



# ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

*June 18, 2004*  
*Renaissance Hotel*  
*Springfield, Illinois*

**I C C T A**  
ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION



June 18, 2004

**PRESIDENT'S  
WELCOME**

This year marks the 33rd anniversary of the Illinois Community College Trustees Association. Created as an advocate for the state's public community college boards, the Trustees Association has grown in influence and effectiveness, just as the colleges have grown to meet the needs of nearly 1 million students each year.

Tonight we welcome you to our annual celebration of excellence in the Illinois system. We will honor several retired trustees and public officials who have been unwavering supporters of the community college movement. In addition, we will recognize the newest Honorary Member of our association, the winners of our Paul Simon Student Essay Contest and statewide College Bowl tournament, and our outstanding community college instructors and alumni.

A special welcome is extended to our President's Reception sponsor, the Illinois Community College Risk Management Consortium.

We hope that you enjoy tonight's banquet and award presentations. Thank you for sharing our pride in Illinois' outstanding system of community colleges -- where learning never ends.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jake Rendleman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

**Jake Rendleman**  
President, ICCTA  
Trustee, John A. Logan College

# RAY HARTSTEIN TRUSTEE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

*The Ray Hartstein Trustee Achievement Award was originated in 1992 to recognize a currently serving trustee whose exemplary board service and leadership sets the standard for outstanding trusteeship in Illinois. The award is named after Ray Hartstein, the founding chair of the Oakton Community College Board of Trustees and an Honorary Member of ICCTA.*

## **James L. Ayers** *Parkland College*

Jim Ayers has provided incomparable leadership at all levels of the Illinois community college system. A Parkland College trustee since 1989, he regularly participates in the college's FUTURES Conference and serves on the board of the Parkland Foundation. He was instrumental in arranging an "Agriculture Forum" that led to the creation of the Tony Noel Agricultural Technology Applications Center. Not surprisingly, when Parkland's longtime board chair retired in 1999, his fellow trustees turned to Ayers to lead them.

His state-level accomplishments are equally impressive. He chaired ICCTA's East Central Region in 1997-98, its Federal Relations Committee from 1993 to 1995, and the Government Relations Committee from 2001 to 2003. He has earned two Trustee Education Awards and sits on ICCTA committees dealing with diversity and finance. Through his work on the association's Nominating and Women in Leadership committees, Ayers has mentored other trustees to take leadership positions within the organization. Most recently, he was named to the special committee charged with recommending a successor for ICCTA's retiring executive director Dr. Gary Davis.

On the national level, Ayers is completing his second term on the board of the Association of Community College Trustees and currently chairs ACCT's Central Region. In addition, he has made several presentations at national and regional conferences on diversity issues, strategic planning, and the changing role of the community college trustee.

Outside the educational arena, Ayers is a partner in a thriving law practice and the CEO of a family-owned manufacturing business in Bement. His volunteer commitments have included serving as mayor of the city of Monticello from 1993 to 2001, as president of the Monticello Chamber of Commerce, and as Scoutmaster with Boy Scout Troop 490.

# CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

*Certificates of Merit are granted to individuals in appreciation and support of their longtime commitment to Illinois' community colleges.*

## **Dr. Wayne Chapin**

Trustee

*Highland Community College*

After 42 years in veterinary medicine, Dr. Wayne Chapin began a new career in 1985 as a Highland Community College trustee. He served nearly 20 years on the board (from 1985 to 2003), including 10 years as board chair. Dr. Chapin enjoyed talking with legislators about the college's needs, and he was instrumental in building community support for Highland's successful March 2004 referendum. As a strong advocate of regular retreats, he made the Highland board a leader in trustee development.

In addition, Dr. Chapin was a model of faithful attendance and careful stewardship at both the local and state levels. A quiet and steady influence, he served on ICCTA's Executive Committee for three years, providing the association with perspective and wisdom. He also chaired ICCTA's Northwest Region for three terms, where he fostered cooperation with neighboring colleges. Most notably, he was the first to earn four ICCTA Trustee Education Awards for his continuing commitment to lifelong learning.

## **Donald B. Johannes**

Trustee

*Rock Valley College*

Don Johannes has spent much of his adult life in service to public education, beginning in 1959 as superintendent of Manchester Elementary District. Later he served as the state's director of high school adult education programs and as director of admissions at Rock Valley College. He then embarked upon a successful career in insurance and investment sales. In 1985 he won election to the Rock Valley College Board of Trustees, a post he held until 2003. During his tenure, he served as board secretary, vice chair, and as chair for three terms. In turn, Rock Valley expanded and renovated its facilities -- including the building of the Woodward Technology Center -- and launched its first \$10 million capital campaign.

At the state level, Johannes chaired ICCTA's West Suburban Region for two terms and its Workforce Training Forum for two years. A member of ICCTA's Executive, Finance and Nominating committees, he served 13 years as Rock Valley's delegate to the association's governing board. At the time of his resignation as a trustee, Johannes was again sharing his fiscal expertise as ICCTA's treasurer and Finance Committee chair.

# MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

*Meritorious Service Awards are presented to public officials and other friends of education who have made outstanding contributions to ICCTA and the state's community college system.*

## **Joseph J. Neely**

Vice chair

*Illinois Community College Board*

Joe Neely's unwavering commitment to the Illinois community college system can be seen at both the local and state levels. As the chair of the Shawnee Community College Board of Trustees, he played a pivotal role in rejuvenating the board and the institution. His work as Shawnee's representative to the ICCTA strengthened the state association and helped other trustees understand the special qualities of rural community colleges.

Appointed to the Illinois Community College Board in 1994, Neely was a respected and disciplined leader who served seven years as vice chair and one year as chair. His experience as a college trustee led him to take every opportunity to explain the importance of local governance and the value of trustee development programs. In addition, more than any other ICCB member, he was faithful in his attendance of ICCTA conventions. An attorney, Neely brought deliberative thinking and sound judgment to his duties as a member of two ICCB Executive Search Committees, assisting with the appointments of presidents Dr. Joseph Cipfl and Geoffrey Obrzut.

## **Anne Ladky**

Executive director

*Women Employed*

In February 1973, a small group of women met to form an organization that would take action to end discrimination against women and improve working conditions in downtown Chicago. None of the founders could have envisioned the changes that would eventually be realized – nor the role Women Employed would play in bringing attention to the plight of working adults who lack access to postsecondary education in Illinois.

Under the leadership of executive director Anne Ladky, Women Employed has lobbied lawmakers and published studies on career laddering, economic self-sufficiency, and problems in Illinois' financial aid system. In addition, as a member of Gov. Blagojevich's executive transition team, Ladky stressed the need to help working students and those whose poverty threatens to deny them access to college. These efforts have resulted in real advances for low-income students, including the provision of financial aid for part-time and summer-school attendees. Most recently, Women Employed has worked with ICCTA to double the value of the Illinois Incentive for Access Grant, a state-funded scholarship originally born of ICCTA efforts in 1997.

# MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

*Meritorious Service Awards are presented to public officials and other friends of education who have made outstanding contributions to ICCTA and the state's community college system.*

## **Edward T. Duffy**

Chair

*Illinois Community College Board*

As chair of the Illinois Community College Board from 1999 to 2004, Ed Duffy successfully guided the system during a critical time in its history. His tenure saw the transfer of adult education governance to ICCB and the state's commitment to replace \$250 million of temporary buildings over a five-year period. As ICCB's representative to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Duffy chaired a study that helped IBHE members understand the unique role of part-time faculty. He also worked closely with IBHE chair Philip Rock to turn back ill-advised proposals for legislative micro-management of higher education.

No stranger to the political process, Duffy previously held the posts of director of the Illinois Department of Public Aid (overseeing the nation's fifth largest public-welfare system), deputy chief of staff to former Gov. James R. Thompson, and director of the Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. He began his career in public service as a member of the Chicago Police Department and has served as an executive in the thoroughbred racing industry.

# HONORARY MEMBER

*As the Trustees Association's highest accolade, Honorary Membership is conferred only upon a select few individuals who reflect the finest that the community college movement has to offer.*

## Mary Karasek

Trustee  
Morton College

Many people donate time and money to special causes, but few choose community service as their life's work. Mary Karasek attributes her activism to Morton College, where she gained leadership skills and the self-confidence that she could make a difference. Morton College also offered her the opportunity to develop and promote her interest in women's causes. As sophomore class president during World War II, she delivered a commencement address entitled "Hats Off to the American Woman." Later, as a member of the local PTA and the Morton High School Board, she successfully championed a budget to establish a women's athletics program.

Karasek's election as a Morton College trustee in 1976 marked the first time that voters had chosen a woman – and a Morton graduate – for the board. During her 25 years as a trustee, she set the standard for effective leadership as chair of ICCTA's West Suburban Region, as Morton's delegate to the ICCTA Board of Representatives, and as a member of the association's Awards, Nominating, and Government Relations committees. In addition, she holds the distinction of being the first and only woman to earn three ICCTA Trustee Education Awards for participation in professional development activities.

Although now retired from the Morton board, Karasek continues her civic commitment as the elected city treasurer of Berwyn, a post she has held since 1985. In a fitting tribute, the Illinois House of Representatives adopted a resolution in 1981 commending her for her volunteerism on behalf of education and her community. In 1991, the Trustees Association followed suit by naming her the recipient of its 1991 Distinguished Alumnus Award.

## ROSTER OF ICCTA HONORARY MEMBERS

Allen Y. Baker	Judith E. Madonia
Verle Besant	Robert Maher
The Hon. Terry L. Bruce	Jessalyn Nicklas
Dr. Forest Etheredge	Dr. David R. Pierce
James Furman	H. Kenneth Ramsden
Dr. James H. Griffith	Harold Rice
Richard Groharing	Robert Rimmington
Donna Grove	Ellen Roberts
Russell Guin	Robert E. Sechler
Hugh D. Hammerslag	Freida Simon
Ray Hartstein	Ruby Sweigart
Dr. L. H. Horton, Jr.	Dr. David L. Viar
Dr. Larry Huffman	Dale R. Vonohlen
Peter Lardner	Joan Wolf

# GIGI CAMPBELL STUDENT TRUSTEE EXCELLENCE AWARD

*Student trustees created this award in 1996 to recognize exemplary leadership by their peers. This honor is named after the late Gigi Campbell of Prairie State College, who ably served her fellow students with her spirited advocacy of educational opportunity.*

## **Carlos Vale**

*Elgin Community College*

Carlos Vale's connection to Elgin Community College dates back to his selection in 6<sup>th</sup> grade for the district's first Youth Leadership Academy class. As the college's first Latino student trustee, he actively participated in board meetings and workshops and represented ECC at meetings of the ICCTA, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and at the National Legislative Seminar in Washington, D.C. He also created a web site to enhance the level of communication between students, trustees, faculty and administrators.

In addition to his campus duties, Vale was elected by his peers as chair of the Illinois Community College Board's Student Advisory Committee for 2003-04. He also served on the statewide committee to appoint the new president/CEO of the Illinois Community College Board.

Vale's interest in public service extends to the global arena as well. While in high school, he travelled to Japan as part of the Elgin Rotary's youth exchange program, and his future plans include pursuing an advanced degree in international relations.

## **OTHER GIGI CAMPBELL AWARD NOMINEES**

### **DeCarlos Adams**

*Richland Community College*

### **Jimmy F. Cureton, Jr.**

*Kankakee Community College*

### **Kenneth "Knut" Ellingsen**

*College of DuPage*

### **Erin Fauke**

*Kaskaskia College*

### **Lina Hoffman**

*Oakton Community College*

### **Matthew Mau**

*Lincoln Land Community College*

### **Alice Navarro**

*Morton College*

### **Andy Simko**

*Illinois Valley Community College*



# **BUSINESS/INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP AWARD**

*This award recognizes an Illinois business that has built a successful workforce-training alliance with a local community college.*

## **Dana Corporation**

*McHenry County College*

Dana Corporation knows the value of education. As one of McHenry County's top five employers, this brake-and-chassis manufacturer encourages its employees to spend at least 40 hours each year in job-related training. Not surprisingly, Dana has shopped around for customized programs -- but always comes back to McHenry County College for training. As an example of this eight-year partnership, Dana's McHenry Plant location began a mentoring program for new hires that decreased the turnover rate by 52 percent. "We believe that the cooperative efforts between McHenry and Dana Corporation has resulted in tangible benefits, both to the employees within our workforce, and to the members of the community around us," says Dana vice president Joe LaVarra.

## **Fairfield National Bank**

*Frontier Community College*

In an attempt to address the limited training options for area students, Frontier Community College and Fairfield National Bank joined together to purchase and renovate an abandoned distribution center in mid-2002. Their efforts have transformed the facility into a new Workforce Development Center for the college, as well as an asset in the community's quest for additional jobs. Frontier has already added several new programs at the Center as part of a five-year plan to greatly expand its occupational curriculum. Says bank president (and Illinois Eastern Community Colleges trustee) Larry Rost: "The Workforce Development Center is a valuable card in the hand of city economic planners. In the meantime, the college is opening its doors to students that want short-term vocational opportunities in order to join the workforce quickly with good-paying jobs."

## **Freedman Seating Company**

*Wilbur Wright College*

The four-year partnership between Wright College and Freedman Seating Company has grown from a simple customized welding class to the birth of "Freedman University." Freedman University has all the elements of a traditional college but is based in the workplace setting. Employees can take courses in basic adult educational skills, vocational training, and personal growth areas. In addition, they receive reimbursement for credit classes, as well as a \$1,500 bonus each year while taking community college courses. Within the next five years, Freedman University (with the support of Wright College) plans to offer its manufacturing skill courses not only to current employees but to unemployed individuals in the community. "Our relationship with Wright College is one that we are proud of," says CEO Gerald Freedman.

## **Good Samaritan, Inc.**

*Rend Lake College*

Sine 1987, Good Samaritan, Inc., has supported Rend Lake College through an annual scholarship program. In 2003, a "loan forgiveness program" was created by the college Foundation and Good Samaritan to address the dire shortage of nurses in southern Illinois. This project pays the educational expenses for 20 Rend Lake students to complete the LPN or ADN one-year nursing program. In turn, the students agree to work part-time for Good Samaritan Hospital while attending college, and to work full-time at the hospital for at least two years after passing their state board exams. "This program is so innovative that the American Medical Association has taken notice," says Good Samaritan president Leo Childers. "We are very proud of our association with Rend Lake College, which has been an invaluable long-term partnership."

## **Holten Meat, Inc.**

*Southwestern Illinois College*

For the past four years, Southwestern Illinois College has offered an annual on-site professional development series for all members of the Holten Meat, Inc., management team. The program has expanded from a single seminar in 2000 to nine sessions in 2003. Participants review the company's mission and core values statements and concentrate on upgrading the collective and individual leadership skills needed to carry out the Holten mission. Company officials estimate that \$50,000 in savings has been realized due to increased employee retention and job satisfaction. As one individual on the training team stated, "Our concerns are handled more smoothly. The workplace just seems better."

## **MasterFoods, Inc.**

*Lake Land College*

Lake Land College has offered workforce training to MasterFoods, Inc., for more than 20 years. In 2002, MasterFoods underwent a large-scale re-engineering that necessitated the retraining of the company's 350 employees - and launched a new line of business for the college. To assist MasterFoods in this effort, Lake Land became the first community college in the nation to work with software designer Talsico, LLC, to produce industry-specific work instructions using Process Picture Maps™. The success of this new software led MasterFoods' parent, M & M Mars, to adopt PPMs™ in the development of work standards at 12 of its 15 North American Divisions. In addition, Lake Land has turned PPM™ production into a mainstream service, producing more than 700 PPMs for area companies to date. "We strongly support Lake Land College and applaud their contribution to workforce and economic development in the region," says Al Watson, MasterFoods' manager of operations.

## **Olin Corporation**

*Lewis and Clark Community College*

The Educational Alliance between basic-materials manufacturer Olin Corporation and Lewis and Clark Community College has transformed both entities for the better. All of Olin's 4,000 employees at its East Alton complex have received training through the college. New and accelerated degree programs, scholarships for area minority students, and a shared Director of Technology position (housed at Olin) have been created. In addition, Lewis and Clark has adopted Olin's Total Quality Management strategies, resulting in a 10-year accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission. "When this strategic alliance was formed in 1995, Olin could not anticipate the commitment, vision and friendship that it would find in Lewis and Clark," says Olin executive Richard Hammett. "This partnership has surpassed our highest expectations."

## **Palos Community Hospital**

*Moraine Valley Community College*

Palos Community Hospital and Moraine Valley Community College have joined together to increase both the number and quality of prepared healthcare workers in their shared region. PCH provides Moraine Valley students with state-of-the-art facilities for on-site clinical experiences. Hospital employees also serve as adjunct faculty and advisors for the college's health science programs. In return, Moraine Valley offers short- and long-term customized training for hospital staff in such diverse areas as radiation protection, case management, and computer skills. "We acknowledge the special relationship we have mutually enjoyed," says hospital president Sister Margaret Wright. "More importantly, we acknowledge the benefits spread to our community and the possibilities extended to young people who aspire to careers in healthcare."

## **Rayovac Corporation**

*Sauk Valley Community College*

In 2003, Sauk Valley Community College was asked to discuss training options with an anonymous company that was considering building a major packaging and distribution facility in Dixon. When Rayovac Corporation committed to the 500,000 square-foot site, a new partnership was born. Sauk Valley and Rayovac personnel worked together to coordinate the plant's start-up so that all 250 new hires had completed a full week of training prior to beginning their jobs. The company continues to rely on Sauk Valley for training opportunities and is pursuing an internship program with the college's Industrial Technology department. "We look forward to a prosperous future and a lasting partnership with Sauk Valley," says Rayovac operation leader Steve Fraundorfer.

## **St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital, Inc.**

*Kaskaskia College*

The partnership between Kaskaskia College and St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital has truly stood the test of time. The two have collaborated since the early 1970s, when SMGSI (the largest employer in Centralia) assisted with the development of the college's nursing program and provided classroom space until the appropriate clinical facilities were constructed on campus. Most recently, the hospital has formed a regional consortium to support the hiring of two new nursing faculty and to fund nursing scholarships at the college – resulting in a 33 percent increase in Kaskaskia's nursing enrollment. "We believe that our partnership with Kaskaskia College has been a plus for SMGSI, for the College and for the community we serve," says St. Mary's Hospital president Bruce Merrell.

## LIFELONG LEARNING AWARD

*Established just this spring, ICCTA's Lifelong Learning Award celebrates the accomplishments of Illinois' community college students over the age of 50. Nominees must be currently enrolled students who have completed at least six credit or non-credit courses at an Illinois public community college.*

### **Lester F. Catlin**

*Moraine Valley Community College*

A veteran of World War II, Lester Catlin's family and work responsibilities had prevented him from taking advantage of the G.I. Bill. Then he read in *Reader's Digest* that education might help stave off Alzheimer's disease. In 1996, after 50 years of dreaming of a college education, he marched into the halls of Moraine Valley Community College to take a writing class. Now at age 83, he is pursuing his master's degree in English literature at Governors State University – and continuing to take classes at Moraine Valley. "My only regret is that I didn't start my education sooner," Catlin says. "My thanks to the great staff, teachers, and most of all, my fellow students at Moraine Valley, who helped to get me started down the path to rediscovered youth."

### **Alvin E. Childress**

*Shawnee Community College*

After 30 years in the funeral home business, Alvin Childress enrolled at Shawnee Community College in spring 2001 to learn basic computer skills. Not only has he achieved that goal, but he has completed 57 credit hours of course work and now tutors students in the computer systems degree area. "I began taking introductory computer courses to stay abreast of the technology that my children would be using and fell in love with the 'people of Shawnee Community College,'" says Childress. "I have gained so many wonderful experiences throughout my lifetime and being able to attend a community college has definitely been one of those opportunities."

### **Patricia Johnson**

*Frontier Community College*

A native of Liverpool, England, Patricia Johnson's grade-school education was cut short by the daily bombings of World War II. Nearly 60 years later, her adult children encouraged her to return to school and give Frontier Community College a try. "Somehow or other, to my amazement, at the advanced age of 72 years, I found myself the proud recipient of an associate degree," says Johnson, who was also selected to be the student speaker at her graduation. "Of course I am still attending classes and will probably do so as long as I am fit enough to get there, see the blackboard, and hear the teachers. Frontier has become a sounding board for my mind and I feel there are no boundaries to the knowledge I can glean."

### **Jane Kappes**

*Parkland College*

As a high school senior, Jane Kappes toured Parkland College in 1971 but opted to enter the workforce and raise a family instead. Her work assisting students as a high school guidance secretary led her to return to Parkland for computer training. Taking two classes each semester, she has maintained a perfect GPA and is using her community college as a stepping stone to a bachelor's degree. Her Parkland experience has also made a difference in her new job as assistant to the Finance Department chair at the University of Illinois, where she has been promoted twice in three years. "As a top priority, I have instilled the need for continued education throughout the lives of our three children," says Kappes. "Now at age 50 it is my turn."

## **Jane Katz**

*Southwestern Illinois College*

After successful careers as a music teacher and a real estate broker, Jane Katz decided to pursue the study of art. Since first enrolling in the spring of 2000, she has welcomed her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and earned 30 credit hours at Southwestern Illinois College. "This has nothing to do with donating your time," wrote Katz in a journal that prompted her instructor to add that activity to his class requirement. "It has to do with the drive of productivity that I have always enjoyed. The challenge is to be creative and to reactivate my mind . . . . Yes, I can't get around as well as I used to, but this class has taken me out of myself. I find myself competing in an educational setting and to me it's very exciting."

## **Edna Olson**

*Illinois Valley Community College*

"After graduating from high school in 1966, I had planned to pursue a career in what was then known as 'Commercial Art,'" says Edna Olson. "However, my parents persuaded me to go into a more stable profession, and since there were few opportunities for women at that time except 'secretarial' work, I entered Illinois Valley Community College in the Secretarial Science program. I graduated in 1968 with an associate degree." Over the next 30+ years, she continued to take classes at IVCC. After her company's plant closed in 2002, she returned to college full-time to fulfill her lifelong dream. Last month, at age 55, Olson received her second associate degree, this time in graphic design technology.

## **Mary Pennington**

*Kaskaskia College*

For the last six of her 68 years, Mary Pennington has volunteered as an adult literacy tutor at Kaskaskia College. She has taken five non-credit courses to improve her tutoring skills, as well as two credit courses in music for her own personal enrichment. "I believe that education is the key to saving our young people and our communities," says this former elementary school teacher, who also works full-time at the family insurance agency. "If everyone could read, then they would have better opportunities to have a successful life. I am totally committed to literacy and lifelong learning. I have found time in my busy schedule to return to college. I am learning so many wonderful things and I want that for everyone."

## **Alice Roach**

*William Rainey Harper College*

Alice Roach celebrated her 94<sup>th</sup> birthday on June 13. Despite two knee replacements and a pacemaker, she has taken aquasize classes at William Rainey Harper College for the past 23 years. In fact, she considers Harper's water aerobics program to be such an important part of her health routine that she has led four petition drives to keep the class going when it was on the verge of cancellation. "It's fun and very good for you, and the pool accommodations are excellent," she told the *Daily Herald*. "Everyone is friendly." Roach has also assumed the unofficial role of senior advocate on campus, serving as an advisor to the late Harper president Paul Thompson and supporting the college's successful referendum in 2000.

# PAUL SIMON STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

*Named after the late U.S. Senator (and founder of the direct student loan program), this competition is open to all students at ICCTA member colleges. This year a total of 26 entries were received from community colleges across the state.*

## 1<sup>st</sup> place essay

**Julie K. Stoneburner**

*Oakton Community College*

### “How Has My Community College Experience Changed My Life?”

Confidence – *that* was something I was sorely lacking nearly five years ago as I took my first class at Oakton Community College. I knew that I wanted to help others and that nursing was my calling, yet the mandatory math and science classes seemed overwhelming. This first hurdle in order to qualify for years of additional coursework appeared, at best, to be a formidable challenge. I’d sworn off math for life in high school and, if it hadn’t seemed like such a harrowing experience then, it might have seemed funny now, but I was anything but amused.

Somehow I enrolled and successfully completed several courses while diligently avoiding my math placement and chemistry requirements. In retrospect, I now believe that I was building up newfound confidence with each additional course. Finally, no longer being able to put off the inevitable, I rapidly became a familiar face in the Learning Center for extra math help, seeking the bottom line: confidence. The availability of the facility and the kindness of the staff were a welcome port in my storm. My chemistry course also proved to be a great experience, largely due to the engaging instructor who was always available for extra inquiries. Imagine my surprise when I tested two levels higher than necessary on the math placement exam and received an “A” in my eight-week summer chemistry course! I felt like the scarecrow in *The Wizard of Oz* when he finally gets his brain. “The square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the two sides.” Confidence? You bet!

During that same period, my husband lost his job with the University of Illinois and continues to be unemployed, regardless of his experience and his MBA. Talk about our lives being changed! In addition to persevering through this coursework, I also became the main income and benefits provider for our family of seven. Pursuing a nursing dream was no longer simply a dream, but is now a necessity.

I am awaiting an acceptance letter from the nursing department at Oakton for a fall 2004 entry. I have completed every core nursing class as well as the prerequisites. What used to be a middle-of-the-road grade point average is now a 4.0. I scored in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile on the National League of Nursing exam; far surpassing my high school standardized test results. These achievements did not occur spontaneously, but through a slow and consistent increase in not only my education, but in my overall confidence level.

This newly found confidence in my math and science abilities continues to propel me down this path. As I stand on the threshold of only four more semesters remaining in my quest to be a nurse, I feel that I am ready. The confidence I have developed from my experiences with the staff and resources at Oakton Community college will translate into a rewarding new career for me and better healthcare for the patients that I serve.

**Honorable Mention**

**Jeanne Meyers**

*Kaskaskia College*

**“Community College Instills Confidence”**

As I approach the steps of Kaskaskia College, I am overcome with a feeling of doubt. “What am I doing here?” I thought. It has been 27 years since my body last occupied a desk in a classroom. But that was high school; that was another life; that was when I thought of school as a waste of time. So here I stand in the looming shadow of an intimidating metropolis, feeling quite insignificant, somewhat insecure, and suddenly very alone; yet there was that spark of excitement for the unknown. That spark was all it took to ignite the fire of desire to learn that had been snuffed for so long while I was busy making a living.

Due to work-related injuries, I had lost my job. With the old saying “when one door closes, another one opens” in mind, I was ready to open that door. I took a deep breath, reached for the door handle, and opened the portal to a whole new and exciting world. The atmosphere was warm and inviting. Everyone was busy, but not too busy to notice me, and I was soon walked through an entire process of registering for school.

Each semester my self-confidence grows and now, as I am advancing near the school, the buildings seem to envelope me in a warm, welcoming embrace. I can’t wait to see all of my friends from the previous semesters, and I am filled with the anticipation of meeting new ones. I am thoroughly enjoying my life as a college student and I feel 10 years younger – my husband affectionately accuses me of being in my second childhood. After working all of my life and raising twins, I have to admit that it feels good to be Jeanne, rather than Mom or just another dockhand at UPS. The feeling of expressing ideas and having someone listen to them is enthralling, to say the least.

I am now in the middle of my fourth semester, feeling confident with my school work and taking my education seriously. It seems that each semester I have redefined my self, metamorphosing from the insecure woman who was unsure of her capabilities into the self-confident student that I have become. Today, as I approach school, I feel big enough to reach my arms around those brick buildings and squeeze them in a great big hug, absorbing all of the knowledge contained within their walls.

At times I have wondered why I had been so apprehensive about coming back to school, and I have wished that I had started my higher education sooner. But then I realized that now *is* the right time for me, and I intend to make the most of it. My community college has given me the confidence to succeed.

# COLLEGE BOWL

*Nicknamed "the varsity sport of the mind," College Bowl features fast-paced question-and-answer competitions between teams of students. Statewide College Bowl tournaments have been co-sponsored by ICCTA and the Illinois Community College Student Activities Association since 1993.*

## 1st Place

### **Prairie State College**

Linda Dethloff, coach  
Alfred Wong, captain  
Brian Diachenko  
Elizabeth Weihert  
Rachel Martin  
Corrie Sharp

## 2nd Place

### **Elgin Community College**

Jarrig Visser, coach  
Erin Hanks, captain  
Matthew Bergholt  
Bradley Van Winkle  
Michael Storey  
Joshua Roney  
Christopher Schoenherr

## 3rd Place

### **Frontier Community College**

Kathy Doty, coach  
Robert Black, captain  
Jeremy Winter  
David Higgins  
Elizabeth Curtis-Robinson  
Dustin Windes

## All-Star Team

(individual high scorers)

Erin Hanks, Elgin Community College  
Brian McAuliffe, Oakton Community College  
Alfred Wong, Prairie State College  
Elizabeth Weihert, Prairie State College  
David Graff, John A. Logan College



## **PACESETTER AWARD**

*The Pacesetter Award honors those individuals who have graduated from an Illinois community college within the past five years. Taking advantage of the unique educational opportunities provided at reasonable costs, these recent alumni began their journey toward their personal or professional goals at their local community college.*

### **Bonita Bear**

Human services technician • Cunningham Children's Home

*Parkland College (2000)*

“When I divorced, my three sons and I left the only home we had ever known,” recalls Bonita Bear. “Times were tough. I worked two low-paying jobs trying to support my family, with no possibility of advancement. Then I made a decision that I should have made years ago. I decided to enroll in classes at the local community college.” Bear was one of the first students to enroll in Parkland College’s human services technician program in 1999. Her Crisis Intervention training was put to the test in March 2000, when she saved the life of an elderly woman and a group of school children and helped apprehend a murder suspect. “I truly believe that things happen for a reason,” she says. “It is because of a positive community college experience that I am here today. Parkland College has given me the courage, confidence and inspiration to continue my educational journey.”

### **Ashlee Cunningham**

Pharmacist • CVS Pharmacy / Walgreen Drug Store

*Danville Area Community College (1999)*

“I would not be where I am today if it had not been for Danville Area Community College,” says Ashlee Cunningham, whose grandfather and mother were technology instructors at the school. “I have dreamed of becoming a pharmacist since I was in the third grade. Unfortunately, I came from a family of five children, four of us were of college age at the same time, financial aid is not available to pharmacy students, and paying out-of-state tuition on my own for the six years it takes to complete a pharmacy degree was out of the question.” Taking classes at DACC allowed her to save money for her graduate studies and prepared her for the advanced coursework ahead. Since earning her doctorate in pharmacy in 2003, she has received both an Illinois and an Indiana pharmacy license and holds two professional pharmacist positions.

### **Chad Cunningham**

Teacher's assistant • Central Junior High School

*Illinois Central College (2002)*

At just one year of age, Chad Cunningham was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. His parents were told he would never walk. With his parents’ love, the support of Easter Seals, and his own determination, he not only learned to walk but earned his driver’s license, graduated from high school, received his associate degree from Illinois Central College, and now travels from coast to coast as this year’s national spokesperson for Easter Seals. He also works as a teacher’s aide for students with learning disabilities, where he serves as a role model for children dealing with challenges similar to those he faced as a youngster. “This journey would never have been possible if not for the skills and knowledge that I acquired while earning my associate degree at ICC,” says Cunningham.

## **Damon Harbison**

Radiation therapist and chief mentor • St. Louis University Hospital  
*Kaskaskia College (1999)*

As a chief mentor for one of the country's top medical facilities, Damon Harbison is responsible for assigning and teaching 200 mentors. His efforts have led to a dramatic reduction in staff turnover. He has also made his mark in the area of patient care by designing equipment to provide cancer patients with greater comfort while receiving treatment. Harbison credits this success to Kaskaskia College, where he was president of the Radiology Club and a Student Ambassador. "Kaskaskia College unveiled my natural ability to lead others," he says. "I can honestly say that my life would not be what it is today without my experiences from this Illinois community college. It was at Kaskaskia College that I developed my drive to succeed."

## **Laura Kaltenecker**

Pastry chef • Isabella's Estiatorio  
*Elgin Community College (1999)*

Laura Kaltenecker had wanted to be two things when she grew up: a veterinarian and a chef. She went to veterinary school first, working as a veterinary technician for 13 years before deciding to pursue a new career with the help of Elgin Community College. In 1999 she earned her pastry certificate and will receive her associate degree in December. Last year she competed in front of more than 1,000 professional chefs to win the American Culinary Federation's Junior Chef of the Year award. "Elgin Community College truly changed my life," says Kaltenecker, who aspires to open her own upscale restaurant with her husband (also a chef). "I have traveled nationwide and abroad with school and have a wonderfully challenging career that I appreciate every day. I hope I can have enough experience to become a teacher there myself one day."

## **Joyce Kirkland**

Youth services specialist • DOVE, Inc.  
*Richland Community College (2002)*

Joyce Kirkland spent 13 years as a volunteer and board member of DOVE, a Decatur-based domestic violence agency, before joining the staff as youth advocate and prevention educator. She attributes this life change to her local community college. "After many years in the workforce and many years away from academics, I reached a turning point in my life that brought me to Richland Community College," she says. "When I think back on my experience at Richland, a mental image appears of my 'cheering section' -- the faculty members who I came to respect and who challenged me to do my best. How fortunate I was to have such wonderful people behind me. How fortunate current Richland students are to have those same people behind them!"

## **Linda P. McMahon**

Human resource accountant • McHenry County Government Center  
*McHenry County College (1990 and 2000)*

Linda McMahon's college career has been full of "firsts." A first-generation student, she originally graduated from McHenry County College with an associate degree in 1990, returning in 2000 to earn three certificates in microcomputer programming and accounting. She was the first student to join the school's new Accounting Advisory Committee and served as the first chair of the MCC Alumni Advisory Council. Most recently, she was appointed as the first AAC liaison to the college foundation board. "Even to this day, I find more opportunities opening up before me because of my continued association with the community college experience," says McMahon. "Learning is for life and a community college has the resources and

opportunities to facilitate that lifelong journey. For that, I'll be forever grateful."

### **Jed Nelson**

District aide • Office of U.S. Rep. John Shimkus  
*Southeastern Illinois College (1999)*

Jed Nelson's education at Southeastern Illinois College prepared him well for a public-service career dealing with a variety of audiences. "People in my line of work are often thought of as being out of touch with the problems of everyday working men and women," says Nelson, who supervises casework and constituent services for a 16-county area in southern Illinois. "Indeed, some of us are. But those of us who spent some of our formative years in a community college have an advantage over the others. We have been there, we have seen the struggle of our neighbors, and we carry with us that extra determination to make things better for them and for all in our communities. It is an experience that made a true difference in my life."

### **Patricia Tessmann**

Senior executive assistant • Baxter Healthcare Corporation  
*College of Lake County (2003)*

"In 1988, I went to work full-time and realized that the office had passed me by," recalls Patricia Tessman. "The computer was the up- and-coming form of technology. I didn't even know how to turn one on." Turning to the College of Lake County, this mother of six took 13 years to complete her associate degree and earned three certificates as well. Her desire to further her education also helped her move up the corporate ladder from file clerk to her current position. "I truly believe that if I had not been in pursuit of a degree when applying at Baxter, an interview would not have been possible," says Tessman. "Obtaining an associate degree had been my dream since I was 15 years old. Thank you, College of Lake County and your faculty members, for making my dream come true."

### **Maria Valarezo**

Graduate student • University of Chicago Graduate School of Social Service  
*Kankakee Community College (2000)*

As a 13-year-old cancer patient, Maria Valarezo already knew what her life's vocation would be – to become a social worker on a pediatric oncology unit. When it came time to choose a college, her decision was equally simple – to enroll at Kankakee Community College. "People told me that I should go away to school, but I knew I could get a great education at KCC and it was so close to home I couldn't pass that up," says Valarezo. "My only regret at KCC is that I didn't have time to take all of the classes I wanted. There are professors I would like to take a class with again, and I have always wanted to take a photography class. When I finish graduate school, I hope to work in the Kankakee area as a social worker. I know I will be busy, but I would like to try to find time to take that photography class."

### **Mark Weber**

Undergraduate student • University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
*Moraine Valley Community College (2003)*

Mark Weber says that "Moraine Valley Community College gave me an opportunity that other institutions would not. My transcripts had predicted a student who would be unable to succeed in higher education. But I was able to prove to myself and to others that college was for me." By earning his associate degree with honors and volunteering for numerous campus activities – including terms as student trustee and as student

member of the Illinois Community College Board – he gained the academic and leadership skills necessary to excel. Weber has now set his sights on a law career. “I look back and wonder what would have become of my life if it were not for Moraine Valley and its ability to serve those who need help the most,” he says.

### **Megan M. Wiles**

Strategic marketing assistant • AXIOM Marketing & Advertising  
*Frontier Community College (2002)*

Megan Wiles’ decision to attend Frontier Community College was influenced by a health condition. “I had been taking summer classes at my community college while in high school, so as a compromise I decided to attend the community college following spinal fusion surgery and not go away to a university,” says the former cheerleader. “In just one year I completed my associate degree and was ready to move on to a university.” Frontier also prepared her for her future career; while still a college senior, she was offered a permanent position at a top advertising agency after completing a summer internship in marketing research. “My community college experience allowed my body to heal but most importantly gave me the opportunity to look inward and examine my strengths and weaknesses, establish new goals, and re-evaluate my priorities,” says Wiles.

### **Jon Roger Williams**

Flight nurse and regional nurse educator • Air Evan Lifeteam  
*John A. Logan College (2000)*

“The education I received at John A. Logan College has launched me on a whole new career and allowed me to be successful in my chosen profession,” says Jon Roger Williams. “I’m proof of the fact that you really can teach an old dog (or coal miner) new tricks and of the impact that community colleges have on lives and the communities they serve.” In 1998, when Williams’ future in the coal industry became uncertain, the opportunity to attend Logan gave him a fresh start. “Earning my LPN certificate resulted in my employment as an emergency department nurse and enabled me to continue on in the nursing program at the college. The excellent, affordable training I received at JALC placed me on a career path that has allowed me to provide well for my family, to remain in southern Illinois, and to fulfill my career dream of becoming a flight nurse,” he says.

## **DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS AWARD**

*This honor symbolizes the accomplishments of those individuals who graduated from Illinois' community colleges more than five years ago. Many have achieved success in artistic, technical and humanitarian endeavors; others have found personal fulfillment through higher education.*

### **David Burns**

Biology instructor • Carl Sandburg College  
*Carl Sandburg College (1989)*

Encouraged by his sister, David Burns came to Carl Sandburg College as a non-traditional student with a young family and few prospects. "Over the next couple of years, my life changed in many ways," he says. "I learned that I was much brighter than I gave myself credit for. I also learned how to learn." He then transferred to Knox College, where he lettered in two sports and made the National Dean's List. While a graduate student in biology, he was awarded an Illinois Minority Graduate Fellowship and taught part-time at Sandburg. In 2003 he accepted a full-time position at his alma mater. "I love teaching, especially in the community college atmosphere," Burns says. "Even more important is that I got to come back to where it all began. Everyday I enjoy seeing how this organization is shaping the lives of others."

### **Erma L. Clark**

Manager of patient representatives • Northwestern Memorial Hospital  
*Malcolm X College (1990)*

In addition to earning her nursing degree while working as a pharmacy technician, Erma Clark had to balance the demands of a new marriage and three stepchildren, two of whom have developmental disabilities. She also had to overcome her own health issues when she suffered a stroke six months after graduating from Malcolm X College. Clark's experience as a recipient as well as provider of healthcare services has made her especially attuned to the needs of her patients, and she was the logical choice to oversee the expansion of Northwestern Hospital's nursing unit prior to the opening of its new Stroke Program. "I entered Malcolm X College with a committed spirit of excellence, and Malcolm X College received me with the same commitment," recalls Clark. "I was determined to be successful, and each instructor seemed to embrace and encourage my success."

### **William Craig**

Adjunct instructor of Spanish GED and English as a Second Language  
Moraine Valley Community College  
*Moraine Valley Community College (1981)*

William Craig's livelihood as a printer was destroyed when he lost 90 percent of his vision to multiple sclerosis in 1977. Upon taking classes at Moraine Valley Community College, he quickly discovered his talent for another form of communication - foreign languages. In 1992 he began volunteering as a literacy tutor at the college and in 1995 was offered a paid teaching position. "I am now in my 10<sup>th</sup> year of teaching at Moraine Valley, and I cannot believe how wonderful it has been," Craig says. "It is a privilege to share the things I have learned with other people and to help them reach their goals. Whenever I am on campus or walking through the halls, I feel proud to be a part of this college. Moraine Valley gave me new life, first as a student and now as a teacher."

## **Donald H. Dame**

Vice president of human resources and government relations • Freeman Energy Corporation  
*Rend Lake College (1972 and 1976)*

Attending Rend Lake College is part of the Dame family tradition. Don Dame's wife and one of his daughters are RLC graduates, and his father coordinated the school's Practical Mining Technology program in the 1980s. Dame himself holds two associate degrees, which helped him rise from coal miner to company executive. As vice president of Freeman Energy Corporation, he is in charge of all labor relations, technical training, and legislative advocacy for the billion-dollar company. He also serves on the Illinois Coal Development Board and is a past chair of the Illinois Coal Association. "The foundations of an educational experience were set in place for me at Rend Lake College," says Dame. "That experience has helped me throughout my life."

## **Pati Darak**

Meteorologist • WWMT News 3  
*Morton College (1986)*

Some journalists seem to have a nose for news. Pati Darak is one of them. Her very first day on the job at WTVD-TV in Raleigh, she faced the story of a lifetime as Hurricane Irene struck the North Carolina coast. Darak provided live coverage via The Weather Channel to millions of primetime viewers. Three months later, a 20-inch snowstorm hit the area, and again Darak reported on the event with non-stop, all-day coverage. "The experience of meeting deadlines (at Morton College) in addition to a commitment to professionalism as well as job excellence is what helps me to this day in my present field," says Darak. "I came out of Morton College with far more than I ever expected."

## **John W. Fountain**

Author and visiting scholar • Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University  
*Wilbur Wright College (1984)*

A father at 17, a college dropout at 19, John Fountain was on the verge of giving up all hope. Two things saved him – his faith and his belief in the transforming nature of education. Now an award-winning reporter and former *New York Times* correspondent, he teaches aspiring journalists and has started his own inspirational publishing company. His autobiography, *True Vine: A Young Black Man's Journey of Faith, Hope and Clarity*, is required reading at several Chicago high schools. One chapter, entitled "The Wright Stuff," focuses on his transforming experiences at Wilbur Wright College. "In truth, it is Wright that gave me the stuff to right my life, to live my dream, to affect the lives of my family for generations to come," says Fountain. "If you ask me what Wright has meant to me, the answer is: It only changed my life."

## **John Frieburg III**

President and CEO • Harris Bank Arlington-Meadows  
*William Rainey Harper College (1979)*

John Frieburg was drafted at the height of the Vietnam conflict. Upon returning to the States, he was unsure how he would fit into the "normal" college lifestyle – so he enrolled at William Rainey Harper College. "My community college lived up to its mission," he says. "It gave me the chance to study, to learn and met my needs. I have succeeded because Harper College showed me the way and gave me the support and the opportunity I needed – when I most needed it." Frieburg has since spent all of his post-college career in community banking, rising from bank teller to branch president. In appreciation of this early support, he recently endowed the first English as a Second Language scholarship at Harper College.

## **Nancy Graham**

Project engineer • Town of Flower Mound, Texas  
*Shawnee Community College (1990)*

Nancy Graham dropped out of Shawnee Community College after only a year in order to get married. After the relationship ended, she returned to school to provide a more stable future for herself and her two children. Transferring to Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, she won a scholarship to study mining engineering and was the first woman to graduate from the program. Graham is now working towards her master's degree, training to become a licensed professional engineer, and has achieved her goal "to make \$100 a day." On weekends she and her daughter run a photography business named "Shoot Me Photography."

## **Gregory G. Grunloh**

Associate and project architect • Holabird & Root, LLC  
*Lake Land College (1986)*

Greg Grunloh was introduced to the world of architecture when he began working in his family's construction business, AKRA Builders, at the age of 16. He has since supervised numerous construction projects in the Chicago area, including the renovation of the historic Goldblatt's Building into city offices. Most recently, he was the project architect for the new McCormick-Tribune Campus Center at the Illinois Institute of Technology, heralded by the *New York Times* as one of the most significant buildings of 2003. "Architecture schools have a reputation for being very grueling and demanding," says Grunloh. "My time at Lake Land College allowed me to mature, while still progressing towards my future career as an architect."

## **Joel Hall**

Designer and project manager • Basye & Associates  
*Lewis and Clark Community College (1991)*

A native of New Jersey, Joel Hall says that when he moved to Illinois after graduating from high school in 1989, "all I was expecting to do was to get a technical school education and to move back to the East Coast." Instead, Lewis and Clark Community College taught him not just about drafting and design but about life in general. "I learned that the money I made after I graduated would not be what satisfied me as a person," he says. "Rather, it would be the job that I took in helping others to develop and realize their potential." To that end, Hall volunteers as a high school recruiter for his alma mater and serves on its Drafting/CAD Technology Advisory Council.

## **The Hon. James Hallock**

Associate judge • 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit  
*Elgin Community College (1972)*

As a self-described "socially maladjusted" teenager, Jim Hallock only wanted to play basketball and drive a bulldozer for a living. His plans were detoured by a coach at Elgin Community College who "slick-talked me into college" and by a speech instructor who "fooled me into a measure of success and a certain confidence that would serve me well in the future." "I wonder where I'd be without Elgin Community College," says Hallock, who is now in his 12<sup>th</sup> year as a Circuit Court judge in Kane County. "Would I have been assigned to a jury courtroom where I just finished presiding over my 82<sup>nd</sup> jury trial? Never. Elgin Community College made the difference."

## **Gayle McGehee**

Elementary school teacher • Fairfield Public School District #112  
*Frontier Community College (1993)*

Like many non-traditional students, Gayle McGehee worked all day, raised a family, and carpooled to classes two nights a week and many weekends on her way to a master's degree in education. In November 2002, she became one of the few teachers in southeastern Illinois to achieve National Board Certification. She also mentors future teachers as the adjunct instructor of two elementary education classes at her alma mater, Frontier Community College. "I can genuinely create a 'no excuses - just results' climate because of my 'been there - done that' experience," says McGehee.

## **Lonny Plowman**

Owner • Eden Salon and Day Spa  
*Highland Community College (1985)*

Lonny Plowman is a dual-enrollment success story. He entered Highland Community College's cosmetology program as a junior in high school and won top honors in the Clairol Fantasy Color Competition a year later. The owner of a successful salon and spa, he is also a respected cosmetology instructor and was one of 20 educators named to the Paul Mitchell "Top of the Class" list in 2003. "I'd attend Highland again in a heartbeat for the cost-effectiveness and the quality of the instruction," says Plowman. "You can't knock the basics, and Highland does a great job teaching the fundamentals you need to know."

## **Dr. Brian J. Reach**

Family physician • Rural Health, Inc.  
*John A. Logan College (1990)*

Dr. Brian Reach is modest about his accomplishments, but not about the influence of John A. Logan College on his life: "My education at JALC was an essential step toward my entry into the field of medicine," he says. "During my first year at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, it was time to take the Medical College Admission Test. It involves biological sciences, physics, chemistry and writing. I simply reviewed my notes and texts from John A. Logan College. I found that my education prepared me very well for the exam, and I left feeling tired but confident. My scores allowed me to be accepted into three medical schools."

## **Jeff Richardson**

Owner • Competitive Edge / Iroquois Builders / Iroquois Investments  
*Kishwaukee College (1983)*

Jeff Richardson is a successful entrepreneur whose specialty advertising, home-building, and commercial construction companies each gross more than \$1 million in sales each year. His reason for attending Kishwaukee College, though, was not based on business considerations but personal ones -- his father had been a member of the school's first graduating class. "The beauty of a community college education is that there is a special spirit there, a cohesiveness that gives it heart," says Richardson. "I am proud to be a second-generation graduate of Kishwaukee College."



## **Marla Holder Robinson**

Director of human resources • Decatur Public Schools District #61  
*Richland Community College (1981)*

As one of Decatur's youngest principals, Marla Robinson shepherded Garfield Montessori Magnet School, one of the few schools of its kind in the nation, from its inception as a two-class program into a preschool-through-6th grade school. She attributes her tenacity to her parents: "While growing up, I did not have to face what I consider obstacles because my parents did not allow us to buy into such thinking. Even though neither of my parents went to college, I knew as far back as I can remember that I would go. My mother, I am proud to say, went to college at age 50 (at Richland Community College) and is now a fellow educator in District 61."

## **Ericka Sanders**

Assistant attorney general • Illinois Attorney General's Office  
*Kaskaskia College (1993)*

Ericka Sanders' passion for public service is reflected in her law career as well as her volunteer work. She has served as assistant public defender, a guardian ad litem for abused children, and a legal advocate for low-income clients. She also helped start a Big Brother/Big Sister program in the county in which she grew up. "I have repeatedly stated that the best instructors that I have had are from Kaskaskia College," says Sanders. "They taught me that choosing an occupation in which you truly believe and love, as opposed to those occupations that solely supply monetary gain and prestige, will have greater impact on one's life and society in general."

## **Dr. Jon T. Satterwhite**

Dentist  
*Danville Area Community College (1973)*

In 1972, Jon Satterwhite's dream of becoming a dentist was interrupted when he quit college due to a "severely damaged" GPA. He went home to Danville to find work, get married and start a family. The instability of his factory job led him to Danville Area Community College, where he decided to again pursue his dream. In 1989, five years after opening his own dental practice, Satterwhite won election to the college's Board of Trustees. "DACC was instrumental in giving me the confidence and the tools to succeed academically," he says. "If there were no Danville Area Community College, there would be no Dr. Jon T. Satterwhite."

## **The Hon. Gerald Schweighart**

Mayor • City of Champaign  
*Parkland College (1975)*

Lifelong Champaign resident Gerald Schweighart has served his hometown in many ways – as police chief, as a City Council member, and now as its mayor. Back in the 1970s he even organized fundraising efforts on behalf of another Parkland College student, future Olympic gold medalist Bonnie Blair. "For me, Parkland College represents a resource that enables individuals to take advantage of opportunities and a tool to prepare for and adapt to changes in our lives," says Schweighart. "I am filled with gratitude for the teachers and administrators that make Parkland so rich, rewarding and friendly."

### **Lt. Lisa Snow**

Peoria Police Department  
*Illinois Central College (1987)*

Lisa Snow is changing the face of law enforcement. In addition to being the first woman in her department to earn top ranking on the sergeant and lieutenant promotional exams, she has developed diversity training for new recruits and pioneered the use of victim-sensitive interviewing. She is also completing doctoral research on the formation of prejudice of police officers in the workplace. "I have always been an unsolicited advocate of community colleges," says Lt. Snow, whose mother also graduated from Illinois Central College. "My associate degree will be proudly listed on my dissertation title page when I earn my doctorate" in May 2005.

### **Anthony M. Springer**

Alliance development manager • Office of Aerospace Technology  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
*Kankakee Community College (1988)*

As a high school honors graduate, Anthony Springer paid for his first year at Kankakee Community College entirely through scholarships. His career at NASA has been similarly successful as he has gained acclaim for his cutting-edge research on wind tunnel technology and his work as the director of NASA's Centennial of Flight activities. "I can't reiterate enough the value of a community college as an educational resource for local communities," says Springer, who was the main speaker at the college's 2003 commencement ceremonies. "KCC contributed to the foundation of knowledge that I've built upon and use continually throughout my career."

### **Douglas Thompson**

Certified public accountant • Kemper CPA Group LLC  
*Southeastern Illinois College (1966)*

Five years after graduating from Southeastern Illinois College, Douglas Thompson passed the CPA exam, earning the second highest test score in Missouri. He joined Kemper CPA Group that same year and became manager of its Harrisburg office in 1977. In 1993, as a senior partner, he was elected chair of Kemper's Executive Committee. Thompson's community affiliations include service as president of the Harrisburg Rotary Club, treasurer of the Bridge Medical Clinic, and as a member of the local Chamber of Commerce and the President's Circle of the Southeastern Illinois College Foundation.

### **Dr. Corrado Ugolini**

Internal medicine physician • Lake Villa Internal Medicine  
*College of Lake County (1997)*

At the age of 15, Corrado Ugolini emigrated from Italy with his parents – and little knowledge of English. "The College of Lake County served as a catalyst in my academic pursuits," he recalls. "Although I was a member of the National Honor Society, I did not feel confident in my academic abilities and I looked to CLC to further develop my academic interests." Today Dr. Ugolini is an expert in public and occupational health, with a special interest in lung diseases. He also volunteers his time and expertise at a local free clinic for those without medical insurance. "I credit the College of Lake County for my academic and professional successes," he says.

## **Camillo Valle**

General manager • Winstrom LLC  
*Illinois Valley Community College (1983)*

Camillo Valle has distinguished himself both professionally and through his charitable works in the Illinois Valley region. He earned the top managerial positions at two area manufacturing companies by the age of 40, and he continues to be a tireless volunteer, football coach, and school board leader in his hometown of Oglesby. "Attending Illinois Valley Community College was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life," says Valle. "The learning environment at IVCC allowed me to develop my study skills, and the football program allowed me to develop my team-building skills – skills I continue to use everyday in my professional life."

## **The Rev. Dr. Donald C. Wagner**

Pastor • St. Paul United Church of Christ  
*Southwestern Illinois College (1982)*

Don Wagner initially enrolled at Southwestern Illinois College in 1975 to study agriculture. Soon after, he became a partner in the family dairy farm, married his childhood sweetheart, and left school to take on these new commitments. Several years later, he responded to a new, more spiritual calling and returned to SWIC as the first step towards his divinity degree. "Being shaped by a Community College Education is not about individual benefit," explains Rev. Wagner. "It is about receiving as a 'trust' the invested vision of the people who have gone before you, who have hammered and chiseled their wisdom and insight upon this earth into a gift that can be shared with others."

## **Steven L. Weskerna**

Senior program management and finance fellow specialist • Northrop Grumman Corporation  
*McHenry County College (1971)*

A member of McHenry County College's second graduating class, Steve Weskerna has used his professional skills as a project manager and fiscal analyst to improve his community. He has served on two area school boards and assisted with the consolidation of three school districts. In addition, in his elected position as Marengo Township Supervisor, he was instrumental in the adoption of a comprehensive land use plan. "I firmly believe that the value of any education is essentially measured not only in the benefit it imparts to oneself and one's family, but also for the benefit of those affected long after you," says Weskerna. "I found that McHenry County College embraced more of the same local community values that I grew up with."

# OUTSTANDING FACULTY MEMBER AWARD

*Outstanding teaching helps make a college great, while faculty recognition enhances a systemwide emphasis on excellence. This award honors Illinois' community college instructors and their invaluable contributions to their students and institutions.*

## **Jon Althaus**

Agriculture  
*Lake Land College*

In my opinion, the basis for all education is personal accountability. The students must first take ownership of their life, their goals and their dreams. As a teacher, I have the awesome task of protecting, facilitating and nurturing this process. . . . As a teacher, I must constantly challenge my students to reach within themselves and find that which is unique and outstanding. I must instill in them the belief that, through determination, anything is possible. That common people are capable of uncommon results. That excellence is a journey, not a destination, and that the pursuit of excellence should end only when life does. However, none of this is possible unless I, as a teacher, am willing to set the standard.

## **Tom Bauhs**

Chair • Learning Resource Center  
*Wilbur Wright College*

Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "I do hope that in the present spirit of extending to the great mass of mankind the blessing of instruction, I see a prospect of great advancement in the happiness of the human race; and that this may proceed to an indefinite, although not to an infinite degree." That quotation sums up, quite simply, the basis of my philosophy of education. A trained historian and librarian, I like Jefferson's approach to the importance of education to all people, to all communities and to all nations. If Jefferson were alive today, he would include reference to global good in his quotation, I believe.

## **Patricia Bennett-Minor**

Nursing  
*Rend Lake College*

. . . To teach is to lead others to a stronger and more autonomous place in life. It is my belief that the educator's role is to help students discover the possibilities and to direct them to their own place of individual strength and freedom. Were the students all going to (or even starting from) the same place, the trip wouldn't be nearly as adventurous. . . . To run headstrong into the challenges of as many students as possible and facilitate some type of growth in each encounter equates to nirvana in the classroom. Education is good. Education is really good!

## **Mary Ann Bretzlauf**

English  
*College of Lake County*

I believe that the most successful learning occurs when students discern honesty, integrity, compassion and respect as defining principles in the classroom: honesty in grading and presenting ideas, integrity in reasonable but high expectations regarding students' abilities to achieve, compassion in remembering our students' challenges outside the classroom, respect for them as individuals and respect for the privileged opportunity to teach at the College of Lake County. Each time I walk into a classroom, or what Thomas Mann would call a marketplace for ideas, I turn a new page in my learning experience. If I'm to meet my definition of a lifelong learner, then I am indeed fortunate to have a daily opportunity to learn with my students and colleagues.

## **Jane A. Brown**

Information systems  
*Danville Area Community College*

When we become adults and reflect upon the teachers who effected the greatest impact during our educational years, we remember best those who were dynamic, motivating and challenged us to excel. Jane Brown is one such educator. . . . Unlike many instructors whose content does not drastically change during a period of 10 or 20 years, Jane must constantly learn new programming languages and develop new teaching materials since the computer industry changes so rapidly. Her extra work becomes the benefit of all the students who attend her classes as her dedication to perfection is unwavering. Jane is simply an excellent instructor.

- Computer programmer Tammy Stern, DACC Class of 1985

## **Dennis Campbell**

Psychology  
*John Wood Community College*

As I look back on 30+ years of teaching at the university and college level, I can see how my philosophy of education (and life) has evolved greatly. However, it was not until I came to John Wood Community College that I actually put my thoughts in writing. Now, all of my course syllabi contain a summary statement of my educational ideals, which reads as follows: "For me, the best classes I have had were ones where we worked hard together, had fun in doing so, and bonded as a group. It is one thing to learn, but quite another to do it together. This is education in its purest form, and its achievement depends on both mutual respect and support."

## **Kristine Christensen**

Management information systems  
*Moraine Valley Community College*

In today's fact-paced, information-based economy, we must promote lifelong learning to our students so they can be successful in their lives and careers. The environment I create for my students is open, fun and comfortable, allowing them to learn while they exchange ideas working in groups. This environment allows students to openly and freely ask questions without fear of ridicule. . . . Learning is not a one-way street, and I often learn from my students. I express to my students that they can contribute just as much to the classroom as I can. They may be able to conceptualize an idea or task in a different perspective than I could have ever

envisioned.

### **Diane Christianson**

Early childhood education  
*Illinois Valley Community College*

I truly believe we learn from our mistakes, as long as we take the time to reflect upon the process and analyze ways in which change/improvements could take place. My role as an instructor is to model those beliefs within my classroom and teach the relevance of constructive knowledge and reflective analysis. We are all a community of learners and we should embellish every avenue we have to learn from one another (colleagues, students, and the availability and assistance of our community allies). Personal and professional growth in our learners, and ourselves, goes a long way in assessing the impact of our instructional processes.

### **Richard Diefenbach**

Math  
*Shawnee Community College*

The American Heritage Dictionary defines education as the process of obtaining and imparting knowledge and skills. I believe it also includes the process of obtaining and imparting ways of thinking and ways of living. Each of us (whether professional educators or not) will be involved in this process all of our lives . . . Professional educators should motivate and encourage each individual to set their standards high and work with that individual to achieve those goals. The educator's responsibility is to furnish each student with the tools to solve problems – their own and those of the community – to the best of their individual ability. Each individual learns in their own way. Each has their own “teachable moments.” Educators must increase the number and quality of those “teachable moments.”

### **Pixie Fennessey-Woolen**

Psychology and sociology  
*Richland Community College*

My philosophy of education is based on several specific beliefs. I believe the role of the educator is to nurture students' potential. . . . I also believe that students must be treated with dignity and respect. . . . Finally, I believe that I must have professional integrity. This means I must be on time, prepared, and responsible in my duties as an educator. I must demonstrate that I value my career as an educator, and I love being a teacher. I continue to stay abreast of the topics I teach through professional experiences and development. This demonstrates that education is a never-ending process, and I will continue to teach students to the best of my abilities.

### **Dr. Bodo Fritzen**

Interdisciplinary humanities, German and French  
*Heartland Community College*

I have had many great teachers in my life who served as an inspiration to me to become an educator. . . . Professor Alder stressed upon me that teaching is not telling but “touching the hearts of students.” According to him, touching a mind becomes the driving force of wanting to learn, of gaining knowledge. Professor Cazier, a great lecturer whose classes students did not want to miss, served as an example that a lecture can be interesting as long as it is presented with enthusiasm and a touch of humor. Dr. Hans Weber taught English in such a way that learning became a fun experience. . . . Master teachers, teaching theories and more

than 30 years of experiences in the classroom have molded my present outlook, which can be summarized as *"To teach is to touch a life forever."*

### **Christyne Gehlbach**

Nursing

*Sauk Valley Community College*

Nursing education as a profession was not on my mind when I began as a staff nurse at a Chicago hospital. However, I soon felt the urge to return to school, recognizing that a master's degree would provide more options for my future. This decision made a significant difference in my life, and I have observed the impact of education on the lives of my students over the years. Education allows individuals to exert more control over their lives, to mold their lives around something meaningful.

### **Gladys Y. Harris**

Secretarial science, English and speech

*Malcolm X College*

Educational pursuits should be guided by specific philosophical principles. These principles include motivation, pursuance, implementation, honesty, practicality and serviceability to humanity. A good education is achieved by exposure and sincere dedication to learn specific skills tailored to personal choice. . . . My students' paramount goal is to acquire positive effective public speaking delivery techniques. At the end of the semester, I have noticed that my students have learned to appreciate different cultures. Also, they have increased in wisdom, and exhibit self-pride. They have acquired self-confidence in their oral communication. Moreover, my students become enriched with positive speech techniques and have acquired additional universal vision.

### **George Heyman**

Accounting and economics

*Oakton Community College*

It is my constant goal to develop new ways to engage my students in the discussion and evaluation of the world around them. One of my strengths is my refusal to be a compliant teacher. I am prepared to take risks and to try new things in class to get my students work-ready. . . . I strive to present information to students in ways that will stimulate their imaginations into working with the material in a more dynamic way. I teach them how to learn as well as the content. I work beside each student, to coach, guide and lend support both inside and outside the classroom. My goal is for students to incorporate what they learn and apply it in their everyday lives as active learners – to listen, ask questions, discuss, interview, write, edit and make informed ethical decisions.

### **Robert Hickey**

Math

*Kishwaukee College*

Often a student's lack of success is not caused by the lack of pre-requisite knowledge, but instead by the student not doing what a good student does. So another aspect of my role as educator is to encourage each student to become a better student. I try to accomplish this through class discussion, providing and analyzing role models, and individual conferences. While we in education would like it for every student to pass the course, we know that this is not likely to be true. However, if I think an individual has become a better

student as a result of the experiences that he/she has encountered in my class, I think that I have accomplished something that will help the student to succeed in the future, whether it be another course or life in general.

### **Nelda Hinckley**

Biology  
*John A. Logan College*

My teaching field is biology. Because the demands of knowledge in my discipline are important, I strive to keep up-to-date in my discipline. I endeavor to maintain standards while helping my students develop critical thinking skills and the ability to practice problem-solving. My goal is to have them become independent learners so that they will be prepared for the next step in their educational development. . . . My concern is that my students learn material they need to be able to succeed in their chosen field. Above all, I hope that they learn to think.

### **Connie Canaday Howard**

Theater  
*College of DuPage*

I believe that all education, including theater, has as its primary goal to discuss what it is to be human. I was initially drawn to the study of theater, and continue to be immersed in it, because I feel it is a way to challenge ourselves, to encourage each other, to provoke, confront and renew our faith in humanity. At its very best, it is a mutually conducive growing experience, for teacher and student alike. In a play by Athol Fugard, South Africa's greatest playwright, entitled *The Road to Mecca*, there are several themes about learning and about the roles of teacher and student. One that I have held dear to me, and use as a reminder to myself, is this: "Light just one little candle in here, let in the light from just one little star, and the dancing starts." There is no role I hold more dear than the opportunity to teach.

### **Dr. Kent Johnson**

English, Spanish and poetry  
*Highland Community College*

The student's *learning* has, on the outside, maybe 3 percent to do with classroom teaching. The truth is that learning matters when individuals fall in love with the idea of learning and take autonomous, personal accountability for it. After all the up-to-date theory, technique, and organizational-systems razzmatazz, that's the secret we all know, really. And we know, in the end, too, that there's no secret answer for making that lovely accident consistently happen. If I can awkwardly veer my way, just a few times a semester, to have that 3 percent light a spark that helps send a few students off on their own luminous, mysterious ways, then I think I have done something good.

### **Stephanie Johnson**

Culinary management  
*Elgin Community College*

Albert Einstein once said, "Example isn't another way to teach, it is the only way to teach." It is exactly that philosophy that I attempt to emulate each day in my classroom. I receive great satisfaction and joy when working with my students, particularly when they have been struggling to understand a concept and slowly, yet surely, they grasp the idea, their smile widens, and their excitement grows. It is through hands-on



instruction that my enthusiasm and love of the pastry field is passed on to my students. I try to give them “reality instructions,” and an understanding of what is expected of them in the workforce, knowledge that will carry them far. . . . They are taught to be professional, while never fearing the unknown.

### **Marsh Jones**

History  
*Parkland College*

The challenges of teaching a diverse student body and the pleasure one has when encountering eager scholars and those who are struggling to finish just one course make the teaching experience both stimulating and rewarding. . . . It is necessary that the educator is always a learner and is serving, in the best of circumstances, as a facilitator to the learning process. In application of these aims, I am never satisfied with one approach, one style, one technique. An educator will be readily open to new methodologies and new ideas regarding her/his teaching style and pedagogy. In this way, we can constantly hone our minds, be prepared to meet new challenges and opportunities, and share the joy of learning with others.

### **Joan Libner**

Chair • Associate degree nursing program  
*Triton College*

“The instructor must possess an understanding and true appreciation of the richness of teaching in a multicultural classroom, while utilizing a variety of teaching strategies appropriate to the learning styles and backgrounds of the students. The instructor is obligated to encourage student use of appropriate resources to promote success. The educational institution is responsible for providing resources, with the educator working closely with individuals who impact the success of the student. The educator values all members of the educational institution, recognizing those with the least impressive titles have a tremendous influence on the effectiveness of the institution and its ability to meet its mission with a sense of integrity.

### **Dr. Dorothy Martin**

Biology  
*Black Hawk College*

What I teach today has to be relevant to my students. I help them see connections between information in the classroom and their day-to-day life. It is almost like I am a salesman and the product I am selling is biology. I need a good sales pitch to get and keep them actively engaged in the course. But I’ll never get anywhere if I cannot demonstrate enthusiasm for what I am doing. To do all of that requires me to be innovative, invest time and be strongly committed to student learning. While I may go home exhausted at the end of the day, I know what I am doing is making a difference in the lives of my students. It is very rewarding and after almost 37 years of teaching biology, it is still fun.

### **Kim Martin**

Math  
*Southeastern Illinois College*

Enabling all my students to develop techniques of thought, empowering them to deal with real-life problems beyond mathematics, is my greatest challenge. I want them to view mathematics as a network of intriguing ideas, and be excited about it, like I am! It’s so enjoyable to strive for 50 minutes of non-stop student

engagement and to see an “I get it!” expression on their faces. When former students tell me they got the job they wanted or were admitted to professional school, I feel fulfilled. Many students’ dreams would be beyond reach if not for the mission of this community college, and I am so proud to be a part of it!

## **Valerie Nicholson**

Music

*Prairie State College*

Teaching music is not just about history, sociology, creative reflection and development. It’s not limited to physics, acoustics, and mathematical principles. It’s about learning to listen and all its potential.

They can listen.

I just need to help them learn how.

## **Steve Normansell**

English

*Kaskaskia College*

Every semester I am reminded of why I wanted to be a teacher: the joy and enthusiasm students express in the classroom as learning occurs. This focus on students and on student learning lies at the core of my philosophy of education. I think education needs to be looked at – not as a noun, not as an acquisition and possession – but as a verb, an action, an evolving experiential event. A classroom changes; students change. In a dynamic environment, we experience education as a process, and both the student and teacher are necessarily changed. Our assumptions, our knowledge, our lives, our wisdom must, by their nature, never again be the same.

## **Tom Pilat**

Biology

*Illinois Central College*

Mr. Pilat is the most outstanding and dedicated instructor I have ever had in all my years as a college student. His knowledge of Anatomy and Physiology is profound and his teaching ability exceeds all others. It is amazing how he can bring such an intense subject to ground level so that those of us who are being introduced to these topics for the first time are actually able to understand it. The fact that he does take tremendous time and effort to explain uncertain topics in great detail says a lot about a person. It's quite apparent that Mr. Pilat has a great deal of integrity and he should take much pride in his teaching ability. It's very comforting to know that he is sincerely concerned about his students’ success.

– From a former student’s letter of nomination

## **Joyce Ray**

Math

*Southwestern Illinois College*

I have observed that learning mathematics requires active participation and involvement on the part of the student. I keep trying to learn new ways to encourage my students to be active learners and take responsibility for their own academic progress. Building good study habits is also an important component

as the student moves forward in their study of mathematics. It is also essential to provide positive feedback to students by pointing out their strengths and areas that need improvement. Learning math is a skill that the student will be able to utilize for the rest of their life. My ultimate goal would be for my students to be able to apply their problem-solving strategies and math skills to help them reach their dreams and goals within their own lives.

### **Gene Robeen**

Computer information systems  
*Lewis and Clark Community College*

In the classroom, I always attempt to strike balances, realizing each group of students is unique. Some students are more focused, more interested, or more knowledgeable. My aim is to be interesting enough to bring in those less than focused, to be informative enough to attract those less than interested, and to be thorough enough to allow those informed students to seize new concepts. . . . To accomplish this, we learn to not only use modern technologies, but to grapple with their inherent limits. In this manner, students begin to recognize issues within these technologies, and either creatively work within their confines, or perhaps someday learn to supersede them.

### **Lillian Roy**

Business  
*McHenry County College*

My teaching philosophy is to assist men and women and to be a catalyst in helping them grow personally and professionally. Through the unique opportunity we have as instructors to touch students' lives, we become responsible for encouraging their growth in their academic area but also helping them understand that learning is lifelong. I have always been committed to helping individuals develop as thinking people and helping them appreciate that education and knowledge open doors to wonderful opportunities. . . . Teaching continues to be a challenge. Teaching continues to be a marvelous experience. Our contribution to individuals through teaching is lifelong.

### **Craig Sanford**

Welding  
*Carl Sandburg College*

We recognize that students within a class are all different. There also is a range of abilities and preferred learning styles among the membership of each class. These situations require the instructor to find a way to bring everyone in the class along at a consistent pace, which will result in everyone meeting the objectives of the course at a satisfactory level by the end of the term. . . . The students will still be different and many of them will still have challenges in meeting the standards of success outlined in the course syllabus. But I always find myself being energized by the positive results of using a variety of training techniques with different groups, as well as the feedback I receive when I have the opportunity to implement new educational experiences.

### **Diane Taylor**

English  
*Spoon River College*

Community college instructors have the unique opportunity to teach a diverse population who have various

educational needs. In order to meet these expectations, we must embrace changes in our instructional modalities. In the college classroom, the straight lecture format was practiced and while this can still be utilized, it is important to consider other forms such as group work so that the classroom is no longer “teacher-centered” but “student-centered.” When students are actively involved in the educational process, they learn! We must no longer be the “sage on the stage” but the “guide on the side” in order to serve our students.

**Dr. Janet Friend Westney**

Student development  
*William Rainey Harper College*

I believe that to be an effective and responsive counselor, I must be a superb student-centered teacher. Teaching for student success has been one of my counseling credos. I pride myself on taking the extra steps necessary to truly understand and respond to each student’s needs, and then teach each student to develop creative methods to understand and solve his/her problems. The skills I teach help students to address issues they will encounter throughout their lives. . . . I believe for students to be successful in life, they must find role models to emulate. Each day I seek to be that role model for my students and my colleagues.

**Robert Wood**

Psychology  
*Morton College*

A philosophy of education for me as a community college instructor means more than imparting a knowledge base or using a certain pedagogical style. A primary goal of education at a community college is to help improve the students’ abilities to build stronger communities. What can I as an educator do within the college environment to facilitate this goal? I can structure the classroom environment in such a way that expectations are fully understood, a professional tone is maintained, with an atmosphere of warmth and humor to help encourage and maintain student motivation for success. . . . If I can approach these objectives within and outside the classroom, then I believe I can successfully help the college in its overall mission, and help the students to improve the overall quality of their lives and their community.

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