

Alumni & Friends

FALL 2007

Robin Wilson, lead vocalist for the Gin Blossoms, spent a large part of his youth on the Mesa Community College campus where his father, Lee Wilson, taught accounting from 1971 through the early '90s.

Gin Blossoms Vocalist Recalls Days at MCC

He calls himself the “Blutarsky” of junior college — a reference to John Belushi’s character in *Animal House* — because he spent five years at MCC and earned no degree. But he considers it time well spent.

“I have a big place in my heart for that campus,” said Wilson during a phone interview from his tour bus as he promotes the band’s latest release, *Major Lodge Victory*. “I grew up there. I used to sell popcorn at the football games and I remember running around on campus waiting for my dad to get off work. My very first job was in the campus cafeteria.”



Photo credit: Scarpati Left to right: Robin Wilson, Scott Johnson, Bill Leen, Jesse Valenzuela

“I walked out of there with a solid basic knowledge of science and I’m glad I learned it,” Wilson said. “It’s where my interest in science grew and I later named my recording studio, Uranus Recording Studio, after my interest in planetary science.”

Wilson was a full time student at the college from 1983-88. He started out with no clear idea of what he wanted to do, but after a couple of years found his direction—physics.

Today, you can hear echoes of his passion for science in his song lyrics. Wilson said he enjoys the diversity of his life, dividing his time between recording, stage performances, and working with other musicians at his Tempe studio. His studio work with younger musicians allows him to stay connected to new music and energizes him.

“I had a life-changing moment one summer,” Wilson said. “I was never properly encouraged in science, but I rediscovered it on my own on a hiking trip. It was really the first time I was excited to return to school and sign up for classes. For the next three years I took virtually every science class MCC had.”

“I’m so privileged to be a singer who is able to support a family at age 42,” Wilson said. “To be able to do what you love is great.”

He planned to continue his schooling and get a graduate degree in planetary science, but the Gin Blossoms happened, propelling Wilson and the band to fame in the '90s with hits such as “Follow You Down”, “Hey Jealousy”, and “Allison Road”. The group earned a Grammy nomination for Best Performance by a Duo or Group in 1997.

Wilson divides his time between Arizona and New York, where his wife, Jenna, is the stage manager for *Saturday Night Live*. Their son, Grey, will be starting kindergarten this year, so Wilson may soon be spending more time in New York. But he calls Arizona home and spends about one week every month here.

Wilson’s advice for young musicians or recent graduates? It comes from the lyrics to a Cheap Trick song: “Surrender, but don’t give yourself away.”

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It was a privilege to begin the new academic year at Mesa Community College as acting president. I was both surprised and honored last July when our chancellor, Dr. Rufus Glasper, asked me to serve in this position until a permanent president is selected later this year.

My guess is my brother, Emmet, who currently serves on the MCC Alumni Board, was surprised as well.

My connections to MCC go back to the early 1960s. My dad, an attorney, was one of the early adjunct faculty members at MCC. In addition to my brother Emmet, my sisters Anne and Jeanne, and three other brothers Tom, Pat and Terry, all attended MCC. And the next generation of my family is represented as well with three of Emmet's four sons having attended MCC.

I was pleased to have a chance to meet in August with the Alumni Association Board to share with them strategic areas I am going to be focusing on in my short time as acting president. The most important area is accountability for student success, focusing on how to retain students at our college, and how to assist the one out of every two incoming Freshman who test as unprepared for college curriculum. One approach to addressing college readiness is through "P-20." This term refers to a national and statewide emphasis by business leaders and policymakers to integrate our K-12 schools, community colleges and universities into a seamless educational system. We will be working with Mesa Public Schools to administer our college ASSET test which assesses readiness in reading, English and math, and providing the remediation needed so that students are ready to enter MCC as Freshmen. And MCC, MPS and Northern Arizona University are partnering to build a first-of-its-kind "P-20 Education Center" at our new campus in downtown Mesa.

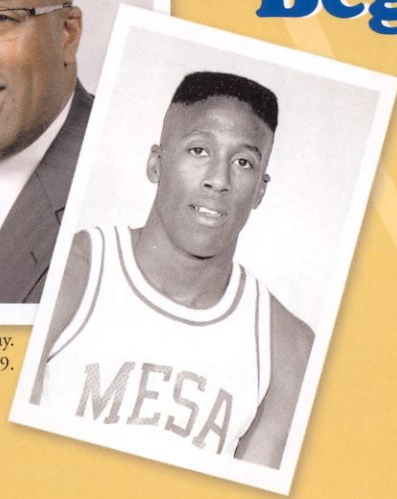
I am energized and rewarded by the help, support and good counsel I receive on a daily basis from within our institution and inspired by our faculty's tireless commitment to excellence in teaching and learning.

I welcome you to call or email me with your thoughts, ideas and suggestions about this fine college. My phone number is 480-461-7300 and email address is: bernie.ronan@mcmail.maricopa.edu.

Bernie Ronan
Bernie Ronan, Ph.D.
Acting President



Mike Brown today.
Mike Brown at MCC in 1989.



Mike Brown, the coach who guided the Cleveland Cavaliers to the 2007 NBA Finals, got his start at Mesa Community College.

Brown attended MCC from 1988-90, playing basketball under former MCC coach Tom Bennett. Brown went on to graduate from the University of San Diego with a business degree in 1992 and began his NBA career with the Denver Nuggets. Over the next decade he helped coach

Cavaliers' M Began Caree

several teams, including the Wizards, the San Antonio Spurs, Indiana Pacers. He was hired as head coach of the Cavaliers in 2005.

Brown said he remembers how friendly the MCC campus was and it was there that Tom Bennett was a very important person who influenced his life - coach Tom Bennett.

"I struck up a great friendship with Tom Bennett," Brown said. "He coached me and helped me mature into a man." Bennett and his friends stay in touch and during the 2007 NBA Finals, Brown flew to Cleveland for one of the games. "It was a small town experience, thanks," Brown said.

Bennett remembers Brown's intensity and dedication and focus when he was at MCC. "Virtually every day he came to MCC he did extra practice," Bennett said. "He's still the same. When I visited him several years ago, we sat at 2 a.m. eating cereal and watching NBA films."

New Student Information System to rollout at MCC

In a district-wide effort, MCC and its nine sister colleges will roll out a new Student Information System (SIS) in October.

What does that mean for you?

SIS houses all of the college's admission, registration, payment, and transcript functions for students. October 4 - 9, business performed in the current Legacy Student Information System will cease as the district transitions to the new system. The college will have VIEW ONLY access to the existing (Legacy) SIS during this time. Since records cannot be added or changed, most enrollment services (including registration and fee payment) will be limited temporarily.

Please help to inform prospective and continuing students and your neighbors about these black out dates and their registration options for Spring 2008.

October 4, approximately 5:00 p.m.

MCC employees will have view only access to Legacy SIS

October 9

MCC employees can access the new SIS

October 10

The new SIS, including the new online Student Center, is available to current and prospective students.

October 22 - 26

Priority registration for MCC continuing students only!

October 29 - January 18

Registration open to all students through the new online Student Center at my.maricopa.edu

Why are we doing this?

When Legacy SIS was implemented in 1983-84, it was the Cadillac of all systems. The past 24 years of technological change has made it necessary to upgrade to the 2007 model.

How will students benefit from the new SIS?

It's a fully integrated, web-based resource that allows you to:

- Quickly navigate course selections and descriptions
- Register for classes
- Check financial aid and scholarship award status
- Manage your class schedule
- Pay tuition and fees
- Print unofficial transcripts or request official transcripts
- Check grades
- Much more!

Thank you for your patience and support as we implement the new system!
Visit my.maricopa.edu in October to enroll and register for classes.

Mike Brown at MCC

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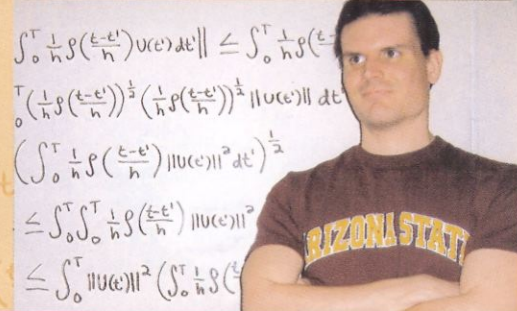
Although Brown was disappointed that the Cavaliers' first trip to the NBA finals was a short one - the San Antonio Spurs defeated the Cavaliers 4-0 - he considers the series a positive experience. "How high we finish is always a journey," Brown said. "It was fun. I was proud of our guys and our organization. If we get there in the future, we'll be even better prepared."

Brown and his wife, Carolyn, are actively involved in community charity work in Cleveland, where they are raising their two sons, Elijah and Cameron.

Bennett said Brown is just great with both personal and professional relationships. "He is where he is today because of the quality person he is," Bennett said. "It's cool to see someone like him with such good qualities succeed."



In 1996, Jon Perinetti entered Mesa Community College with big aspirations but little money. His family had been through bankruptcy, leaving the young student struggling with expenses while trying to keep his grades up. But Jon didn't let that stop him from pursuing his education. He applied for and received an MCC alumni scholarship in Fall 1999.



MCC Grad Gives Back

"There were times I only had a few hundred dollars in my checking account," Jon said. "But thanks to the financial and academic foundation I received at MCC, I not only survived Stanford (BS in Mathematics, 2003), but I have just graduated from ASU (MA in Mathematics, 2007)."

Today, Jon is teaching full-time at ASU. Jon said he chose to go into teaching to help people. He remembers how it feels to be intimidated when introduced to so many new math concepts all at once. "My goal each semester is to get positive feedback from students - to know they're a little less afraid of math and a good deal more confident in themselves," Jon said.

His experience at MCC taught him what students need to succeed. "All of my MCC instructors were great," Jon said. "They had clear teaching methods, chose examples carefully, and were supportive of

me as a student. I try to remember how they treated me so I can emulate their behavior now that I am an instructor."

Another goal for Jon is to donate money to MCC so other students can have a shot at higher education. MCC's Assistant Director of Development, Deb Devore, said Jon has already become a donor. "Jon sent a small check and said, 'I need to start giving back,'" Deb said. "It was so great even though he was still in school he wanted to help."

Jon said he plans to become a larger donor after he pays off graduate school loans. He is also considering working toward a doctorate. "I'm very thankful for the education and aid I received from MCC," Jon said. "It was an indispensable cornerstone of the successes I've enjoyed since earning my AA there so many years ago."

Check out what's happening at MCC this Fall

For a complete listing of events and times, visit the college's online events calendar at www.mc.maricopa.edu/events. To view schedules for MCC's excellent athletic teams, visit <http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/athletics/calendar/>.

September 27 - 30 &
October 4 - 7
Laughter on the 23rd Floor
Theatre Arts - Theatre Outback

October 1 - October 11
MCC Art Faculty Show
Navajo Room in Kirk Student Center

October 3
Coffee with Mesa Mayor Keno Hawker
Mesa Life Options Coffee Series
Mesa Life Options Center

October 17
Empty Bowls
at Southern and Dobson campus

October 24
Empty Bowls
at Red Mountain campus

October 24-27
City of Angels
Act 1 Musical Theatre - Theatre Outback

October 25
"Attachment Theory and Romantic Love"
Presenter: Gabrielle Lawrence, Ph.D.
Psychology Evening Lecture Series
Kirk Student Center, Navajo Room

November 1 - 2
Fall 2007 Dance Concert
Theatre Outback

November 2
Sports Hall of Fame
Dobson Ranch Inn

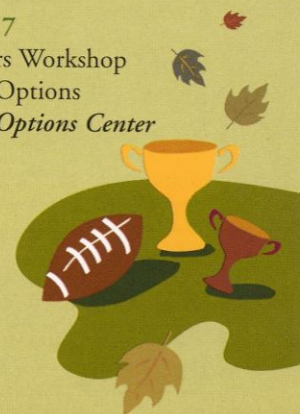
November 3
Homecoming football game
John D. Riggs Stadium

November 6
"Who am I? Personal Growth Through Psychosynthesis"
Presenter: Janet Messer, Ph.D.
Psychology Evening Lecture Series
Kirk Student Center, Navajo Room

November 21
Coffee with Mesa City Manager Chris Brady
Mesa Life Options
Mesa Life Options Center

November 29 - December 2
Twelfth Night
Theatre Arts - Theatre Outback

December 7
Mesa Voters Workshop
Mesa Life Options
Mesa Life Options Center





**MESA
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

Alumni Relations

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Alumni & Friends is published by the Office of Institutional Advancement (IA) for alumni of Mesa Community College.

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A Maricopa Community College
The Maricopa County Community College District is an EEO/AA institution.

NOTICE:

After this newsletter was printed, the rollout date for the new Student Information System was changed to spring 2008 (see page 2). For more information, visit <http://my.maricopa.edu>.

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**Top 4 reasons to participate in MCC's
2008 Alumni Directory project**

Time is running out! Call Harris Connect today at 1-800-786-1169 to update your profile for your 2008 Mesa Community College Alumni Directory. Why should you take your valuable time to be part of this project?

The MCC Alumni Directory can prove to be invaluable to:

- A** Connecting with old friends. If your contact information were up to date in our records, a former classmate could drop you an e-mail. Better yet, this comprehensive effort to update every alumni record we have could put the friend you've been thinking about, but never had the time to locate, within your reach.
- B** Professionals who are looking to build and maintain a strong network. After all, who you know is often as important as what you know.
- C** Alumni who are considering re-careering and want to discuss a potential career path with someone who's already walked down it.
- D** Alums who are relocating and looking to connect with someone in their new community.

This important directory will contain complete listings of all alumni from Mesa Community College, including e-mail addresses, professional, and personal information, to help meet your networking needs. My goal is to make this all-new alumni publication the most comprehensive graduate reference available. Please be assured, however, that you have the final say in what is listed for your profile. Just call Harris Connect and tell them your preferences.

Thank you for taking a moment to ensure that we have your most current information. By taking this opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the information for this directory, you will be able to stay close to the college and classmates that made a difference in your life.

Marcy J. Snitzer, Class of 1992
*Coordinator of Alumni and Communications
Mesa Community College*

P.S. Harris Connect, Inc., a trusted partner of Mesa Community College, has been chosen to produce our alumni directory. Harris Connect's commitment to protecting the privacy and ensuring the integrity of the information collected for the directory is reflected in their privacy policy on-line at www.alumniconnections.com/olq/privacy.html.