

## Sign up for MCC's Award Winning Email Announcements

The National Council for Marketing and Public Relations recently awarded the alumni email announcements a bronze Medallion Award in regional competition (see article on page 4); MCC has been notified that it will also be receiving a gold, silver, or bronze Paragon award at the completion of the national competition in March.

Add your email address to our list! Contact Jennifer LaForge at [jenner@mesacc.edu](mailto:jenner@mesacc.edu). Please provide your first, middle, and last name and preferred email address.



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# Alumni & Friends

A Publication for the Mesa Community College Alumni Association

## Alumnus Member of Rising Country Group Due West

Mesa Community College alumnus Brad Hull recently experienced the thrill of walking the red carpet at the Country Music Awards as a member of the country trio Due West.

Hull, who began his career in music at MCC, said he and his band had a hard time believing they were at the awards show as artists, not just fans.

"To be on the other side was surreal," Hull said. "We have all been big fans for a long time and we always watched the show on TV and talked about the winners. That night I still felt more like a fan than an artist."

Hull graduated from MCC in 2000 with an associate degree in general studies. He said a music business class he took at MCC with instructor Grant Wolf helped him begin to define what he wanted to do in the music business.

"Grant Wolf was an incredible teacher," Hull said. "He knew the music business really well and was very entertaining as a teacher."

*I always knew I wanted to do something in the music business but he [Grant Wolf] opened my eyes to all the options and different careers."*

While in Mesa, Hull met fellow Due West member Matt Lopez. Hull transferred to Belmont University in Nashville where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration in 2002. Lopez followed Hull to Nashville where the two met the final member of the Due West trio, Tim Gates.

"When we met Tim, we knew we had found the right voice," Hull said.

The group was off and running, releasing their first hit single, "I Get That All the Time" to radio at the end of April 2009. Fans responded to the sincere, down-to-earth lyrics and three-part harmony immediately.

*The song reached #17 on the Music Row Country Breakout Chart and the video was in the Great American Country Top 20 Countdown for 8 weeks, peaking at #3.*



Alumnus Brad Hull (pictured on left) plays the guitar, sings high harmony, and writes songs as a member of country trio DueWest.



Hull plays the guitar, sings high harmony and writes songs, enjoying all parts of the creative process equally.

"Each holds a special place in my heart," Hull said. "Songwriting is the closest thing to creating something. I don't have kids yet, so my songs are my kids."

Hull said the group plans to release a new single and a new CD this spring. Information on the band can be found at [duewest.com](http://duewest.com).

## Twin sisters open Tilt Gallery

Since opening the Tilt Gallery in Phoenix in 2005, Mesa Community College graduates Michelle and Melanie Craven have enriched the Phoenix art community by sharing their photography skills and knowledge.



The gallery's photography workshops are taught by local and visiting educators and artists who are well-known and established in their field.

"These classes are for anyone who wants to learn and be creative with their printing techniques or for the person who wants to pursue and establish more into a specialized area of printing," Melanie said.



Melanie and Michelle both pursued associate of arts degrees at MCC and then transferred to Arizona State University to earn Bachelors of Fine Arts degrees in photography. They said MCC instructor Ron Bimrose was very influential in their pursuit of a degree.

"His assignments made us think outside the box of taking a picture," Melanie said. "He challenged his students to think about what concepts we could convey through photography. When taking pictures, one can develop a concept and try to express that concept with a series of images."

The sisters said they both feel that their education and experience at MCC, ASU, and a variety of photographic workshops have all



contributed to their commitment and desire to be involved in the arts community.

For more information on the gallery and workshops, visit: [www.tiltgallery.com](http://www.tiltgallery.com).

**facebook**

Find MCC's new Facebook page on [facebook.com](http://facebook.com). Type "Mesa Community College" in the search box then click the "Become a Fan" box.

**twitter**

Follow [MesaCCollegeAZ](https://twitter.com/mesaCCollegeAZ) at [twitter.com/mesaCCollegeAZ](https://twitter.com/mesaCCollegeAZ)

**You Tube**

View videos at: [www.youtube.com/user/mesacc](http://www.youtube.com/user/mesacc)

**EXCITING START, EXTRAORDINARY RETURN**

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

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## Mark Your Calendar

- SPRING ALUMNI EVENTS – REGISTER TODAY AT [WWW.ALUMNICONNECTIONS.COM/MCC](http://WWW.ALUMNICONNECTIONS.COM/MCC) AND CLICK ON THE EVENTS CALENDAR**
- February 19, 7:00 p.m.**  
Family Discovery Series – Saving Wild Cheetahs: Education vs. Guns and Bullets  
Saguaro Building, Red Mountain Campus
  - February 25-27, 7:30 p.m.**  
**February 28, 2:00 p.m.**  
The Great White Hope  
Theatre Outback, Southern & Dobson Campus
  - March 1, 7 p.m.**  
Evening Lecture Series in Psychology  
The Mysteries, or Not, of Juvenile Sex Offenders  
Navajo Room, Southern & Dobson Campus
  - March 3, 7:30 p.m.**  
Spring Jazz Concert  
Saguaro Building, Red Mountain Campus
  - March 5, 6-10 p.m.**  
MCC Astronomy Nights,  
Planetarium shows repeat every half hour  
Physical Science Building, Southern & Dobson Campus
  - March 10-13, 7:30 p.m.**  
**March 13, 2:00 p.m.**  
Pippin • Theatre Outback, Southern & Dobson Campus
  - March 10, 7:00 p.m.**  
Honors Lecture Series – A History of Women at Work in America: Poverty, Affluence and the Paradoxes of Social Change • Navajo Room, Southern & Dobson Campus
  - March 25-26, 7:30 p.m.**  
Spring Dance Concert  
Theatre Outback, Southern/Dobson Campus
  - March 26, 7:00 p.m.**  
Family Discovery Series – Saving the Planet: One Building at a Time • Saguaro Building, Red Mountain Campus
  - March 31, 7:00 p.m.**  
Lalo Alcaarez: Cartoons in the Borderlands/ Caricaturas En La Frontera  
Navajo Room, Southern & Dobson Campus
  - April 2, 6-10 p.m.**  
MCC Astronomy Nights  
Planetarium shows repeat every half hour  
Physical Science Building, Southern & Dobson Campus
  - April 16, 7:00 p.m.**  
Family Discovery Series – The Life and Habits of Rattlesnakes  
Saguaro Building, Red Mountain Campus
  - April 23**  
Desert Echoes Flute Project  
Saguaro Building, Red Mountain Campus
  - April 26, 7 p.m.**  
Evening Lecture Series in Psychology  
You, You, You and What You Do!  
Navajo Room, Southern & Dobson Campus
  - April 29, 7:00 p.m.**  
Instrumental Chamber Ensembles Concert  
Saguaro Building, Red Mountain Campus
  - April 29-May 1, 7:30 p.m.**  
**May 2, 2:00 p.m.**  
To Gillian on Her 37th Birthday  
Theatre Outback, Southern & Dobson Campus
  - May 7, 7:30 p.m.**  
Broadway Bound  
Theatre Outback, Southern & Dobson Campus

For a complete listing of events and times, check out our online calendars.  
**GENERAL MCC EVENTS** [mesacc.edu/alumni](http://mesacc.edu/alumni) then click EVENTS CALENDAR **ATHLETICS** [athletics.mesacc.edu/schedules](http://athletics.mesacc.edu/schedules) 6

<b>Spring 2010</b>	
President's Corner.....	<b>Page 2</b>
Alumna Embraces 4 R's.....	<b>Page 3</b>
Soleri Bells Dedication.....	<b>Page 3</b>
MCC Wins Gold, Silver, Bronze.....	<b>Page 4</b>
New Thunderbird Mascot.....	<b>Page 4</b>
Award Winning Email Signup.....	<b>Page 5</b>
Twin Sisters Open Tilt Gallery.....	<b>Page 5</b>
Mark Your Calendar .....	<b>Page 6</b>







## President's Corner

Greetings MCC Alumni,

I couldn't help but pause this past New Year's Day: can it possibly be 10 years since we celebrated the beginning of a new millennium? The highlight for me during the past decade – other than the joy of watching my sons continue to thrive -- was coming to Mesa Community College.

I am energized and excited to begin the new decade. I am confident that MCC's focus on student success, employee success and community involvement will ensure its continued reputation as a trend-setter and national leader in community college education.

MCC begins the new year with the unveiling of its new vision, mission, and values. This major initiative required a lot of soul searching as an institution. We looked at what we have done well; where we have fallen short; and what we want to be as a higher learning organization. I appreciate the input offered by the Alumni Advisory Board and community members. Our vision is clear– to lead the way to success in our local and global economy. Our mission and values statements are posted at [mesacc.edu/about/administration/mission](http://mesacc.edu/about/administration/mission).

Throughout the spring, MCC will focus on planning for a new initiative – Communities Learning in Partnership (CLIP). MCC along with our two partners, Mesa Public Schools and the City of Mesa, received a planning grant last fall from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to work together to double the number of low-income young adults – ages 16-26 – who complete a post secondary degree or certificate with value in the marketplace. This initiative falls right in line with MCC's long-term commitment to student success for all students. Everything we learn from being part of this CLIP initiative will help us in our efforts to help students succeed. As an alum, you know the value of completing a college degree. We look to you for personal success stories of what helped you complete your degrees and what strategies and resources would have helped to make that journey a little easier. We are soliciting community input for the initiative, and we are particularly interested in alumni input. Please contact Leah Palmer, MCC's CLIP coordinator, at [leah.palmer@mccmail.maricopa.edu](mailto:leah.palmer@mccmail.maricopa.edu) or 480-688-9801 if you would like to contribute.

Finally, enrollment is up at all of our campuses. We have seen an increase in the number of individuals returning to college to retool and re-career – inevitably as a result of the difficult economic times in which we find ourselves. Due to the diligent efforts of our faculty and staff, MCC is fiscally sound and prepared to meet the current demand. We expect to serve more students with fewer resources in the upcoming years due to fewer resources allocated by the state and lower property tax revenues. We also continue to see a great number of our students struggle to find a way to pay for college. The need for financial support for student scholarships is great. If you are in a position to make a gift, I ask you to consider making a donation online at [mesacc.edu/alumni](http://mesacc.edu/alumni).

MCC's future is bright. Our commitment to teaching and learning never waivers. I wish you all the best in the new decade.

Sincerely,

Shouan Pan, Ph.D.

## Alumni NewsClips

## Alumna Mary Chavez Embraces 4 R's with Eco-Friendly Thrift Store

Inspired by a desire to help the environment as well as de-clutter her own home, Mesa Community College Alumna Mary Chavez recently opened Verde Vintage and Thrift in Mesa.

The store holds a well-organized collection of antiques and thrift items. Mary, a 1983 graduate of Mesa Community College, said she is excited to be able to share and enjoy the items she finds at auctions and yard sales with her customers.

"We have both antiques and thrift items," Mary said. "But most importantly, this is a 'green' store. We believe in the four Rs – reuse, restore, recycle, repurpose – while keeping the items at reasonable prices."

The store also has a bin to drop off old tennis shoes that will be donated to the City of Tempe. The collected shoes are recycled, ground up and used in the creation of new sports and playground surfaces.



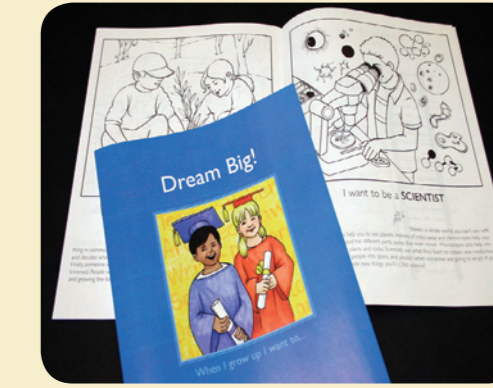
The store itself was in dire need of refurbishing when Mary purchased it. Mary and her husband, Pete, along with her children and grandchildren, worked for about six months gutting and refurbishing the store. They sanded and finished the cement floor, painted the entire building and updated the wiring and electrical system. Mary's former experience working for an interior design company helped her spruce up the interior.

The efforts paid off and today the bright yellow building is attracting customers to the store, located on the northeast corner of Southern Avenue and Country Club Drive in Mesa.

Mary held the store's grand opening in December amidst a crowd of family, friends and well-wishers.

"This is exciting for me," Mary said. "I've never done anything like this before. I didn't know I was an entrepreneur."

Verde Vintage and Thrift is located at 326 W. Southern Avenue in Mesa.



## MCC Wins Gold, Silver and Bronze

Mesa Community College won five Medallion Awards from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations.

Two of the entries are for Alumni Publications.

**Silver** – *Alumni & Friends* Newsletter

**Bronze** – *MCC Events Calendar Announcements* sent via Email

Other awards include:

**Gold** – *Define Yourself Viewbook* for recruiting high school students

**Silver** – *Dream Big Coloring Book* for children age 8 and under

**Silver** – *MCC Summer Youth College* advertising materials

*The NCMPR is the only organization of its kind that represents marketing and PR professionals at community and technical colleges. The Medallion Awards recognize outstanding achievement in communications.*



*President Pan applauds Dr. Paolo Soleri, the guest of honor at the recent dedication of the Soleri Bells.*

## Soleri Bells Come Home

### CLASS OF 68 AND DONORS HONORED

The Mesa Community College Paolo Soleri bell sculpture, a rich part of the college's history, has been reinstalled at the Paul A. Elsner Library. A dedication was held on January 8 with special guest Dr. Paolo Soleri addressing members of the Class of 1968, MCC retirees and employees, and donors to the Soleri Bells project.

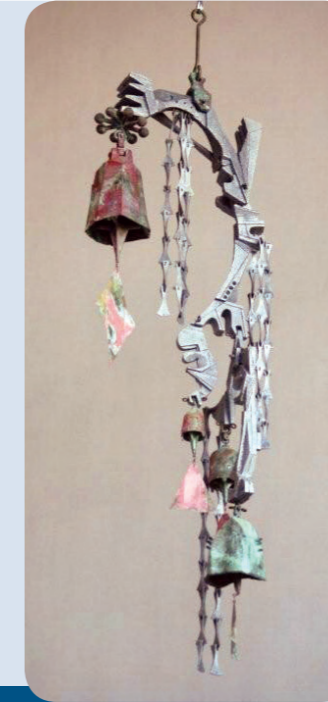
The bell sculpture was a gift from the Class of 1968. It was presented to Dr. Jeanette DePriest, department chair for the Library at that time, and installed when the original MCC library opened in 1968.

The bell sculpture hung outside the library until construction on the newer Paul A. Elsner library began in 1998. At that time, the bells were relocated to the art department, but never installed at the new library until now. Because of natural weathering and vandalism, the bells required refurbishing several times

throughout the years, with the most recent refurbishing and replacement of missing bells occurring last fall.

The restoration, installation and dedication of the bell sculpture was made possible by donations from a number of individuals, particularly MCC library and art department employees. The college is grateful for the generosity of these individuals, and a commemorative plaque will be mounted in recognition of their contributions.

Betty O'Neill, an MCC library employee for 35 years, said she is pleased the bells have been reinstalled. "I always loved the bells," O'Neill said. "They are a piece of Arizona history and the library's history."



### Facts about MCC's Soleri Bell Sculpture

**The artwork has an original one-of-a-kind cast aluminum spine created by Paolo Soleri that cannot be duplicated. The absence of an inscription, which means the piece was made before Soleri started signing his art, makes the sculpture more valuable. The current sculpture has one of the original bells donated by the class of 1968. Cosanti, where the famous Paolo Soleri bells are made and sold, has crafted replacements for the bells that were lost to theft or vandalism. To learn more about Soleri and the windbells, visit [www.cosanti.com](http://www.cosanti.com).**



## NEW THUNDERBIRD MASCOT

Thanks to some superior artistic ingenuity and the need for a new look, Mesa Thunderbird Athletics is off and running with a sleek new insignia and mascot uniform for the traditional MCC Thunderbird.

The new logo was unveiled at Homecoming in November 2008. The football team was first to don the insignia on their helmets for their game against Scottsdale.

Ever since, student-athletes, alumni, and faculty have seen an increasing interest in the insignia. The new bird is represented by Mesa's colors; scarlet, white, and southwest blue.

Designed by Shachi Kale, a freelance graphic designer with MCC's Office of Institutional Advancement, the new thunderbird also has a hint of orange to create the idea of a bird rising out of fire.

"It's great to have a new look. Other schools' players are saying how unique it looks," said Mary Natsyn, an MCC women's basketball team member.

MCC students and fans have also responded favorably to the updated mascot uniform. The charismatic Thunderbird has been greeted with cheers and high-fives at numerous athletic events and campus activities.

*Special thanks to Todd Bolser, alumnus and MCC Athletics Sports Information Officer, for his contributions to this article.*

Mesa's mascot became the Thunderbird during the 1974-75 school year and has incorporated the same mascot ever since.

