

New program honors outstanding alumni

The MCC Alumni Association launched an awards and recognition program this spring as part of an ongoing effort to recognize the accomplishments of our outstanding alumni. Awards were created in two categories: alumni achievement and outstanding chapter service. Awardees were honored on May 1 as part of the Community Recognition Luncheon, hosted annually by MCC President Larry K. Christiansen. Awardees are listed below with excerpts from the nomination letters submitted on their behalf.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Beverly Byrd

Adjunct Faculty and Director, Mesa Community College; Director, Mesa Youtheatre, City of Mesa

As a student in the late 1980s, Bev acted in several productions at MCC. She went from MCC to ASU, earning a bachelor's and master's in Children's Theatre. She began working for the City of Mesa, teaching in their youth program and directing children's theatre. She has won several AriZoni awards for her directing. She began teaching and directing for MCC shortly after graduating from ASU. She has also been a student advisor to the Stagedoor Players Club at MCC. When Bev is not directing, she often comes into the scene shop, works on other productions, and is always heavily involved in building and developing her productions.

Diana Walsh

Nurse, Arthur M. Hamilton School

Diana has always used her expertise and resources in health education to promote health awareness to students, staff,



Beverly Byrd



Diana Walsh



Arlen Sykes

and community. She assists in writing and keeping the District, County, and State School Nurse handbooks up to date. She sees and takes care of numerous students needing health care and/or medications in her office on a daily basis. Diana sets up doctor appointments, arranges for transportation, and picks up prescriptions. She even makes home visits and provides the positive reinforcement to make sure our students are in school. She has performed her duties as the District Lead Nurse with exemplary skills and dedication.

OUTSTANDING CHAPTER SERVICE AWARD

Arlen Sykes

Teacher, Kyrene de la Colina

Arlen organized the Psi Beta Alumni chapter and is solely responsible for its initial existence. He has led the effort to raise money for the Psi Beta Alumni scholarship, which is awarded every spring semester. Arlen has also represented the alumni organization and attended the Psi Beta chapter induction dinner each semester. He takes this opportunity to personally invite the new inductees to join the alumni organization when they graduate. Arlen also involved Psi Beta in helping with the local Special Olympics program for the past few years. He has been the heart and soul of the Psi Beta Alumni chapter.

Please look for a call for nominations in the spring issue of the *Alumni and Friends* newsletter. Special thanks to members of the 2003 Awards and Recognition Committee, Tony Occhiuzzi and Donna Backhaus.



David Udall (left) receives the names of MCC's Class of 2003 from honors speaker Brandon Moak.

involved with the ceremony for making it such a memorable event for our newest alumni and their families and friends.

The MCC Alumni Board will launch its first full year of leadership for the association in July. My fellow volunteers and I pledge to make this an exciting year for all alumni, filled with opportunities to reconnect with the college.

As I shared with the graduates, my grandfather always encouraged me to get involved with a cause larger than myself. Involvement in the MCC Alumni Association is a cause worthy of your time and energy. I hope that you will join us in our mission to preserve the heritage of MCC, provide networking and fellowship opportunities to our members, and to advance MCC within our communities.

Congratulations to the class of 2003, and welcome to the fellowship of the alumni association.



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

Commencement marks milestone

Message from the Honorable David Udall Chair, MCC Alumni Association

MCC graduated its largest class in history on May 16, 2003, conferring degrees to more than 1,700 graduates. As chair of the MCC Alumni Board, I had the honor of accepting the graduates into the MCC Alumni Association. The commencement ceremony, held in the center courtyard of the Southern and Dobson campus, was one of the finest I have ever attended. I applaud MCC President Larry K. Christiansen and all the people

2002-03 Alumni Board

- F. Rockne Arnett, '64
- Donna Backhaus, '98
- Art Betancourt, '03
- Jack Bogle, '76
- Leslie Carlson, '95
- Mary Chavez, '83
- Gerardo de los Santos, '89
- Leonard Heinrich, '74
- Teresa Henry, '01
- Debbie Hentges, '75
- Jacob Moore, '97
- Frank Morales, '92
- Monika Nathan, '78
- Anthony Occhiuzzi, '68
- Diana Occhiuzzi, '69
- Evelyn Plantillas, '67
- Robert Rhoton, '72
- Hans Silberschlag, '95
- David Udall, Chair, '83
- Thayer Vershooor, '89
- Louise Zais, '80

Alumni & Friends

SUMMER 2003

Rumors success funds literacy programs, inspires encore performance

It all started with a simple goal: put together a fundraising play that would make a difference in the community. Who knew that Phillip Fazio and his friends' idea would lead to an award-winning production of Neil Simon's *Rumors* and a new literacy program at MCC?

The *Rumors* crew consisted of eight high school and college students, a 22-year-old director, and an inexperienced executive producer. In four nights, this ensemble of rising stars raised more than \$5,000. The stunning performances offered by the group netted three Maxies: Best Direction, Comedy, David Chorley; Best Comedy, MCC English, Reading, and Math departments; Best Performance, Actor in a Comedy, Ben Giroux. *East Valley Tribune* reviewer Max McQueen tagged Giroux as "the best hometown comedic actor we've seen in 20 years."

Rumors' success allowed MCC to increase the number of college-age tutors involved in literacy programs. The Center for Service Learning, run by faculty director and MCC alumnus Duane Oakes, offers a variety of literacy programs:

- Free tutoring for school children
- Training for writing tutors
- Literacy training and instructional materials for parents
- Scholarships for students doing community service in literacy

The success has been phenomenal. MCC



General admission: \$15
Alumni (with alumni card): \$12
Students: \$10
Call 602-254-2151 for tickets.



The 2002 comedy *Rumors* netted three Maxies and more than \$5,000.

students now provide more than 1,000 hours of literacy service.

Gene Fazio, the play's producer and faculty member in MCC's English Department, has been a champion for literacy throughout his 32-year career in the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). Diagnosed with dyslexia, a condition that causes difficulty in reading, Gene was advised as a freshman in college to adjust his educational goals — "to be more realistic about your abilities." Gene accepted this as a challenge, enrolled in a reading class at Phoenix College, and began down a path that led him to two master's degrees. He became a teacher and mentor to thousands of students.

Gene and the *Rumors* cast will present an encore this summer with *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. The Phoenix Theatre has signed a project partner agreement, allowing the cast to work with theatre professionals and

providing access to the theatre's box office, set designers, and rehearsal facilities. Proceeds from ticket sales will benefit literacy programs. Additional donations are being accepted through the Maricopa County Community College District Foundation, 480-461-7355.

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MCC alumna wins Fulbright



On occasion, success stories of former students filter back to teachers and advisors "who knew them when." Janet Staples is one such story.

Janet began her studies in Exercise Physiology at Mesa Community College, where she won honors on the All-USA Academic Team. In May, Janet

graduated from the Honors College at Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology (study of body movement). In August she will go to Oslo, Norway, as a Fulbright scholar.

Based in the United States, the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship program offers education grants at different levels—for students and professors. More than 100 countries participate. The scholarship covers tuition, room and board, and transportation, as well as additional benefits from each country or university.

Janet's study focuses on the senior population. "I'm looking at movement adaptation of the elderly," she explained. "I will be working with older adults, comparing the differences in their movement patterns to younger adults." Janet will be studying at the Norwegian University of Sports Science, which has a student population of 400.

Future goals, Janet noted, may include a doctorate in Physical Therapy (DPT). "There are so many options," she said. "Whatever it is that I do, I know I will enjoy it and hopefully make a contribution."

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Alumni Relations
1833 West Southern Avenue
Mesa, Arizona 85202-4866

- Coordinator, Communications and Alumni Relations: Marcyn Snitzer
marcy.snitzer@mccmail.maricopa.edu; 480-461-7792
- Assistant, Communications and Alumni Relations: Jennifer La Forge
jennifer.laforge@maricopa.edu; 480-461-7794
- Contributing Writer: Karen Peters
karen.peters@cablcaz.com; 480-461-7794
- Graphic Designer: Mary Jordan
mary.jordan@maricopa.edu; 480-461-7795



Message from the President

Thunderbird basketball player goes to UW, plans to attend med school

MCC basketball player Hakeem Rollins excels at academics and athletics. Hakeem, a 2001 Mesa High grad, turned down a full scholarship to the University of Arizona to attend MCC. "I was interested in enjoying the full college experience, which for me meant combining academics and athletics," Hakeem said.



MCC was fortunate to have Hakeem as a power forward for the 2002 and 2003 basketball seasons. During 2003, Hakeem made first team All-Conference and first team All-Region, received an honorable mention as an All-American, and came in second place in conference

"Whatever he does in life, he'll be successful."
—MCC basketball coach Alton Lister

voting for Player of the Year. He led the conference in blocked shots, led the team in scoring, and was second in rebounding for his team. Hakeem was distinguished as one of the top three power forwards in the country by the National Junior College Athletic Association.

Hakeem's academic and athletic successes make him an appealing candidate for many four-year colleges and universities. As an honor student, he was recruited by schools such as Stanford, the University of Connecticut, and the University of Oregon. "During his visits to each of the schools, Hakeem carefully examined both the athletic and academic programs," said MCC basketball coach Alton Lister.

Hakeem accepted the full athletic scholarship offered by the University of Washington. He intends to pursue a medical degree, so Hakeem found the University of Washington attractive because of its medical school. "Whatever he does in life, he'll be successful," Alton said. "He's focused, driven, and wants to do well in everything."

On May first, 1,776 students received their diplomas from MCC. We are proud of them; we wish them much success; and we are hopeful that they will remain in the MCC family as active alumni.

MCC has always had tremendous support from its alumni. Whether helping us create new programs, cheering on our football team at Homecoming, attending theatre productions, or providing insight and support as we build and grow our facilities, MCC alumni are an important and integral part of our college.

This year we created a new alumni board chaired by the Honorable David Udall, Maricopa County Superior Court Judge. The new board is comprised of 21 members with graduation dates spanning 38 years. Collectively and separately they bring enormous insight and support to our college.

As we look forward at MCC, we will continue our focus on academic excellence across all programs; continue and strengthen our collegial partnerships with Arizona's universities as they change their directions; sustain our current partnerships with business and industry and foster new ones; and remain — as a top priority — accessible to every student in our area who wants a college education at MCC.

These areas of focus will require all of us to work together. We are grateful for the enormous contributions of our alumni over the years. I personally look forward to working with all of you on the challenges and the opportunities that we face as part of a growing, dynamic community.

Sincerely,

Larry K. Christiansen

College launches accreditation self-study

Mesa Community College is preparing for its fourth comprehensive 10-year accreditation visit. The accreditation self-study is a process that allows the college to examine itself in relation to accreditation criteria and to provide evidence that it meets those criteria. The self-study report will be submitted in Fall 2004, and a team visit from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association will occur in Spring 2005.



Courtesy Arizona Diamondbacks

MCC alumnus Shea Hillenbrand joins Arizona Diamondbacks

Shea Hillenbrand, the newest addition to the Arizona Diamondbacks roster, began his career here at MCC. During his 1996 season at MCC, Shea was named a National Junior College Athletic Association All-American and holds the record for leading hitter with a .431 batting average. Hillenbrand's Thunderbird team won the 1996 Conference Championships. Congratulations to Shea, and welcome back to the Valley!



Academic accolades abound for PTK

Twenty-three awards, 367 new members, and more than \$50,000 in scholarships. MCC's Phi Theta Kappa Omicron Beta Chapter had a record-setting year in 2002-03. Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) is an international honor society for two-year college students that has earned a reputation as one of the largest and most prestigious honor societies in higher education. Invitations to join PTK are extended to students who have completed 12 hours of coursework toward their degree with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or

"The number of students inducted this year speaks to the caliber of students MCC attracts." —Duane Oakes, PTK Faculty Advisor

better. MCC proudly inducted 367 members this school year, bringing the total number of students inducted into MCC's Omicron Beta chapter since its inception in 1963 to 3,914. "The number of students inducted this year speaks to the caliber of students MCC attracts," said Duane Oakes, faculty advisor to PTK and MCC and PTK alumnus. "MCC has earned a reputation in the community for the excellent educational opportunities it offers."

PTK had a remarkable year. In addition to increased membership, PTK co-sponsored the annual All-Arizona Academic competition, with all four of MCC's representatives placing in the top 20 students in Arizona. First-team winners received a \$1,000 scholarship, a four-semester tuition waiver to any of Arizona's three state universities, and the opportunity to compete in the national competition sponsored by *USA Today* and PTK. Edilyn Gan, PTK president, went on to place in the top 40 students listed as *USA Today's* All-American students.

The honors don't end there. Edilyn was selected as a Guiste White scholar, placing her in the top 10 PTK students in the world, and received the 2003 Distinguished Chapter President Award. Edilyn graduated from MCC in May and will continue her studies at Arizona State University. She leaves MCC

with \$35,000 in scholarships. PTK members won a plethora of additional awards at both the regional and national levels:

- International Distinguished Chapter Award
- Internationally Recognized Top 25 Chapters in Scholarship
- Arizona Region Leadership Hallmark
- Dr. Larry K. Christiansen – 2003 Shirley B. Gordon Award of Distinction
- Duane Oakes – Continued Excellence Award for Advisors
- Dawn Russell – Arizona Region Hall of Honor for New Advisors
- Kelley Stewart – 2003 George O. Bierkoe Distinguished Member Award

PTK members collected donations this year in support of cancer awareness and contributed hundreds of hours of community service to organizations such as the American Cancer Society and the American Red Cross.

PTK alumni chapter

Edilyn Gan, 2002-03 PTK president, is continuing her spirit of leadership by organizing the Phi Theta Kappa Omicron Beta alumni chapter. Twelve members have been recruited so far, but they are looking for more! The goal is to have enough members to officially charter the chapter with the MCC Alumni Association and have it recognized by PTK International. "I would like to encourage MCC alumni who were Phi Theta Kappans to be part of this chapter," said Edilyn.

If you would like more information about getting involved with the chapter, please contact Duane Oakes at duane.oakes@mccmail.maricopa.edu or Marcy Snitzer at marcy.snitzer@mccmail.maricopa.edu.

MCC and the community — making beautiful music together

At semester's end, MCC Music Department chair Sue Anne Lucius has no time to kick up her heels and take a rest. That's because creating opportunities to enjoy music is a year-round occupation for her.



The Music Department's most recent venture, MCC's new Community Music Centre, is designed to enhance music opportunities for the community. "We'd like to be known as a place where community members can come and participate in musical activities," Sue Anne said.

In May, MCC's Music Theatre Group involved community members in performances of three children's book musicals: *Snoopy, You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, and *Songs for a New World*. Assisting with the productions were alumni of the Maricopa Community Colleges; Mary Christensen, choral director at Skyline High School; Lindsay Brinkerhoff Maxson, a first grade teacher; and Aaron Ballard.

Because music opportunities are not always accessible to young people, the Community Music Centre creates workshops and classes designed for students in elementary school, junior high, and high school. The music programs are open to all students and educators in the East Valley.

Community Music Centre offerings for the summer include the following:

- Jazz Ensemble, for junior high and high school students
- Piano and Voice Lessons — open to all ages
- Magic Music Kidz Training Workshop — grades 1 through 3, June 9-19
- "Glories of the Strings" Chamber Music Workshop — grades 7 through college, intermediate and advanced levels, July 9-22

"Future goals," Sue Anne said, "include a children's chorus in the fall and a jazz band camp or workshop."

Many of the workshops and classes culminate in performances that are open to community residents. Sue Anne extends a special invitation to MCC faculty, staff, and alumni to attend some of the performances and enjoy our community's talented young musical artists: "Let us entertain you!"

For more information on upcoming classes, workshops, and performances, call the MCC Music Department (480-461-7575) or Community Education (480-461-7494).

International education thrives at MCC

Of the more than 1,000 international students attending MCC, many already reside in the United States; 222 students come directly from their country of origin. For these students particularly, the Office of International Education (IE) plays an important role. Dr. Gailynn Valdes and her staff and advisors make life easier for MCC's international students.

"Our international students have very specific needs," Gailynn said. "We really are their support system while they are here." IE provides housing information, an orientation, a newsletter, a website with news and reminders, academic counseling, conversation partners, and special activities, such as a trip to the Grand Canyon. In the fall, IE will begin a mentoring program that connects an international student with an American student for one-on-one support.



Geremie Sawadogo from Burkina Faso, Africa, enjoys the fall 2002 international student welcome party.

"We have more international students than any college in the district," Gailynn said, "because we have so many programs and options." More than 50 countries are represented; Asia contributes the most students — Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, and India. Popular courses of study for international students are business, computer science, engineering, and biotechnology.

In addition to accommodating students visiting from other countries, IE also creates opportunities for MCC students, faculty, and staff to study abroad. Summer study opportunities, organized and conducted by faculty and often receiving funding through the faculty minigrant program, include 2- to 5-week courses in Mexico and China:

- Guanajuato, Mexico, directed by Jaime Herrera - language, history, photography, and storytelling
- Xalapa, Mexico, led by Dr. Nora Reyes - for educators and social workers
- Puerto Peñasco, Mexico, coordinated by Bonnie Kalison - marine biology
- Two study programs in China — one directed by Steve Bass and the other by Jonelle Moore

Students and faculty who take advantage of these programs are richer for the experience. "It changes their world," Gailynn observed. "They have a different view."

To learn more about the Office of International Education, visit www.mc.maricopa.edu/services/international.