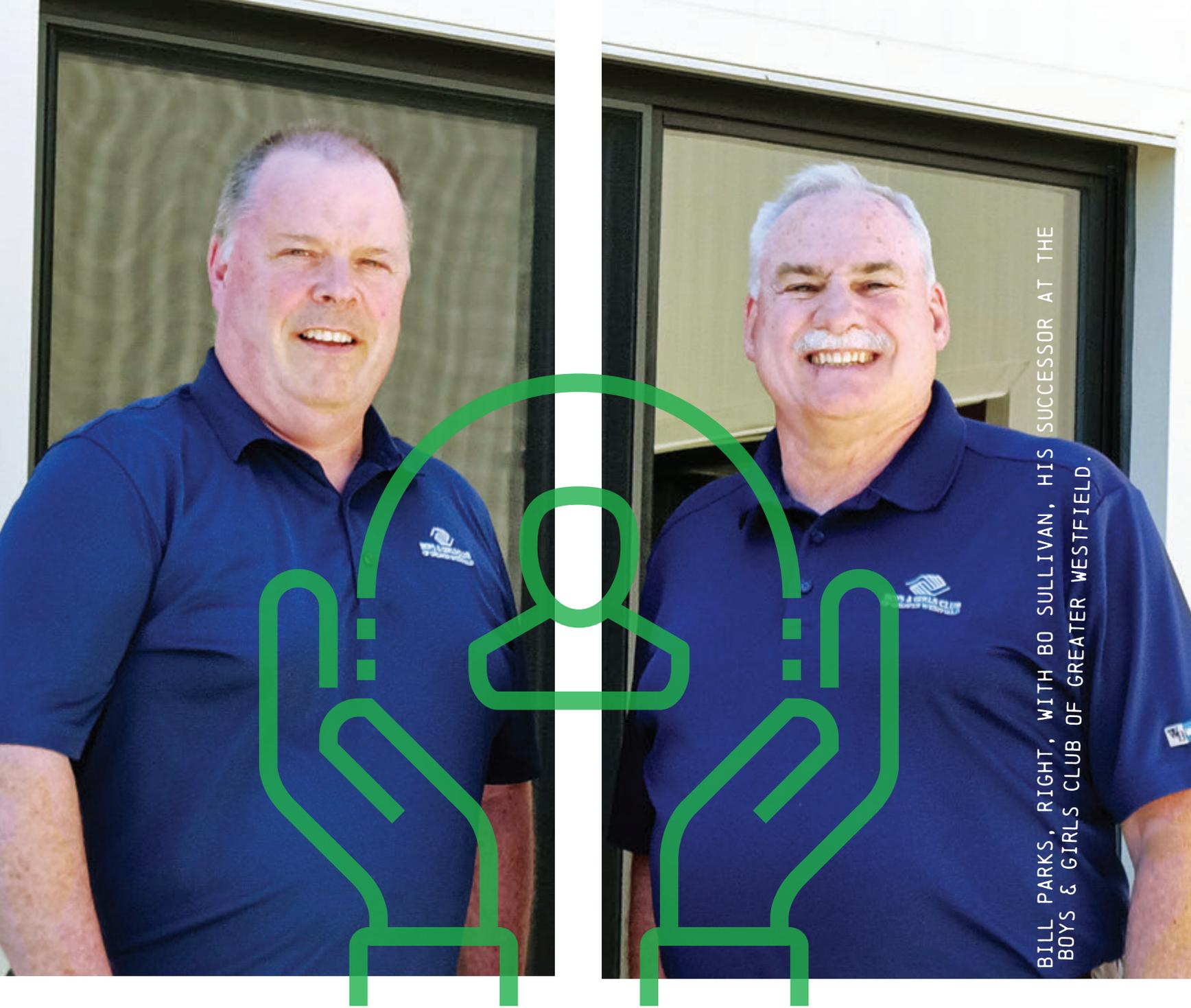
"HCC really set the foundation for everything that I have achieved," she said. "It was at HCC that I learned that I love learning and helped me realize what I wanted to do. If I didn't come here, I don't know if I would have figured that out." 





things I have to do a little differently to accomplish the same things as other people.

(Top photo) Ainsley Murdock '19 with HCC student Nikayla Rogers



BILL PARKS, RIGHT, WITH BO SULLIVAN, HIS SUCCESSOR AT THE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF GREATER WESTFIELD.

THAT LITTLE PUSH

By DOUG SCANLON

BILL PARKS WANTS TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED. FOR MANY OF THEM, THAT MEANS COMING TO HCC.

Bill Parks remembers what it was like growing up in a working-class neighborhood in Marlborough, Mass. His father worked in one of the local shoe factories while Parks was either going to school or hanging out at the Marlborough Boys Club.

He describes his father as a hard worker who always put food on the table but admits that college was never a conversation topic in their home.

“The Boys Club was always there to direct me,” Parks said. “They helped me look at colleges and even helped raise money to pay for it.”

That meant a lot.

He worked at the club during and after his college years at Fitchburg State, where he graduated with a bachelor’s degree in sociology. Later, he applied for a full-time job as athletic director at the Billerica Boys and Girls Club, where he eventually became executive director. He moved on to the Waltham Boys and Girls Club and finally the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Westfield, where he spent the last 18 years of his 42-year career, creating educational opportunities for area youth. He retired in June as president and CEO.

During his time in Westfield, Parks served on several community scholarship committees and noticed that scholarship awardees tended to be high-performing students who were already receiving other awards and accolades.

“I thought, we should have something for those kids that are in the middle, the kids that really need that little push to help them along, and this may make or break whether they go to college,” Parks said.

For the past several years, the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Westfield has been supporting dozens of college-bound students through its Youth of the Year program, which recognizes teenagers who demonstrate moral character, leadership, and service.

In order to be considered for the Youth of the Year award, candidates are chosen by

a committee comprising members of the local community. They look for students who are leaders and have often had to overcome personal challenges. Their reward is a college scholarship.

“A lot of our winners are the first one in the family to ever go to college,” said Parks, “so the scholarship gives them a great way to experience what college is all about.”

The club already has an endowed scholarship for a student to attend Westfield State University, but Parks started noticing that more and more students were interested in HCC.

After receiving a \$15,000 planned gift, Parks and his successor, current president and CEO Bo Sullivan, contacted the HCC Foundation about using those funds to set up an endowed scholarship. They were told that if they could secure another \$5,000 for the scholarship, bringing the amount to \$20,000, the Foundation would match it with an additional \$20,000, transforming it into a \$40,000 endowed scholarship.

Parks and Sullivan met with the club’s board of directors about the proposal, hoping to raise the final \$5,000.

“It took about a minute and a half and we had it,” said Sullivan.

Starting with the fall 2022 semester, select club members enrolling at HCC will be eligible to receive the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Westfield Scholarship.

“This scholarship is a way of saying to our students, ‘We believe in you.’ For some of these kids, it’s the first time somebody has said that to them,” said Parks.

While Parks and Sullivan are happy to create this new opportunity for area youth, they also hope to grow the relationship between HCC and the club.

“I think it’s more than just a scholarship,” Parks said. “I think this will turn into many other opportunities to partner with HCC, and who knows what we can build from there?” 

*This scholarship is a way of saying to our students,
‘We believe in you.’
For some of these kids, it’s the first time somebody has said
that to them.*

Running for Ukraine

Luba Pantus '14, a Ukrainian refugee who came to the United States 21 years ago, recently established Pray4Ukraine, a charity running team to support her war-torn homeland. The team's inaugural race was the Run Westfield Flat & Fast 5k on May 22. Team members wore Ukrainian colors and flower crowns. "We wanted to make it festive, family oriented," said Pantus. "Prior to the race, we sang songs in English, Spanish, and Slavic to show that it doesn't matter what language we speak, that we are all one community, one family." Pantus earned a certificate in medical assisting in 2006 and an associate's degree in nursing in 2014 before transferring to Elms College for her BSN. She now works as a nurse for William J. Dean Technical High School in Holyoke. For the race, she recruited HCC nursing students as volunteers to work in the medical tent. "HCC is a second home to me," she said. "So many years and it still has a place in my heart." Pray4Ukraine raised \$5,200 from the race, money earmarked for clothing and food for Ukrainian refugees in Poland and orphanages in Ukraine. "We came together at the race as a community," Pantus said. "This makes us all stronger."

Luba Pantus '14 is the founder of Pray4Ukraine, a charity racing team. Inset: From left, HCC student nurses Laura Levin '22, Shauna Martinez '22, and Alison Hansen '23 worked in the medical tent at the Run Westfield Flat & Fast 5k on May 22.



Forever Grateful

When **Myriam Quinoñes '95** began her HCC journey in 1992, she was a 20-year-old single mom who spoke rudimentary English. Encouraged by her ESL instructors and mentors, she completed her associate's degree in liberal arts, then transferred to UMass for her bachelor's degree in psychology and education. A few years later, she returned to HCC as an academic advisor in the ESL program, which she would soon be running as coordinator. In 2006, she became the founding coordinator of MAS, HCC's Multicultural Academic Services program, where she counseled – and inspired – countless students by sharing the story

of her own success. "This place gave me the opportunity to grow as a professional and the opportunity to give back to my community," she said. "I will forever be grateful." In May, after 21 years, Quinoñes left HCC and moved back to Puerto Rico with her wife, former HCC advisor Jossie Valentin, to continue the work they started a few years ago helping to rebuild the island after the devastation of Hurricane Maria. "I have many, many memories with many of you here," she said during a surprise farewell. "Some of you have become more than colleagues. We have good stories and bad stories, right? I will take them all with me."



Myriam Quinoñes says goodbye to HCC.

Students in Professor Alex Sanchez's Introduction to Criminal Justice course last spring were introduced to "General," the furrier member of the Southwick Police Department's K-9 Unit. Tending the opposite end of General's leash: K-9 Officer **Michael Westcott '11**. Westcott, a lifelong resident of Southwick, earned his associate's degree in criminal justice from HCC before transferring to Westfield State. He's been with the Southwick PD since 2006, where he started as a reserve officer before being appointed full time in 2009. He and General have been training and working together since 2017. They're a tight team. "He's the town's dog," said Westcott, "but he lives with me." General, Westcott explained, is a dual-purpose K-9, which means he is trained in multiple areas, including evidence recovery, tracking, apprehension, handler protection, and narcotics detection. To demonstrate General's skills, Westcott led him on a search of Sanchez's classroom. It didn't take General long to sniff out the locker where Westcott had earlier planted a narcotics-scented baggie. True to his European roots, General, a German Shepherd/Belgian Malinois mix born in Holland, takes his commands in Dutch. *Brave hond!*



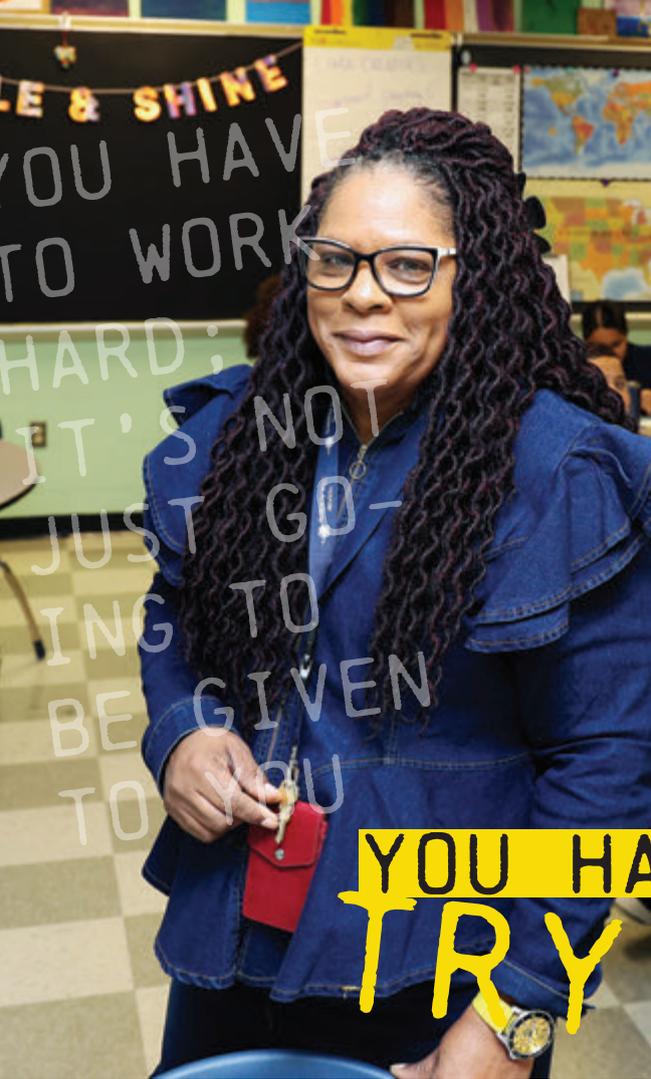
K-9 COMPANY

Standing Out in a Crowd

Mychal Connolly '04 received the Distinguished Service Award from HCC at the college's 75th anniversary commencement June 4. A self-professed "serial entrepreneur," Connolly studied visual arts at HCC, where he was a DJ for the college radio station, played tennis, and served on the Student Senate. Inspired by HCC alum **Michael Kittredge '73**, founder of Yankee Candle Company, whom he met through HCC, Connolly went on to start Stinky Cakes, a newborn baby gift company, and StandOutTruck.com, a digital mobile advertising and marketing agency. Connolly has served as an HCC alumni mentor, endowed an annual scholarship through the HCC Foundation for business and marketing majors, and volunteers his services during HCC's annual "Together HCC – Drive to Change Lives" fundraising campaign. "Myke can be found talking about the impact of a Holyoke Community College education all across our region – in boardrooms, with aspiring leaders, and all along the streets of western Massachusetts thanks to the Stand Out Truck," Royal said. "He is a champion for HCC and we are pleased to celebrate his service to the college."



President Royal presents the Distinguished Service Award to Mychal Connolly at HCC's 75th annual Commencement June 4.



Principal Lesson

Korin Hall '95 spent several years working various jobs – machinist, plumber’s apprentice, construction worker, among them – before a car accident injury forced her to consider a less physically demanding career. Following the lead of her mother, **Catherine Campbell '90**, Hall began taking classes at HCC through the Women in Transition program (precursor to today’s New Directions for Adult Learners program). That experience sparked a decades-long career in education. After working as a middle school teacher in Springfield, Mass., for more than 20 years, Hall joined the staff of the newly created Holyoke STEM Academy in 2018 and was named principal starting in September 2022. The most important lesson Hall learned at HCC is something she tries to instill in her students to this day: “Try harder.” She remembers being handed back a paper covered in red ink with those words on it. Discouraged, Hall approached her professor. After their conversation, Hall realized she hadn’t put in as much effort as she could have. “Those two words help you think: have you tried your best? Have you gone above and beyond to get this thing done? You have to work hard; it’s not just going to be given to you. And that’s what I learned from HCC; you have to try harder.”

PREMIER PANEL



HCC welcomed back five successful alumni for the first-ever public event hosted by SAMP, the college’s new Student Ambassador Mentorship Program. Featured are **Chloe Soto '17**, program manager for Holyoke’s Nueva Esperanza; **Nicole Ortiz '20**, owner of Crave food truck and restaurant in Holyoke; **Sarah Monson '03**, assistant director of Donor Engagement and Planned Giving for New England Public Media; **Elizabeth Román '03**, managing editor for news for New England Public Media; and **Dawn Bryden '89**, associate

dean of student development at Asnuntuck Community College in Connecticut. Coinciding with National Transgender Awareness Day, the March 31 event in the Leslie Phillips Theater featured a panel discussion with the five alumni, who talked about their experiences at HCC and how that led them to their present positions. SAMP, which started at HCC in fall 2021, is a grant-funded mentorship and internship program that provides leadership and professional development opportunities for women, nonbinary, and transgender students. 

A REVOLUTION- ARY CHAR- ACTER

In a 1980 homage to George Frost HCC's first president, David Bartley '54 (HCC's second president), wrote that Frost's "special presence" made him realize what a great teacher could mean in the life of a college student.

On Thurs., May 5, 2022, on the same day HCC celebrated its 75th anniversary, HCC faculty, staff, students, alumni, friends, and family members gathered for a more somber occasion – to remember and honor HCC philosophy professor Donald Hanover, who died in 2021 after a long battle with cancer.

Professor Hanover was an integral member of the HCC community for 22 years. Fittingly, HCC's Department of Critical Social Thought created a book award and scholarship in his honor titled "The Donald Hanover Revolutionary Award." And on that day in May, a tree, plaque, and two benches were dedicated in his memory, not far from the gardens where Professor Hanover used to dig in the dirt alongside students from the honors course he co-taught, The Politics of Food: Philosophy of Sustainable Agriculture.

Like George Frost and so many others, Hanover was himself a "special presence" who left an indelible mark. Who better to express all that he meant to HCC than his students?

– CHRIS YURKO

continues >>

HCC pays tribute to Professor Don Hanover, 1965-2021

DON WAS TRULY A REVOLUTIONARY

CHARACTER IN MY LIFE, NOT IN THE SENSE OF ARMAMENTS OR ANYTHING PHYSICAL LIKE THAT, BUT A REVOLUTION OF THE MIND.



Shawn Mitchell '23

“I'm a non-traditional student, so getting back into school after 20 years of work was intimidating. And Don comes right at you. I was impressed with him, and curious as well. His intellect made me curious, and his obvious dedication to his students made me curious to see more of what higher education has to offer. He had the rare ability to be both extremely kind and furious at the same time, which also kept me curious. He was a passionate intellectual. He taught me how to how to read more closely. He taught me how to be a better critical thinker. He taught me how to see an argument from multiple different perspectives and how to attack it from different perspectives. He taught me how to be a better writer. He inspired me to read books I had never heard of. He inspired me to take my education more seriously. And he inspired in me a deeper love of philosophy. I think that teaching can make you a good professor. But a great professor is one that inspires you, and Professor Don Hanover inspired me.”



Matt Medina '18

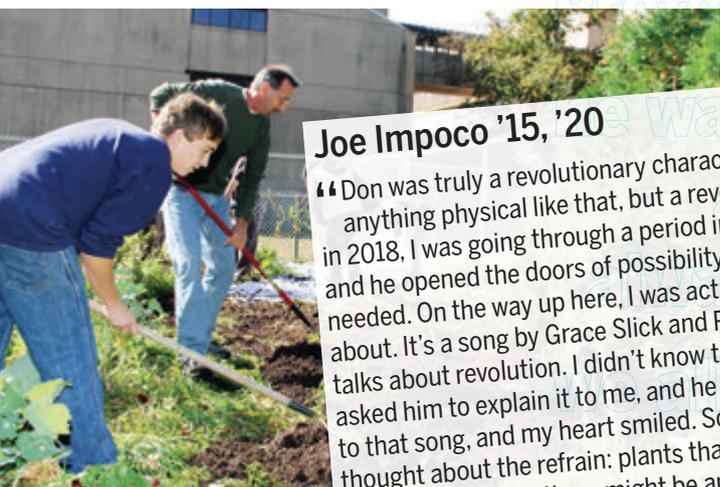
“My first class with Don, Keeping Up with the Times, was the primary reason I transferred to HCC, and it was the first class I'd ever taken that literally brought me to tears. But it also pushed me to become a better thinker, a better student, a better person all around. We all knew Professor Hanover was clever, sharp, and he had little patience for half-baked ideas. Everyone who passed through Donahue has heard Don on the other side of the building, ranting about some untenable political position or some world event. And those who passed by his office knew he always had a line of students out the door. It's no wonder people in facilities put a couple chairs by the end of his hall. Don's section of Donahue is now uncharacteristically quiet. No more queues of students to see, no random outbursts to hear, no funny memes on his office door. Through sickness, he was there for his students, always without complaining, always with a smile.”



Professor Don Hanover inspired me

Joe Impoco '15, '20

“Don was truly a revolutionary character in my life, not in the sense of armaments or anything physical like that, but a revolution of the mind. And when I came back to HCC in 2018, I was going through a period in my life where I needed a revolution of the mind, and he opened the doors of possibility for me and new ways of thinking that I desperately needed. On the way up here, I was actually listening to a song that I had once asked him about. It's a song by Grace Slick and Paul Kantner, “Flowers of the Night,” and the tune talks about revolution. I didn't know that he knew the song. I had sent him the lyrics and asked him to explain it to me, and he said that he had spent many an afternoon listening to that song, and my heart smiled. So, I listened to that song on the way up here today. I thought about him, and I thought about the refrain: plants that cannot bloom by day must flower in the night. You know, we all have a place here. Just because there might be an expectation that we are to do certain things a certain way doesn't mean that that's actually our role. Don helped me see that.”



Class Notes

1982

Palmer Motorsports Park promoted **Al Sandy** to membership club director and community outreach director. He joined Palmer Motorsports in 2015 and has played a key role in their marketing and sales department. The park was rated "One of the top ten road courses in North America" by Road & Track Magazine. Sandy earned his associate's degree from HCC in business administration and continued his studies at Westfield State University.

1989

Dawn Bryden joined Asnuntuck Community College in Connecticut as associate dean of student development after nearly two decades in admissions at Bay Path University. She is president of the New England Transfer Association and a member of the board of directors for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hampden County.

1991

Jennifer Carr was appointed assistant director of donor stewardship at the University of Hartford. She has been with UHart since 2013 working in various roles in the division of Institutional Advancement. She earned her associate's degree in early childhood education at HCC and her bachelor's degree in communication and media studies at UHart.

1993

Christopher Pronovost retired on June 30 as Belchertown police chief. Prior to his service in Belchertown, Pronovost had been a police officer for nearly three decades in Amherst and Granby. He earned an associate's degree from HCC in 1993 and bachelor of science in law enforcement degree from Western New England College three years later.

1996

Melissa Bourdeau joined Astellas Pharma in Westborough, Mass., as senior quality systems engineer. She previously worked as a quality engineer for both Covidien and Medtronic. She has an associate's degree in business administration from HCC and a bachelor's degree from American International College, also in business administration.

2003

Elizabeth Román joined New England Public Media as managing editor for news after reporting for nearly two decades for the Springfield Republican. In recent years, she was editor of El Pueblo Latino, co-founded Colectivo de Medios Latinos, and appeared as a panelist on NEPM's "The Short List" and "Connecting Point" programs.

2005

Benjamin Sunny is an associate director of clinical operations at Sage Therapeutics. In recent years, he has held research and operations positions with Parexel, Genzyme, and Catabasis Pharmaceuticals. Sunny earned his associate's degree in biology from HCC and his bachelor's degree in biology from Gordon College.

2008

Raul Garcia is a clinician in the Opioid Treatment Program at Behavioral Health Network in Springfield, Mass. He has worked in recent years at Habit OPCO, Inc., and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. He holds an associate's degree in criminal justice from HCC, a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from UMass Amherst, and a master's degree in criminal justice from Boston University.

Matthew Harrington joined Northeastern University as the assistant director of campus and community events. He previously spent more than nine years as front-of-house operations fellow and guest experience manager for Emerson College's theater program. He earned his associate's degree at HCC in liberal arts and his bachelor's degree in mass communication at Westfield State University.

Ryan Rege is director of vocational programs at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District in Fitchburg, Mass. Before that he worked for nearly 10 years as vocational director at Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School. After graduating from HCC with his associate's degree in liberal studies, he went on for his bachelor's degree in vocational education from Westfield State and master's degree in education from Fitchburg State.

Tasia Williams was appointed as the administrative assistant to the Male Initiative for Leadership and Education at Springfield Technical Community College. After earning an associate's degree at HCC in liberal studies, Williams completed a bachelor's degree in communications at American International College.

2009

Julie Warren is a software engineering student at Ada Developers Academy in Seattle, Washington. She earned an associate's degree in liberal studies at HCC and a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Smith College. She has also served as the assistant rowing coach at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn.

Iesha Ramos has joined HCC as a career and academic counselor. She previously worked as a family case manager for the Center for Human Development and an academic advisor for Springfield Technical Community College. She earned an associate's degree in public health at HCC, a bachelor's degree from Hampshire College, and a master's degree in public health from UMass Amherst.



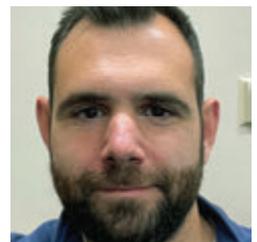
BRYDEN



CARR



ROMAN



HARRINGTON



REGE



WOOD



SPRUELL



WHITELY



ST. ROMAIN

2010

Carissa Dagenais, a trauma informed registered drama therapist, is serving on the Youth Advisory Board for the City of Holyoke. She is also an outpatient therapist for the Northampton, Mass.-based Clinical & Support Options and director of educational workshops at Hampshire Shakespeare Company. After studying theater at HCC, she earned a bachelor's degree in theater at Smith College and master's degree in drama therapy from New York University.

Florence Bank promoted longtime employee **Jean Monska** to lead the Easthampton branch. Monska, who lives in Florence, has worked for Florence Bank since 2002. Before her promotion to branch manager in Easthampton, she served as assistant branch manager in the Hadley location for 14 years. She holds an associate's degree in business administration from HCC and a bachelor's degree in business administration from Southern New Hampshire University.

2011

Jonencia Wood has joined Mount Holyoke College as the assistant vice president of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Most recently, she was the executive director of alumni and family relations at the Rhode Island School of Design. Before that, she was part of the Alumnae Association at Mount Holyoke College, where for five years she held a number of roles, including director of alum inclusion and director of alumnae engagement. Before joining Mount Holyoke, she spent time as a youth organizer with the YEAH! Network and was a project consultant with Baystate Health.

2014

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women appointed **Shaitia Spruell** as executive director. Prior to joining the MCSW staff, she served as a state and regional commissioner and worked as a program manager for the Office of the State Treasurer and Receiver General, where she oversaw women's economic empowerment programming and digital financial education programs. After HCC, she earned a bachelor's degree from Bay Path University and an MBA from Fitchburg State University.

2015

Andrew Kubin was promoted to employee service representative at Big Y World Class Market. Kubin began working at Big Y in 2013 as assistant customer service manager. After receiving his associate's degree in American

Studies at HCC, he earned a bachelor's degree at Westfield State University and master's degree at UMass Amherst.

2016

Laura Whitely is co-founder of Vano Studios, a film and photo rental studio in Eastampton, Mass. Vano Studios opened in June to provide a space for other artists while she and her partner, Bojan Vanovav, continue their own work producing high-quality films, commercials, branded content, and music videos. After earning her associate's degree in business management at HCC, Whitely transferred to the Isenberg School of Management at UMass Amherst for a bachelor's degree in business management and marketing.

2019

Brandi St. Romain has joined Planned Parenthood Federation of America as a medical assistant. St. Romain earned her associate's degree in biology at HCC and her bachelor's degree in neuroscience at Smith College.

2020

Stephania Robert is a loss prevention specialist at the TJX Companies. She previously worked as a security officer at Allied Universal in Springfield. She earned her associate's degree in criminal justice at HCC and her bachelor's degree in criminal justice and homeland security from UMass Lowell.

2021

Samantha Calvao joined Meyers Brothers Kalicka, P.C. as a paraprofessional. She received her associate's degree in accounting from HCC and is working toward her bachelor's degree in accounting at the University of Southern New Hampshire. She was recently awarded the PwC LLP Scholarship from the Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants. 

In Memoriam

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

Joseph T. Wright '54

Dennis K. Meskevich '77

Katherine S. Schaaf '84

Deborah A. Blair '89

Kathryn L. Wall '89

Andrew C. Morse '12

Alexander Seal '18

Peter M. Railsback '20

Jeanne Hatch, *retired staff*

Alix Hegeler, *faculty*

Walter Jaworski, *retired staff*

And these longtime friends and supporters:

Michael L. Chernoff

Harrison A. Fitzpatrick

Carolyn Fontaine

Rita Johnson

To contribute in memory of a classmate, friend or relative, visit hcc.edu/donate or call John Sieracki at 413.552.2746.

What have you been up to since your school days at HCC? Send news of your wedding, retirement, promotion, travels, children/grandchildren, awards, academic achievements, military honors, whatever! Send news and photos to alumni@hcc.edu or to *The Connection*, c/o Alumni Relations, 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke, MA 01040.



Legacy Givings

In 2017, Dean Gallagher enrolled in his first painting class at HCC as a way to keep himself busy during retirement.

He was immediately impressed by his professor, Alix Hegeler, and the way she connected with her students. After taking more classes and getting to know the other students better, Gallagher began to think about ways he could support his classmates, many of whom were struggling with the challenges of poverty. He contacted the HCC Foundation and learned that by naming the college in his estate plans, he could create an endowed scholarship that would help students in need while honoring the memory of Professor Hegeler, who passed away in 2021. He has now established the Alix Hegeler and Dean Gallagher Scholarship Fund, which will be awarded to students studying fine arts.

Join Dean and dozens of others who are creating support for HCC that will last far into the future. Naming Holyoke Community College Foundation as a beneficiary in your estate plans makes you a member of the Frost Society. Just let us know!

It's a simple process. Many types of planned gifts are easy to arrange, won't affect your current lifestyle, and often return benefits back to you.

- You can make a planned gift to HCC today that will cost nothing during your lifetime.
- You can arrange a planned gift that will include tax benefits and guaranteed income payments for life.
- You can make a planned gift by donating a life insurance policy that you no longer need.
- You will be able to preserve the assets from your estate for your loved ones and deliver ongoing support to HCC.
- Your planned gift can eliminate capital gains liability and tax exposure.

Talk to your financial advisor to find out your best options. To learn more about becoming a member of the Frost Society, or if you already have named HCC in your estate plans, contact John Sieracki, leadership gift officer.

“Some of the students are so talented it just blows my mind. Once we’re in the class for a while, sharing and critiquing one another’s work, we all become part of the same experience. And as I began to listen to their stories, their struggles, I learned how hard life has been for them. I said to myself, ‘There’s got to be a way I can help these kids.’”

**Contact John Sieracki,
leadership gift officer,
jsieracki@hcc.edu**

413.552.2746

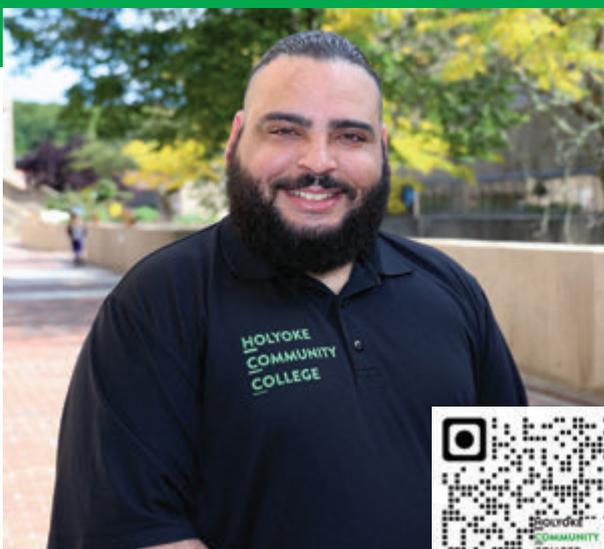
Join Dean Gallagher in The Frost Society

THE CONNECTION

Holyoke Community College
303 Homestead Avenue
Holyoke, MA 01040

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“Math equations don’t make sense when you’re hungry.”



Luis Pinto-Jimenez starts his school days at 5 a.m. to grab an early bus to HCC. An involved student, Luis often relies on the college’s Thrive Student Resource Center, Food Pantry, and Homestead Market for food and other essentials. A math major, he plans to become an architect. But, as he likes to say, “Math equations don’t make sense when you’re hungry.”

When you make your gift to HCC, students like Luis can find help with housing, food, and other support services, or scholarships that make the dream of a college education possible.

You pave the way so that students can thrive.

Give online at hcc.edu/donate

