

# the VIKING

**MERCER**<sup>TM</sup>  
County Community College

SUMMER  
2013

A Publication for Alumni and Friends of Mercer County Community College

**Mercer County  
Community College  
and Rutgers Sign  
Bachelor's Degree  
Agreement**

## Graduation, Honors Highlights

Details on pages 4-7

**Fashion Design Students  
Present "Trenton Makes"  
Runway Show**

***The College VOICE*  
Earns First Place**

**Taylor Pickett-Stokes**  
A.F.A., Theatre

**Treasured Prof. Mel Leipzig**  
Retires After 45 Years



# Faculty Focus

## Medical Lab Tech Professor Named Educator of the Year

Associate Professor **Jane O'Reilly**, coordinator of Medical Laboratory Technology, was selected as the 2013 "Educator of the Year" by American Society of Clinical Laboratory Science - New Jersey Chapter.



## Digital Media Professor Goes to MIT

Professor **Sarah Sweeney**, coordinator of the Digital Media Arts program, presented a paper on the development of an iPhone application called "The Forgetting Machine" at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology during the MIT8 Media in Transition Conference in May.



## Studying Poverty in Ireland

Associate Professor of History **Padhraig Higgins** spent Fall 2012 at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, building on research he conducted for his book, "A Nation of Politicians: Gender, Patriotism, and Political Culture in Late Eighteenth Century Ireland." His new work focuses on social policies related to poverty in 18th century Dublin.



## Television Faculty Member Presents at Rutgers, FDU

Television faculty member **Steve Voorhees** presented a paper entitled "Super Bowl Advertising and Gender Roles in the 21st Century" at the N.J. Communication Association annual conference held at Fairleigh Dickinson University in April. He also spoke at Rutgers University on "Double Bind Theory and Media Framing of Cultural and Political Leaders."



## Online Biology Lab Course Is Topic at National Conference

Biology Professor **Ellen Genovesi**, below, and MercerOnline's **Rodney Hargis**, right, described the development of their comprehensive biology lab class – totally online – at the League of Innovation in Community College's national convention, held in Dallas, TX, in March.



## Organizational Lessons From Hanoi Hilton

**Peter Fretwell**, manager of WWFM, published a book in May documenting subsequent successes of POWs from the Vietnam War. "Lessons From the Hanoi Hilton: Six Characteristics of High-Performance Teams" was co-written with Taylor Baldwin Kiland.



## A Focus on At-Risk Students

Psychology Professor **Heather Jennings** has conducted research to identify predictors of academic success for at-risk community college students. She presented her results at the Tri-State Best Practices Conference in April.



## Professor Speaks on Art and Cold War

Visual Arts Professor **Yevgeniy Fiks** traveled to the University of Kentucky to present a lecture entitled "Magnitogorsk Tour of the National Gallery of Art." Professor Fiks also spent time critiquing the works of students pursuing their MFAs.





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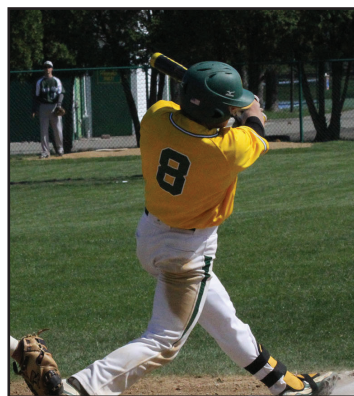
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**THE VIKING**, a semi-annual publication for alumni and friends of MCCC, is published by the Marketing and Public Relations offices. Send story suggestions to [gardnerj@mccc.edu](mailto:gardnerj@mccc.edu).

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#### Mercer County Community College

West Windsor Campus	Trenton Campus
1200 Old Trenton Road	102 North Broad Street
West Windsor, NJ 08690	Trenton, NJ 08608

### Upcoming Events

**September 11:** Ceremony, 11 a.m.

**October 1:** MCCC Golf Classic, 11:30 a.m.

**November 14:** Board of Trustees Open House, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.



# GRADUATION and HONORS

## Grads Encouraged to Embrace Challenges at 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Commencement

"We are counting on you," said N.J. Higher Education Secretary Rochelle Hendricks, keynote speaker for MCCC's 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Commencement, held in the West Windsor Campus gym on May 23. Moved indoors due to inclement weather for the first time in more than a decade, the ceremony proceeded on schedule, with close to 1,100 students earning associate degrees and certificates.

Following opening remarks by MCCC's Board Chair, Dr. Gwendolyn Harris, President Patricia C. Donohue welcomed graduates and their families. "Today we recognize that Commencement is a beginning, and we know that Mercer empowers our graduates to seek new beginnings and direction for their lives," she said.

Dr. Donohue commended the volunteer spirit of the Class of 2013. Students raised \$5,000 for recipients including HomeFront, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, and hosted food drives for United Way and the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen. The women's cross country team closed out the year by hosting a 5K run/walk to benefit the victims of the Boston Marathon bombings.

Keynote speaker Hendricks noted that Mercer was a special place for students to accomplish their goals. "Here, individuals with the desire to grow, to enhance their careers, or start new careers have the opportunity for education. You have been prepared for leadership, which is as important as career readiness."



**Rochelle Hendricks**

She advised students to dream big. "Imagine greatness for yourselves and your community. The world needs your talent, your time and your resources. Just as you have had role models, be a role model for others. We are counting on you to be the difference we all need to see in the world."

This year's Distinguished Teaching Award recipient was



Ornamental Horticulture Program Coordinator Amy Ricco. (See story on next page.)

The student speaker was Honors grad Chynna Taylor, who said Mercer was her best choice financially, but proved to be her best choice for many reasons she could not have anticipated.

***You have been prepared for leadership, which is as important as career readiness.***

**-- Rochelle Hendricks  
N.J. Secretary for  
Higher Education**



**Funeral Service grads**

"I thought I would go to class, take the tests, and that would be that," she recalled. What Taylor found instead was "a serious and challenging institution that pushes students to their limits."

Encouraged by her professors, she began to take Honors classes. She then joined the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society and got involved in extracurricular activities including a peer mentoring program.

She urged fellow students to meet challenges head on, as she learned to do at Mercer. "I became more than a passive listener. I learned to value the community I found."

Taylor, a Biology major, plans to pursue her bachelor's degree, with a goal to be a wildlife biologist.





## Horticulture Coordinator Amy Ricco Is 2013 Distinguished Teacher



**Distinguished Teacher Amy Ricco**

When Associate Professor Amy Ricco got the phone call that she had been hired to teach horticulture at Mercer back in 1998, she recalls it as being a pivotal moment in her life.

"My dream job ended

up being my first job out of college," said this year's proud recipient of the MCCC Distinguished Teaching Award. Introducing Ricco at Commencement ceremonies on May 23, MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue read

comments submitted by the students and colleagues who nominated her. They described her as "passionate, very involved with the college and loved by students" and "student centered and very dedicated to student success."

Ricco began her college education by earning her associate degree in Horticulture Production from the State University of New York at Morrisville in 1995. She continued for her bachelor's degree in Plant Science from Cornell University and then decided she wanted to combine her passion for all things green with a teaching career. She stayed on at Cornell, earning her Master's in Arts and Teach-

ing, with a major in Agriculture Education, in 1998.

Addressing the enthusiastic crowd at Commencement, Ricco described her strong connection to the community college system. "I wanted to teach at a community college because I knew first-hand all of the wonderful opportunities they offer their students," she said.

She concluded her comments by thanking her students. "Because of you, this isn't just a job – it is a career that I love. Watching you succeed makes all of the hard work and sacrifice worth it. I encourage you to not be afraid of all the challenges life will throw your way in your pursuit of finding a career that you love," Ricco said.

## High Achievers Recognized at Honors Convocation



**Jonghyun Phoenix, center, with, from left, Vice President for Academic Affairs Guy Generals, Business Professor Laura Sosa, Business Dean Winston Maddox and President Patricia C. Donohue.**

The college recognized its top graduates at the Annual Honors Convocation that preceded Commencement on May 23. More than 100 students received academic awards and scholarships, presented by MCCC faculty and administrators in full regalia before a capacity crowd of family and friends at Kelsey Theatre.

Mercer's 2012 Distinguished Teaching awardee, Associate Professor of Communication Kathi Paluscio presided over the ceremony. She applauded this special group of students. "You tend to try harder. You are more generous with your time. You make personal sacrifices to be successful and you have this thing that makes you do more."

Paluscio encouraged the graduates to nurture that drive. "That is most important in getting you where you want to go," she said.

Some of the college's highest achievers received multiple awards. Biology/Chemistry Honors graduate Rebekah Dietrich received three awards: the MCCC Faculty Association Scholarship in memory of Prof. Emeritus David E. Collier, the Dowd/Fessler Memorial Scholarship in Biology, and the Excellence in Organic Chemistry Award. Her

goal is to be a pediatrician.

Another high achiever was Business Administration major Jonghyun Phoenix. Phoenix earned the Excellence in Mathematics Award, a Business Administration Outstanding Achievement Award, and an Albert B. Kahn Foundation Scholarship. She will attend The College of New Jersey in the fall, where she will study Finance and Actuarial Science, with a goal to become an actuary.

Also recognized were 18 Honors Program graduates, 15 members of Alpha Theta Gamma, MCCC's chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, 15 NJ STARS graduates, 23 new members of the Alpha Mu Gamma National Collegiate Foreign Language Society, and 21 students who were selected for Who's Who Among Students in American Junior Colleges.



**Graduate Alfonso Rosado accepts a scholarship to William Paterson University at Mercer from WPU Interim Provost Stephen Hahn. Also pictured is MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue.**



**Eighteen Mercer Honors Program grads were recognized, the largest Honors group since the program's inception in 2007.**



# GRADUATION and HONORS

## Trenton Campus Celebrates 25 Years of Academic Success

Hundreds gathered at the Trenton War Memorial on May 7 for the Trenton Campus' Annual Celebration of Academic Achievement. This year marked the event's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

"Tonight we celebrate the college's 25 years in Trenton committed to education, and the students at this campus who have worked so hard and deserve our praise," Trenton Dean and Provost Monica Weaver said. Over the years the campus has awarded more than 2,000 associate degrees and 10,000 General Education Development (GED) certificates.

Front and center were the 175 graduates who continue in the tradition of striving and achieving – even in the face of considerable challenges. This year's class included 55 associate degree students, 20 Career Training Institute students, and 15 English Language Institute students. Eighty students earned their GEDs, including 20 from HomeFront. Twenty-five percent of GED

recipients are expected to enroll for their associate degree.

Sabrina Wright, who earned her A.A.S. in Culinary Arts, spoke on behalf of the associate degree candidates. An adult student who returned to college in 2011, she recalled the difficulty of juggling work and classes – without a computer or car. "Mercer helped me achieve my goals in so many ways," said Wright, who is now employed at Za's, a popular Pennington restaurant. "I am happy with the career path I've chosen."

GED student George Thomas was emotional as he spoke about Mercer. "My teachers had faith in me when

*"My teachers  
had faith in me  
when I didn't have  
faith in myself."*

-- GED Graduate  
George Thomas



**From left: Foundation Board member Robert Humes, GED scholarship recipients Carlos Jones and George Thomas, and Board of Trustees Chair Gwendolyn Harris.**

I didn't have faith in myself," he said. "Now I have my GED, but I'm not done yet," he said, adding that he has already enrolled in credit classes in pursuit of his associate degree.

Dr. Gwendolyn Harris, chair of the college's Board of Trustees, offered her own praise to students. "You represent what we want for this community as a whole. Continue learning throughout your life and show that it can be done," she said.

The evening's keynote

speaker was Maurice Coleman, a Trenton Central High School graduate and senior vice president for Bank of America, where he manages the company's investments in affordable housing.

Three MCCC faculty members were also recognized for going above and beyond to help students: Counselor Specialist Linda Ertingu, English faculty member Dr. Donna Richardson-Hall, and Trenton Campus Learning Center Coordinator Joanna Mia.

## Nursing Grads Recall Journey at Pinning Ceremony



**Nursing Valedictorian Tetyana Nalivayko and Dr. Linda Martin, dean of Science and Health Professions.**

Thirty-five men and women from Mercer's Nursing program gathered at Kelsey Theatre on May 21 to receive their nursing pins in a ceremony that marked their graduation milestone and the beginning of a new career. May's graduates bring the total number to 84 for 2012-13.

"Nurses light the path of peoples' lives. As you receive your hard-earned pin tonight, I wish you all the good that life can bring you for the future," said Dr. Diane Campbell, executive dean of Student Affairs.

Presiding over the cere-

mony was Dr. Linda Martin, dean of Science and Health Professions, who offered words of encouragement and praise. "I have to tell you that you all look different from the first time I saw you: you're smiling," she joked.

Martin also gave special thanks to Nursing faculty and staff. "None of us would be here tonight without your hard work and dedication," she said.

Class valedictorian Tetyana Nalivayko recalled the nervousness she and her classmates shared at their Nursing orientation. "We didn't know how we were go-



**Happy Nursing graduates gather after the ceremony.**

ing to pull through, as many of us had jobs, families and children."

Nalivayko, who had the class's highest GPA, congratulated her classmates for their accomplishments. "Let us give ourselves a pat on the back for how far we've come."



## MCCC Students Honored at Statewide PTK Event

Melody Hicks and Anderson Monken represented MCCC at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Day celebration, hosted by the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) May 2 at the Trenton Marriott.

Each year the NJCCC event recognizes the state's top 40 community college students as members of the New Jersey All-State Academic Team. The event is sponsored by PTK, the international honor society for community colleges, the Coca-Cola Foundation, and the New Jersey Education Association.

Monken, a Liberal Arts major and president of the MCCC Student Government Association (SGA), was also the New Jersey recipient of a \$2,000 New Century scholarship from the Coca-Cola Foundation. As New Jersey's top community college student, Monken was invited to address the group.

"Community college represents a crossroads for anyone who decides to enter our doors," Monken told the packed ballroom. "For each student, community college



**MCCC's Phi Theta Kappa advisor Jing Huang (left) and President Patricia C. Donohue (right) with students Melody Hicks and Anderson Monken at the NJCCC's PTK Day.**

can be a way out, a way in, and a path to the future."

Monken said that his leadership experiences helped him attain his personal goals at Mercer.

"Success is not just an arbitrary piece of paper handed to you at graduation. Success represents the sum total of the connections you have made and the lessons you have

learned. The journey, in fact, can be more rewarding than the destination. I know my time at Mercer has been unforgettable," he said.

Monken, who earned a 4.0 GPA, received a full scholarship to attend Vanderbilt University in the fall.

Hicks graduated from Mercer in December with a 4.0 GPA, earning her as-

sociate degree in Business Administration. She is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in Accounting at The College of New Jersey. An NJ STARS scholar, Hicks served as treasurer of Mercer's PTK chapter and as SGA treasurer. A member of Future Business Leaders of America, Hicks placed third in a statewide microeconomics competition in 2012 and competed at the organization's national leadership conference. She also won the National Westminster Bank Scholarship for Business Administration.

Hicks said she enjoyed her time at Mercer, and credits her extracurricular and classroom experiences in helping her make a smooth transition to a four-year college.

"I loved being at Mercer. Classes were small, and the teachers really seemed to care," she said. "You can accomplish great things if you put your mind to it and have great people behind you." Hicks has been selected to serve as alumna trustee for the coming year.

***"Community college can be a way out, a way in, and a path to the future."***

**-- New Century Scholar Anderson Monken**

## For Youth College Grads, Journey Has Just Begun

Mercer recognized the accomplishments of Trenton middle and high school students who spent the past year preparing for successful futures through MCCC's Youth College programs.

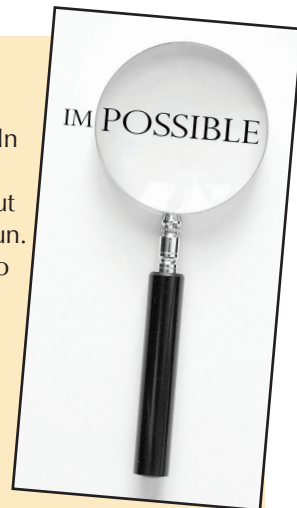
In a May 4 ceremony at Kelsey Theatre, students and families heard words of praise from program coordinators and inspirational advice from community leaders, especially for graduating seniors – many of whom have been participating in Youth College since middle school.

Offered through the college's Trenton Campus under the direction of Donald Davis, Youth College programs include SMILE/GEAR UP, Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search and Urban Academic Academy. Programs begin as early as sixth grade and continue through high school. Services include after-school tutoring, summer programs, field trips, academic counseling and SAT prep.

The keynote speaker was Rev. Toby Sanders, a pastor and

teacher at Beloved Community in Trenton. In his remarks, Dr. Sanders congratulated students for their noteworthy achievements, but also observed that the journey has just begun.

College scholarships were awarded to many of the 75 graduating seniors in recognition of academic excellence. Among the schools they will attend in the fall are Bloomfield College, Haverford College, Montclair State, New Jersey City University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Princeton University, Rider University, Rowan University, Rutgers University, Stockton College, The College of New Jersey, University of Pennsylvania, and William Paterson University. More than 20 will begin their college careers at MCCC.



## VOICE Newspaper Wins 18 Journalism Awards

Students have once again put Mercer on the map in journalistic circles. *The College VOICE* newspaper won multiple awards this spring.

In this year's New Jersey Collegiate Press Association (NJCPA) competition, students won 13 awards in the two-year college category, including the highest honor: first place for General Excellence.

Awards included first place for News Writing, Personality Profile, Editorial Writing, Column Writing, Sports Writing, Investigative Reporting, and Sports Photography, and second place for Feature Writing.

Nine of the 13 NJCPA awardees are MCCC Honors students who took Honors

Journalism II, offered for the first time in Fall 2012. Eight recipients are New Media majors. (See article below.)

Mercer students also earned five awards in the Society of Professional Journalists Region I Mark of Excellence competition, which includes students in two- and four-year colleges in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. Awards included first place for General News Photography; second place for Column Writing and for In-Depth Reporting; and third place for Editorial Writing.

In March, the *VOICE*'s faculty advisors, Professors Holly Johnson and Michael Dalton, took *VOICE* students to the annual College Media Association (CMA) conference



**College VOICE staffers (from left): Dakota Burr, Dan Asnis, Dan Povia, Zac Santanello, Mariana Braz, Stephen Harrison, Britt Curry, Brandon Castro, Emily Lukasewycz, Abigail Schwendeman, Dylan Vaughan, Jaqueline Goncalves and Anna Pinzolo.**

in New York City, which draws more than 1,900 college journalism students, faculty and media professionals.

At the conference, Mercer students presented a

double-session workshop on investigative reporting. The *VOICE*'s former editor-in-chief, Laura Pollack, received the CMA Finalist Award for "Best Newsroom Leader."

## New Media: The Brave New Face of Journalism

While most professors start off their class by asking students to put away their cell phones, in MCCC's New Media classes, you are just as likely to hear: "Take out your cell phones, laptops or tablets, and log on to Facebook."

According to Professor Holly Johnson, New Media is journalism in its most modern form. "It's cutting edge and it's here at Mercer," said Johnson, a professor of English and Journalism, who created the program with Photography Professor Michael Dalton. The two say they routinely hear from four-year schools interested in developing similar programs.

MCCC's New Media program teaches the best practices of traditional journalism – reporting skills and journalistic ethics – alongside communications skills for the current age: marketing, graphic design, television production, and the explosion of communication through social media. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs are covered in a course entitled Multimedia Technologies.

Johnson observed, "While old school journalism may be dead, New Media is rapidly expanding."

The program's capstone course is Convergence Newsroom, in which students complete all elements of online and print news, including writing journalistic articles, taking photographs, making and editing video footage, designing infographics, learning the fundamentals of marketing, and preparing all content for both online and print formats. As part of the course, students are required to contribute to *The College VOICE* student newspaper, as they do for the two introductory levels of journalism that precede it.

**New Media students Dylan Vaughan, left, and Stephen Harrison.**



"Writing for the student newspaper builds students' stamina as reporters and also helps them compile a portfolio of polished material needed to secure internships and jobs," said Johnson, advisor for *The VOICE* with Dalton.

Enrollment in New Media has increased steadily since its first semester in Fall 2011. "Many students write for the paper and then decide on New Media as their major," Dalton said. More than 40 students are currently enrolled.

Dalton said the faculty emphasizes the embrace of emerging trends. "We teach students to be proactive and teach themselves," Dalton explained, noting the wealth of free downloadable training software available on the Internet.

Dalton and Johnson say the biggest motivation for starting the program was jobs. "What used to be several discrete fields – public relations, journalism, broadcast, videography and graphic design – are now combined into one. We saw the trend and wanted to get out ahead of the curve, especially since our students are located at the edge of the biggest media market in the country," Johnson said.

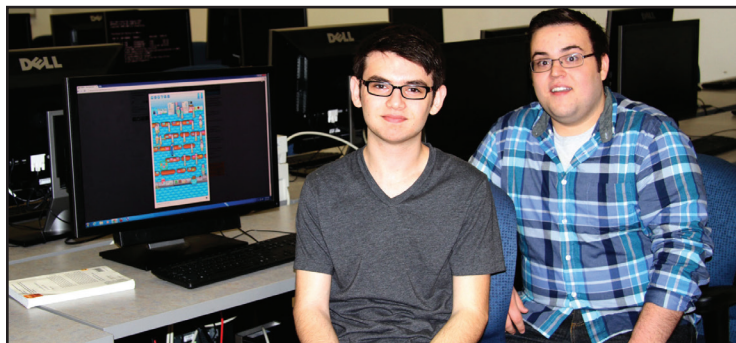


## Game Design Students Turn Assignment into Business Endeavor

After working together on a project for one of their Game Design classes, MCCC students Matt Guido and John-Paul Yunque have taken their game, Lunch War, and independently published it through their newly-founded company, The Automatic Gentlemen, LLC.

The two met in their Game Theory and Culture class at Mercer, taught by Digital Media Arts instructor Ric Giantisco. They teamed up to work on the final project for the class, and decided they should take their game the extra mile. The result is the fully mobile game Lunch War.

In the game, the player is a high school lunch lady, whose job is to keep the unhealthy fudge pops from an army of hungry nerds, bullies, jocks and teachers. She does



**Matt Guido and John-Paul Yunque, creators of Lunch War.**

this by pummeling them with a supply of apples, using her slushie machine to give students temporary “brain freeze,” and calling on a janitor for back-up.

“It’s an arcade game with a weird twist,” Yunque said. “We just thought, ‘What if the game player is a lunch lady throwing food at kids?’ It was such a funny idea we decided to go with it.”

After the class assignment was completed, Guido and Yunque continued with the project on their own time. “We came up with the idea of making it a mobile game application we could sell,” Guido said.

Since then, the two have created a website and continued improving the game’s design. They also attended three game conventions where they showcased their work.

“We got so much feedback we were able to rebuild it in time for our launch this summer,” Yunque said. They plan to offer their app for \$1 through Apple and Android App Stores.

After becoming an official LLC last year, the two say they are in it for the long haul. “We have a lot of ideas that we want to work on,” Guido said.

Guido, who has an IT internship at Purdue Pharma, L.P. this summer, will continue at Mercer this fall, with plans to earn his degree in Game Design. Yunque will be transferring to Drexel University for a degree in Interactive Digital Media. They are currently focusing on marketing Lunch War.

For more information on the students and Lunch War, visit their website at [theautomaticgentlemen.com](http://theautomaticgentlemen.com).

## IT Student Places Eighth in First Statewide Cybersecurity Challenge

Information Systems student Thomas Herrell placed eighth in the inaugural N.J. Governor’s Cyber Corps Challenge, held at Brookdale Community College in March.

The event was hosted by the Governor’s office in partnership with the cybersecurity consultancy and education company, SANS (SysAdmin, Audit, Network, Security). Its goal was to give New Jersey students and job seekers the opportunity to compete in Internet challenges and identify the state’s best young talent in cybersecurity and, ultimately, place them in high-level security jobs.

Herrell decided to participate in the challenge with encouragement from MCCC faculty member Chris Pecci, who teaches Network Security

*“Companies are now racing to fill cybersecurity positions.”*

**-- MCCC Faculty Member Chris Pecci**

Design. “I like cybersecurity because it involves many different fields in computing and makes you use many abilities,” Herrell said.

The first phase of the challenge was a Cyber Aces Foundation online competition for 600 registrants, which consisted of three modules and associated quizzes. The top 15 percent then competed in an all-day challenge, created by NetWars, the system used by the U.S. Military, government agencies and commercial companies to evaluate and train their employees.

As one of the top ten fi-

nals, Herrell will enroll in the N.J. CyberCenter at Brookdale, where he will be immersed in an intensive cybersecurity curriculum comprised of college courses and SANS Institute training.

According to Pecci, when he started teaching about cybersecurity four years ago it was barely on the radar of the media, and corporate awareness of cyber threats was still evolving.

“With recurring high profile breaches of personal data, companies are now racing to fill cybersecurity positions and are finding a shortage of quali-



**Thomas Herrell competes at Brookdale.**

(Photo courtesy of Cyber Aces)

fied professionals,” Pecci said.

Said MCCC’s IT Program Coordinator Jeff Weichert, “The need for highly skilled network administrators is expected to grow, and Mercer is well positioned to train our students in all facets of cybersecurity defense.”



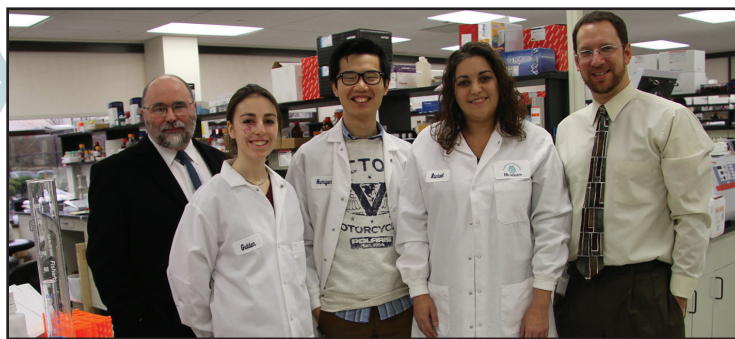
## Students Learn Real World Lab Skills at Genesis Biotechnology Group

A solid internship in the sophomore year of college can make a huge difference in the life of a budding scientist. During their winter break, five MCCC students studying biology and chemistry had an opportunity to learn about the real world of sophisticated lab research at Genesis Biotechnology Group (GBG) at the company's state-of-the-art Hamilton facilities.

According to Dr. Martin Adelson, GBG's Chief Operating Officer, the company has a history of providing internship opportunities to students – from high schoolers up through doctoral students – but this was the first time they have partnered with a community college.

Dr. Grant Gallagher, HUMIGEN's Managing Director, observed, "The Mercer interns were more comfortable in the lab than some of our third- and fourth-year college interns, who have not had the hands-on lab courses offered at Mercer. These students have been very good ambassadors for future MCCC students."

Two students, Yifan Zhao and Sarah Patterson, worked in the genetics labs at HUMIGEN, one of several GBG companies. Zhao worked with researcher Rachael Siegel, Ph.D., on mouse models as part of an ongoing investigation to find novel therapeutic targets in the treatment of allergic asthma. Patterson participated in a project with Raymond Yu, Ph.D., that focuses on blocking



*From left, HUMIGEN's Managing Director Grant Gallagher, Ph.D., MCCC interns Sarah Patterson and Yifan Zhao, research advisor Rachael Siegel, Ph.D., and Dr. Martin Adelson, Chief Operating Officer for the Genesis Biotechnology Group.*

receptors that play a role in human autoimmune diseases.

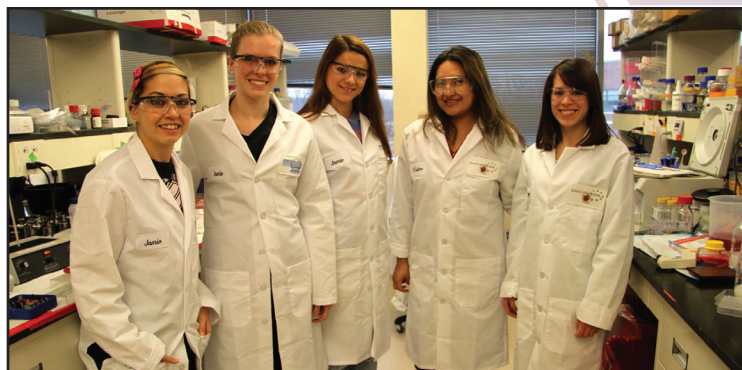
Patterson notes that she took to the work quickly. "On the first day, Dr. Yu showed me, on the second day we did it together, and on the third day I was doing it on my own."

Students Yulia Tsebriy, Nicole Sullivan and Fabiola Pincay worked at another GBG company, VENENUM. Tsebriy and Sullivan carried out basic molecular and biochemical methodologies with research advisor Jamie Francisco, who is working on new therapies to treat atherosclerosis. Pincay worked with researcher Amy Werda on a project that investigates the roles of tumor suppressors and oncogenes (genes that have the potential to cause cancers), with the goal of making diagnoses and treatments more specific. Pincay also examined a variety of serum samples of major cancers, looking for certain types of biomarkers.

Tsebriy was fascinated by the whole process. "In the textbook, it looks so easy. Now I understand how difficult it is. There is real detective work involved," she said.

"In school everything goes back to the grade. Here it's all about the science...and sometimes it's like magic," Werda said.

The students presented summaries of their work during an Honors science presentation in February.



*From left, VENENUM research advisor Jamie Francisco, interns Nicole Sullivan, Yulia Tsebriy and Fabiola Pincay, and research advisor Amy Werda.*

## MCCC Theatre Students Take on "Colored Museum"



*Six MCCC Theatre students assumed multiple roles as they embraced 150 years of African American history in the unflinching, fast-paced George C. Wolfe play, "The Colored Museum," presented at the Trenton Campus in May. The actors tackled themes of racism, oppression, and stereotypes, while pondering the legacy of these issues. Pictured in the full cast photo are, from left, Taylor Pickett-Stokes, DeHaven Rogers, Wellington Talkpa, Domonique Jarret, Amariss White and Gertrude Michel (front).*



*Gertrude Michel*



## Students Dazzle at “Trenton Makes” Fashion Show

Bold, colorful, fanciful and sophisticated designs were all on display as four MCCC Fashion Design students unveiled their work in the program’s inaugural runway show, “Trenton Makes,” on May 4 at the Trenton Campus.

“I am so proud of these students,” said Program Coordinator Allegra Ceci, modeling a purple jacket designed by student Pina Succi. “They dreamed these clothes, these fabrics and these looks. Today, you will see a bonafide fashion show!”

Designers included Ryan Ramoo, Shannon Rayniece, Tashanique Purnell and Succi. Fourteen models took to the runway, including five MCCC staff members who had clothes custom designed for them.

MCCC alumni Tammy Duffy and Ray Brown, both of whom are professional fashion designers, were seated at the end of the runway, along with Lori Ann Diaz, a regional manager for Gap Inc. The three offered critiques to the students after their lines were shown, commenting on the creative use of colors and fabrics, the boldness and sophistication of some of the looks,



*The grand finale included a return to the runway by all the models and designers.*



*Fashion professionals who critiqued students’ work included, from left, the Gap’s Lori Ann Diaz and fashion designers Ray Brown and Tammy Duffy.*

and the obvious sense of playfulness in other fashions.

In addition to her runway feedback, Diaz presented

scholarships to five students as part of the Gap’s commitment to the “Skills for America’s Future” initiative: Melissa Chell, Christina Guillaume, Alysha Mooring, Pina Succi (not present) and Ambreen Zaidi.

At the event’s conclusion, MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue congratulated one and all. “Today we saw a different side of learning and student success at Mercer. This is a memorable day for our Fashion Design program,” she said. She thanked all involved, including adjunct professors who come from the fashion industry and bring the real world of fashion to the class-

room. She also thanked the many people who donated their time to the event, especially the judges.

Mercer’s Fashion Design program offers two A.A.S. degree options: Fashion/Apparel Design and Fashion Merchandising. The programs prepare students for entry-level jobs and for transfer to four-year fashion design and merchandising schools.



*Five fashion students received scholarships from Gap Inc. Pictured are, from left, Ambreen Zaidi, Christina Guillaume, Alysha Mooring, Melissa Chell, Fashion Program Coordinator Allegra Ceci and Gap Regional Manager Lori Ann Diaz. (Not pictured: scholarship recipient Pina Succi.)*



*Designer and model Tashanique Purnell*

More photos on Facebook





# UNIVERSITY CENTER and TRANSFER

## MCCC, Rutgers Sign Agreement for Bachelor's Degrees on Campus



**MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue signs an agreement with Rutgers Interim Vice President for Continuing Studies Richard Novak (seated). Looking on are, from left, New Jersey State Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo, Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes and Mercer County Freeholder Pat Colavita.**

In May, MCCC signed an agreement with Rutgers University that will provide opportunities for students with associate degrees to earn their bachelor's degrees from Rutgers on the West Windsor

Campus.

"Today, we bring together two institutions of higher learning with very different histories, but dedicated to a common goal: making a college education more acces-

sible," said MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue.

Under the agreement, Rutgers University will offer bachelor's degree programs in three majors: Labor and Employment Relations, Political Science, and RN to BSN in Nursing. Courses will be offered on campus, online, and in a hybrid blend of on-site and online formats. Classes will be held in the evenings, making it more convenient to accommodate the schedules of non-traditional students.

"Rutgers is pleased to be working with MCCC to enable their graduates and others in the surrounding region to attain their higher education goals," said Richard Novak, Rutgers interim vice president for continuing studies. "Rutgers' Off Campus Programs at Mer-

cer will give students more flexibility to balance family and work obligations while staying closer to home."

Admission to Rutgers requires an associate degree or 60 credits from an accredited community college or four-year institution. Students enrolled in off-campus programs are Rutgers students, and have access to all university services, such as libraries.

The partnership with Rutgers is the fourth for Mercer's University Center, which currently hosts programs with William Paterson University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, and Felician College.



## MCCC Signs Agreement with Rider for Global Supply Chain Program

On April 10, MCCC and Rider University signed a dual admission agreement to enhance opportunities for students studying business. MCCC's Business Administration program and Rider's major in Global Supply Chain Management within the Business Administration major will be offered as a dual admission program.

"This is a rapidly growing field. We are excited to add this transfer program to our other partnerships with Rider," MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue said. "Rider means a great deal to our students, and we know a lot of them are already headed there. This agreement is likely to boost those numbers."

Rider President Mordechai Rozanski noted the university's strong ties to Mercer. "We are building on a longstanding relationship with what we think is the best community college around," Rozanski said. "One-quarter of our transfer students come from Mercer and they are well prepared."

The agreement grants full junior class admission to Rider for Mercer students who have declared their participation in the program before accruing 30 credit hours at MCCC, have completed all courses in the prescribed program curriculum, have earned their associate degree in Business Administration, and have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5.



**Rider President Mordechai Rozanski and MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue sign the agreement. Also pictured are administrators and staff from both schools.**

Rider's Global Supply Chain Management major is an interdisciplinary program jointly taught by professors in Computer Information Systems and Supply Chain, Marketing, International Business and Management Science.



## MCCC and William Paterson University Honor Bachelor's Grads



**Sasha Saco, who graduated from MCCC in 2010, is now a proud WPU grad. In the background are, from left, WPU President Kathleen Waldron, MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue and WPU Senior Vice President Edward Weil.**

Forty-four MCCC alumni who have earned their bachelor's degrees through the William Paterson University (WPU) at Mercer program this year were the stars of a graduation reception May 3. The event, hosted by William Paterson at the MCCC Conference Center, celebrated students' hard work and perseverance and the start of the next phase of their lives.

"This is the third time I have congratulated you," said MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue, noting that she welcomed them as new students at Mercer and saluted them as Mercer graduates.

Since the WPU at Mercer program began in 2009, a total of 79 MCCC grads have earned

their WPU degrees on the West Windsor Campus in majors including Management, Early Childhood Education/Elementary Education, Liberal Studies, and Psychology. Currently, 180 students are enrolled.

"This is a model program throughout the state," said Dr. Guy Generals, Mercer's vice president for academic affairs and a WPU alumnus. "William Paterson is very much a part of the Mercer family."

According to WPU's Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Edward Weil, Ph.D., MCCC graduates are excelling in WPU's programs at Mercer. "Most are highly motivated to complete their bachelor's degrees. It's a great partnership for us all."

### Two WPU at Mercer Grads Already at Work in Teaching Field

Two proud WPU graduates who attended the May 3 ceremony were Education majors and MCCC alumni Eric Stewart (A.A., Education '10) and Dana Skillman (A.A., Education '10). Both landed jobs in their field following graduation in December.

Stewart enrolled at Mercer in 2007, choosing his local community college for its solid reputation, proximity to home, and affordable tuition. He says he had similar reasons for choosing WPU at Mercer, where he double majored in Education and Liberal Studies, with concentrations in English and History.

"Plus I had familiarity with the MCCC campus. I was moving on with many of my peers," he observed. He notes that WPU's discounted tuition rates for MCCC students made the remaining cost of his undergraduate education reasonable, enabling him to focus his time on learning and on extracurricular activities like the Future Teachers Club, where he served as vice president.

In his final semester in the fall, Stewart was a student

teacher at Beverly City School in Beverly, NJ, a pre-K to 8th grade school. He was offered a job there as a paraprofessional following graduation, working one-on-one with a student and assisting the teacher.

Skillman says that WPU was the answer she was looking for. "The cost was right and the location was right. I still felt part of the WPU family even though I was not on the main campus."

Skillman earned dual certifications in Early Childhood/Elementary Education, with a second major in Psychology. She says she was well prepared for her job as a lead teacher at the Goddard School, a pre-school with several locations in central New Jersey.



**MCCC alumni Dana Skillman and Eric Stewart are pictured at the WPU at Mercer graduation reception.**

## Game Design Students to Benefit from Bloomfield College Agreement

MCCC has enhanced the transfer process for its Game Design students through a new articulation agreement with Bloomfield College, located in northern New Jersey 15 miles from New York City.

MCCC students who complete their A.A.S. degree in Game Design and meet the agreement's requirements can expect a seamless transfer to Bloomfield to earn their Bachelor's degree.

of Arts in Creative Arts and Technology/Game Development Concentration/Game Design Track. MCCC graduates will be able to complete the Bloomfield program with as few as 32 additional credits.

For acceptance at Bloomfield, MCCC students are required to graduate with a GPA of 2.3 or higher, submit an essay describing their creative work and aspirations, provide

a portfolio, and meet with the discipline coordinator at Bloomfield.

MCCC began offering Game Design and Game Programming in 2009. According to MCCC faculty member Richard Giantisco, who coordinates both programs, currently there are more than 70 students studying in these two disciplines.

"We are pleased to be able to offer such an attractive

transfer option, especially given Bloomfield's proximity to New York," Giantisco said. He notes that other program graduates have transferred to Drexel University.

MCCC's Game Design program prepares students for careers as software engineers, artificial intelligence programmers, graphics engineers, physics programmers and user interface scripters.



# FOUNDATION and DONOR NEWS

## "Spring Into Student Success!" Raises Funds for Education

MCCC celebrated student success and welcomed spring-time on April 4 at Mercer Oaks. Joined by more than 225 friends and donors, the college hosted "Spring Into Student Success!," an event whose proceeds will provide scholarships and other critical financial support for students.

Acknowledging the many students who attended the event, MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue said, "You are why we are here tonight. Our goal is to ensure that you succeed by providing opportunities that prepare you for the future."

MCCC Board Chair Gwendolyn Harris reflected on exciting times at Mercer. "There are so many wonderful things happening at the college." She pointed to the recent expansion in Trenton and the refurbishing and addition of science labs, which will help more students get the education they need in promising career fields.

Co-chairing the event were Nina Melker, chair of the college's Foundation Board, and Mercer County Freeholder Pasquale Colavita Jr. Both expressed gratitude to the many guests who assembled in support of the college.

In a special presentation, Melker and Colavita presented awards to two community partners. Wolcott Blair accepted the Distinguished Benefactor Award for the Friends of Trenton-Mercer Airport's Sky's the Limit TTN Scholarship Fund, which has given generously to the college's Aviation students. He noted that the Sky's the Limit group, which is made up of tenants of the airport, has raised \$130,000 since the fund's inception in



**Honoring MCCC partners: from left, event co-chair Freeholder Pasquale "Pat" Colavita Jr., honoree Wolcott Blair, Chair of the Mercer County Board of Freeholders John A. Cimino, honoree Michele Siekerka, event co-chair Nina Melker and MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue.**



**County Executive Brian Hughes with MCCC students, seated from left, Dorothy Watkins-Meadows, Delores Nyerges and Terry Yuille; standing, Shantel Rogers, left, and Veronica Werner.**

2004. "We are committed to the college and to helping make Aviation students' success possible," Blair said.

Michele N. Siekerka, Esq., was the recipient of the Spirit of Education Award. Siekerka has been a long-time member of the MCCC Foundation and has also served in other educational organizations. She was a founding member of the Mercer County Bar As-

sociation's project to educate students about the impacts of bullying. Currently serving as an assistant commissioner at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, she is the former president and CEO of the Mercer Regional Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to student leaders from both campuses, five scholarship recipients attended with members of their families.

Carmen Gates, who earned her degree in Paralegal Studies in December, spoke on behalf of the recipients.

"I never thought that being laid off would be so rewarding," Gates said. A former sales/special events manager, Gates said she went on numerous interviews before deciding that she needed a college degree to be competitive in the job market.

"My Mercer experience was quite rewarding. The college and the professors were wonderful. My education has been a gateway to a better future," she said. In her final semester, Gates completed an internship with the Princeton-based law firm Buckley Theroux Kline & Petraske, LLC, and was offered a job there. She hopes to attend law school one day.

The evening included music by an MCCC jazz ensemble featuring Jesse Becker on guitar, Tom Litwin on bass and Chase Connolly on drums.

PNC Bank, PSE&G, and Roma Bank were major corporate sponsors of the event. Numerous other corporate and community donors included All Clean Building Service, Inc.; Borden Perlman Salisbury & Kelly; Jim Faridy; Hill Wallack, LLP; Hopewell Valley Community Bank; Anna Lustenberg; New Jersey Manufacturers Insurance Company; Phoenix Advisors, LLC; Princeton Management Development Institute, Inc.; Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton; Dr. and Mrs. Y.S. Sim; Spiegle Architectural Group, Inc.; Princeton Health-Care System; Roddenberry Associates; Saint Francis Medical Center; Thomas Edison State College; and Tuchman Group.



## College Remembers Professor Mary Hayes at Tribute Garden

More than 50 staff and faculty members, family members, and former students gathered for the official dedication of the Mary Hayes Tribute Garden on the college's West Windsor Campus on May 10. The garden, created in memory of the beloved professor who taught computer science and math at Mercer from 1980 to 2006, includes a gazebo, walkway, paving and numerous plantings, and was planned and installed by students in the MCCC Horticulture program over the past 18 months. It was made possible through a \$35,000 multi-year donation by Hayes' sister, Joan Silver.

At the ceremony, MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue recalled Professor Hayes as an inspiring and encouraging instructor. "She was well known as helpful and patient with her students and her colleagues. She remains an important member of the Mercer family." Dr. Donohue observed that a garden tribute is an especially fitting memorial for Hayes, who was a master gardener who "could coax things to bloom year-round."



**Mary Hayes' family received a framed remembrance of the event. From left are daughter Sharon, son-in-law Justin, sister Joan Silver, son David, and MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue.**

Ornamental Horticulture Program Coordinator Amy Ricco described the back story of the garden project and the valuable learning opportunity it afforded her students. She explained that students in Basic Landscaping and Planning II, under instructor Carrie Stanker, submitted the initial designs and Ms. Silver chose among the top three, pulling elements from two different designs for the final plan.

Students studying Landscape Construction, taught by Kevin Minton, took over from there last fall. Ricco noted that

their commitment to the project extended even beyond the end of the semester.

"They were finishing up the gazebo and paving in December – in the snow – the day after grades were due," Ricco said. They returned in April to do the planting.

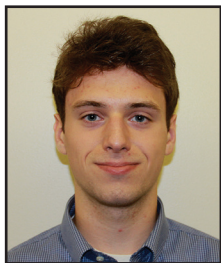
Ricco thanked alumnus Timothy Serinese '99 (A.S., Plant Science), of Timothy's Center for Gardening in Robbinsville, for welcoming students to the nursery, where he provided advice on paving materials and pricing, and furnished the materials at a

discount. Chris Avani and student Colin Pritchard from Shemin Nursery, located in Lawrenceville, helped with the selections of shrubs and flowering plants. Avani also taught the students how to install lighting in the garden, returning to campus at least three times.

Mathematics Professor Art Schwartz, a long-time colleague of Hayes, represented the faculty at the ceremony. "I knew Mary over 30 years from when she first came to the college. She taught a range of math and computer science courses. She taught responsibility and critical and analytic thinking. She changed the lives of many of her colleagues and thousands of students," he said.

Joan Silver acknowledged all those who helped bring the project to fruition. Noting that the project was uncharted territory as the first tribute garden on the campus, Silver said, "I thank the president, Pat Donohue, and all those who guided me through the process and represented the college so professionally."

## Mercer Math Major Receives R&D Council Merit Scholarship



**Michael McNulty**

The Research & Development Council of New Jersey (R&D Council) awarded a 2013 Merit Scholarship to MCCC student Michael McNulty on behalf of Montclair State University. McNulty is pursuing a degree in Mathematics and Physics with a goal to earn his Ph.D. and conduct research while teaching math.

In August, McNulty and 15 other recipients will visit an R&D Council member's research and development facility, where they will meet New Jersey-based researchers and innovators in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

## Mark Your Calendar for MCCC Golf Classic 2013

The date is set for the MCCC Athletics Department's 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Golf Classic on Tuesday, Oct. 1 at Mercer Oaks Golf Course in Princeton Junction, NJ. Proceeds will benefit Mercer's Student-Athlete Scholarship Fund. The tournament is held in memory of local physician Dr. Cynthia Schaffer, an MCCC Foundation board member who supported youth athletics.

Numerous sponsorship opportunities are available. For ticket and sponsorship information, contact Athletics Director John Simone at 609-570-3741 or email [simonej@mccc.edu](mailto:simonej@mccc.edu).



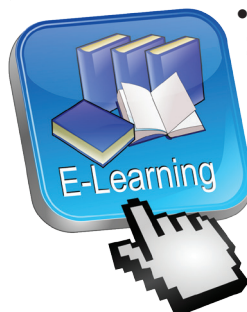


# FOUNDATION and DONOR NEWS

## Annual Campaign Projects to Enhance Learning, Student Support

Now in its fourth year, Mercer's Teaching and Learning Improvement Grant program is funded through the Annual Campaign and provides opportunities for faculty and staff to launch innovative initiatives to enhance learning experiences for students. Four grants were awarded in Spring 2013, with projects to commence this fall.

- Online Math Hybrid Materials: Materials will be created to provide students with online support when they are not in the campuses' math labs.
- Access Technology for the Trenton Campus: This project will help students access electronic information and learning resources.



- Student Science Center: Plans include drop-in tutoring, guided support, a library of books, biology software and websites, advisement for course selection, transfer and scholarship information, research and career advice.
- Expansion of Development Activities for Full- and Part-time Faculty: Teaching and learning events will be offered during the fall semester, especially in support of adjunct faculty. Another focus will be on creating an internal repository of online professional development resources.



### Agricola Community Eatery Donates to MCCC Culinary Program

*Agricola, a new community eatery in Princeton, is already making its philanthropic mark on the local community. On June 5, restaurateur Jim Nawn presented a \$3,000 donation for MCCC students studying the culinary arts. Students and instructor Frank Benowitz are pictured visiting the restaurant to accept the donation: back row, from left, Jim Nawn, Agricola Chef Josh Thomsen, MCCC Chef Benowitz and students Pam Ballard and Ray Montero; front row, from left, students Michael Rabenowitz and Akino Tomizawa.*

### Accountants Association Presents Check

*The N.J. Association of Public Accountants (NJAPA) presented MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue with a \$1,420 check for a student scholarship fund. From left are Norma L. Poles, past NJAPA president; John Duffy, NJAPA Mercer Chapter president; Dr. Patricia Donohue; Charles B. Robinson, NJAPA vice president; and Frank DiBella, MCCC Conference Center general manager. The association provides annual scholarships to colleges throughout New Jersey. This fall the Conference Center at Mercer will host the organization's first ever statewide webcast tax conference.*



### Join the MCCC Legacy Society

We gratefully acknowledge those who have contributed to the MCCC Foundation through a trust or will, or have notified us of their intentions to do so in the future.

Let us know your plans so that we can work with you and your financial advisors to ensure that your wishes are clear. For more information call the Foundation office at 609-570-3616.

### Invest in MCCC

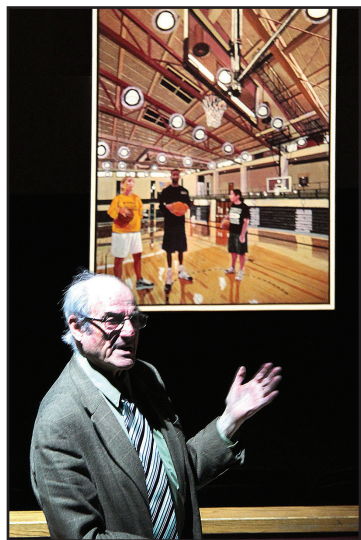
You can change a life and our community through education. We ask for your support of academic and student success through a donation to the Mercer County Community College Foundation. You can designate your gift to: Program and Instructional Needs; Cultural and Performing Arts; Athletics; Facilities and Equipment; Emergency Fund for Students; Scholarships; and Technology.

Send your donation to: MCCC Foundation, P.O. Box 17202, Trenton, NJ 08690. Or visit [www.mccc.edu/give](http://www.mccc.edu/give). For more information, call 609-570-3293.



# CULTURE NEAR and FAR

## Treasured Art Professor Mel Leipzig Retires After 45 Years



Mel Leipzig, MCCC professor of Art and Art History for the past 45 years, retired from his teaching career in May to pursue painting full-time. A lifetime's assortment of former students, colleagues and friends gathered at the Conference Center on May 16 to wish him well as he prepared for the next chapter of his life.

Over the past year, Leipzig treated the college and community to a series of art history slide lectures,

delivered on both campuses. Two talks focused on his own work. In one entitled "Portrait of a College," presented at the Trenton Campus, he discussed more than 50 of the 100 portraits he has painted of co-workers and students since he came to Mercer in 1968.

"I'm convinced no one has done more paintings of the school where they work than I have," Leipzig said.

In his final two-hour lecture at Kelsey Theatre, Leipzig shared close to 100 paintings from his prolific 60-year career, starting with a painting he completed in high school when he was just 17.

"I learned that when you're being taught art, you need to be like a sponge, but also follow your own instincts," he said, noting that time, experimentation and

hard work helped him hone his skill and discover his particular style of portraiture.

He recalled a pivotal 1973 painting of his wife, Mary Jo, which helped him decide that realist portraiture was his calling. Increasingly he became interested in the figure's relationship to his or her setting – whether at work, home or outdoors.

Leipzig said that every ten years or so his style has shifted. He has played with perspective, focusing on architectural elements such as doors, angles and ceilings, and has captured reflections in doors and mirrors. In more recent years, he has painted using just four colors.

Members of Leipzig's immediate family have been frequent models. He also paints other artists in their studios, which leads him to capture

*"My work is a diary of my life and times."*

-- Mel Leipzig, MCCC professor of Art and Art History



**Former art students Joe Gagliardi ('09, '10) and Jonathan Howarth ('10) returned to campus to attend Leipzig's final lecture.**

their work within his own. "I like complications," he said. "My work is a diary of my life and times," he said.

Leipzig advises his students to find something they truly enjoy doing. "You should be told from childhood to find something creative you like to do and pursue it," he said.

Leipzig is looking forward to the freedom that retirement will provide. "When I see something I want to paint, I get this feeling inside of me, and I can't get it out of me until I've finished creating the piece," he said.



### Students Tour Poland, Amsterdam, Costa Rica

Pictured in Poland during a tour of the Birkenau concentration camp are, from left, Professor Jack Tabor, students Alexandra Bussey, Brandon Castro (background), Brandon Stanzas, Les Grunes and Robert Lages. This spring's destinations also included Amsterdam and Costa Rica. Since the program's inception in 2010, the college has offered eight faculty-led tours, with 78 students participating in Study Abroad experiences.

### Profs Teach U.S. Business in Macedonia

Pictured with their Macedonian colleagues are MCCC Hospitality Professor Doug Fee and Economics Professor Laura Sosa, who traveled to the University St. Kliment Ohridski in Bitola, Macedonia, in April. Sosa and Fee say they found a warm and welcoming people, and students who spoke enough English that translators proved unnecessary. Three Macedonian instructors will teach at MCCC in September.





# ALUMNI FEATURES

## NYC Designer Ray Brown Helps Promote MCCC's New Fashion Program

With the recent additions of MCCC's Fashion/Apparel Design and Fashion Merchandising programs, New York fashion designer Ray Brown '85 (A.A.S., Television) couldn't be more excited to see his alma mater making inroads into the fashion world.

"The fashion industry is a viable business that employs hundreds of thousands of people," said Brown, who has been involved in the college's new fashion program as a guest lecturer and as a judge at the students' capstone runway show in May, along with fellow alumnus Tammy Duffy, also a New York designer.

After graduating from Mercer, Brown started out in customer service at Education-

al Testing Service. He went on to become a software tester at ETS, an occupation that followed him to IBM and later CrossView, where he works today as a quality assurance lead.

On the side, Brown pursued his passion for acting and modeling in New York City, which first drew him to the fashion world. He began designing clothing for private clients in the late '80s and early '90s, holding fashion shows for his line, Ray Vincente Design Studio, at the West Trenton Ballroom.

In 2008, Brown submitted fashions to D.C. Fashion Week, and was chosen for a runway show. New York Fashion Week followed. Since then he has consistently shown in

*Pictured in the MCCC Fashion Lab are, from left, fashion designer Ray Brown, fashion student Pina Succì, and Fashion Program Coordinator Allegra Ceci.*



New York, and has participated in Philly and D.C. Fashion Weeks several times.

"It's thrilling when you see your clothing on the runway completely styled for the first time," said Brown, who was recently asked to become the vice president of New York

Men's Fashion Week.

Brown said his ultimate goal is to have an international brand, with all the clothing made locally in Trenton. "We have that sign that reads, 'Trenton Makes, The World Takes'....I want that to be true again."

## Sara Hull Credits MCCC with Leading Role in Hollywood Career

According to Sara Hull '04 (A.A., Communications), national publicity coordinator for Fox Searchlight Pictures, MCCC helped her decide on her future path and motivated her to get there.

For Hull, "there" can be Los Angeles, where Fox Searchlight is located, at film festivals around the U.S., or even as far as the Cannes Film Festival in France – anywhere her job takes her to create buzz about her latest film project.

Hull regularly organizes red carpets and other high-profile press and awards events. In February, Hull worked the most famous red carpet of all, the Academy Awards. She served as the escort for Quvenzhané Wallis, the youngest actor ever to earn an Oscar nomination. Wallis was nominated for

her breakout performance in "Beasts of the Southern Wild." Currently Hill is working on pre-publicity for the films *Baggage Claim* and *Black Nativity*, scheduled for release this fall.

Hull's list of contacts embraces all types of media – print, online, radio and television – from *People* magazine and "Entertainment Tonight," to late-night television shows.

Hull chose to start her college studies at Mercer in part because her mother, Donna Penn, is a member of the Nursing faculty. "It was close to home and a good option while I figured out what exactly I wanted to do," she said.

At Mercer, Hull pursued every possible option to turn her passion for the entertainment industry into a career. She took courses in

journalism, public speaking, television production, radio and more. She worked as a disc jockey on the college radio station and served as co-editor-in-chief for the college newspaper.

She recalls her Mercer professors as top notch – and life-changing. "They inspired me to want to do and learn more and push myself to succeed," she said.

From Mercer, Hull headed to Southern California, where she completed her bachelor's degree at California State University, Fullerton. While at Cal State, she landed the internship of a lifetime in the publicity department at Focus Features.

Hull's first job following graduation was as a movie marketing assistant and then a junior publicist at 42West,



*Hull is pictured with Oscar nominee Quvenzhané Wallis at the Academy Awards.*

a leading full-service public relations entertainment firm with offices in New York and Los Angeles.



## Stephanie Pratico's Own Family Leads to Career Helping Disabled

As a member of the Family Faculty and coordinator for the Trisomy 21 program at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), Stephanie Pratico '89 (A.A.S., Business) specializes in teaching others about patient and family-centered hospital care, lessons she learned through her own experiences of having two children born with medical issues and developmental disabilities.

Pratico began her education by enrolling at Mercer while she was working full-time for a financial services company. "I liked that Mercer was local because I needed to be in the area for my job and for family commitments. For me, it met every need in my life at the time," she said.

Pratico earned her Business degree over three years, and went on to work at Bristol-Myers Squibb. Then, her first child, John, was born with Trisomy 21, commonly known as Down syndrome. Once her daughter, Sara, was born with the same condition, Pratico became more involved in organizations that support those with Down syndrome, which eventually led to her job at CHOP.

"I was approached by the hospital administration to become a more formal part of the organization," said Pratico, who started as a volunteer family advisor at CHOP in 2003. After several promotions, Pratico became the program coordinator for CHOP's Trisomy 21 program in 2011,



*Pratico with her children, Sara and John, who inspired her to get more involved in the family healthcare system.*

providing specialized support and care coordination for patients with Down syndrome.

Pratico returned to MCCC in February as part of the Distinguished Lecture Series. "Mercer was an opportunity to get a great education and network locally. It meant a lot to me to come back to

speaking to students about my work," she said.

Reflecting on the turn her career has taken, Pratico believes her children have helped her help others who need a support system in the healthcare industry. "I know I'm the person I am today because of my children," she said.

## CLASS NOTES



**William Sondervan** '72, '73 (A.A.S. Marketing, A.S. Business Administration)

is a professor/program director of Criminal Justice and Intelligence Management at the University of Maryland University College Graduate School.



**Patricia Braun** '73 (A.A.S., Laboratory Technology) is project manager for new vaccines at Sanofi, a global healthcare company.



**Harry Camisa** '73 (A.A., Humanities and Social Science) retired after a 50-year career as a corrections officer and teacher at the New Jersey State Prison. He is co-author of the book "Inside Out: Fifty Years Behind the Walls of New Jersey's Trenton State Prison."



**Melissa (Csil-lan) Conklin** '93 (A.S., Communications) is the administrator for the Community Education Program in the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District.



**Ellie Patounas** '00 (A.A., Criminal Justice) is the account leader for the Office of the Vice President

for Marketing and Public Affairs at Educational Testing Service.



**Jim Smith** '01, '03 (A.A.S. Computer Graphics, A.A.S. Advertising/Graphic Design) is a senior art director at GSW Worldwide, an inVentiv health company.



**Malgorzata Kolisz** '06 (A.A.S., Aviation Customer Relations) is a customer service agent

for Delta Airlines at Newark Liberty International Airport.



**Rashaun Jones** '09 (A.A., Liberal Arts) is an academic counselor for MCCC's Youth College

at the Trenton Campus.

**Read their full stories at [www.mccc.edu/alumni-success](http://www.mccc.edu/alumni-success).**



# CONTINUING STUDIES and MORE

## MCCC's Veterinary Assistant Program Earns National Certification

For those interested in turning their affection for animals into a career, MCCC's Center for Continuing Studies (CCS) offers a Veterinary Assistant Certificate program that prepares students for entry-level jobs in nine months.

First introduced in Fall 2011, the popular noncredit program was recently approved by the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA), the nation's leading veterinary technology organization. MCCC's students are now eligible to take the NAVTA's national certification exam.

According to Read Langan, CCS's assistant director, the certification is like a gold star. "We are one of only two programs in New Jersey and 11 in the country to receive this 'seal of approval,'" Langan said. "Prospective students can be assured that our curriculum meets the highest training standards in the field. Students who get their certification will

have a big advantage when being considered for jobs."

The curriculum includes four modules: Introduction to the Veterinary Profession; Nursing Skills; Laboratory Skills and Imaging; and a 75-hour Clinical Externship, which is arranged for each student in a clinical veterinary setting.

Langan notes that graduates often share news of their success. Amanda Maldonado, who completed her studies in June 2012, has worked as a veterinary assistant at Banfield Pet Hospital since August 2012.

"I absolutely love it. I've been learning so much. Thank you for the education you shared," Maldonado wrote in an email to her instructors.

Andrea Pace, Esq., a certified veterinary technician, is the program coordinator. She says it is designed to provide a gateway for professional development and career change.

"Students range widely in their interests, skill sets and

goals. We work to ensure that students master the material and develop the skills they need to be successful," Pace says.

An information session

for the Veterinary Assistant program will be held Sept. 12. The Fall 2013 cohort starts later in September and concludes in June 2014.

### Fall Information Sessions

#### Back to School Night for Adults:

Tuesday, September 10, 5:30 p.m.

#### New Pathways to Teaching in NJ (Alternate Route):

Thursday, September 12, 5:30 p.m.

#### Veterinary Assistant: Thursday, September 12, 5:30 p.m.

For locations and more information, call 609-570-3311, email [ComEd@mccc.edu](mailto:ComEd@mccc.edu), or visit [www.mccc.edu/ccs](http://www.mccc.edu/ccs).



THE CENTER  
CONTINUING STUDIES

## Survivor Jasha Levi Is Among Special Guests at Mercer County Holocaust Center



Ninety-year-old Jasha Levi spoke at the MCCC-based Mercer County Holocaust-Genocide Resource Center in February. Levi, who survived the Holocaust and went on to a successful and multi-faceted career in the United States, has published memoirs including "Requiem for a Country," "Blood Without Honey," and "The Last Exile: The Tapestry of a Life." Levi's lecture was one of eight special events held at the center this year.

## Diverse Voices Presented in "Meet the Authors" Event



At the college's "Meet the Authors" event, held in celebration of Community College Month in April, are, from left, Director of Library Services Pam Price (event organizer), authors Rev. William Coleman ("Rejuvenation of the Soul"); Peter Horne ("Women in Law Enforcement"); Dr. Padhraig Higgins ("A Nation of Politicians: Gender, Patriotism, and Political Culture in Late Eighteenth-Century Ireland"); Dr. Vera Goodkin ("In Sunshine and in Shadow"); James Franklin ("Inside Out: Fifty Years Behind the Walls of New Jersey's Trenton State Prison"); Dr. Jo Anne Craig ("When Is It My Time to Cry"); Charles Stanbury ("Three Crooked Roads"); and Bursar Lucia Brown-Joseph (event organizer).



## Men's Basketball

This year's men's basketball team was talented and dedicated, and it showed in the results. The Vikings ended the season with a 21-10 record and a successful run in the post-season that took them all the way to the Region 19 title game, where they lost 65-59 to rival Essex County College.

Entering the Region 19 tournament as the no. 2 seed, the Vikings saw their greatest triumph in the quarterfinal round versus Burlington on Feb. 25. Down by 19 halfway through the second half, Mercer then scored 21 unanswered points to take the lead. Freshman guard Mustafa El-Amin started the comeback with a three-point field goal, followed by three more three-pointers. The Vikings won 48-47.

Head Coach Howard Levy said the improbable happened at Mercer that night. "It was one of the most memorable games in recent Mercer basketball history. Our guys dug deep and never gave up," said the fifth-year coach.

Mercer soundly beat Lackawanna 91-55 in the semifinal contest.

El-Amin was selected as an NJCAA Second Team Division II All-American, the first time in 12 years Mercer has had a men's player earn this honor. He was also named Player of the Year for Region 19 and the Garden State Athletic Conference (GSAC).



**Mustafa El-Amin (no. 11) was named an NJCAA All-American.**

Sophomore center Filip Sekulic was named to the Second Team All-Region and the Second Team All-GSAC. He spent the entire season as one of the top scorers in the nation, finishing in the top 50 (36<sup>th</sup>), with an average of 19 points per game.

## Women's Basketball

The story of MCCC women's basketball this season was a tale of two halves. The Lady Vikings struggled to put together two good halves and lost many close games as a result.

Despite their 5-21 record, Coach Mike Tenaglia says his players never gave up. He hopes the returning freshmen from this squad will use the season as preparation for the pressure of close games next year and have learned how to close out games when they have the lead.

Tenaglia credits his team for "remaining in the game every game. It's hard to continue to fight when things aren't going your way, but that was not true this season," he said.

Tenaglia is especially proud of sophomores Shelby Mellon and Chelsea Arnold, who stepped up, especially in the second half of the season. Mellon was asked to play



**In the pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month are, from left, Fran Pozo, Alyssa Walsh, Shelby Mellon, Jackie Laurenti, Chelsea Arnold, Bianca DeAngelis, Erin Sobkowiak, Morgan Cullen, Taylor Wright, Heather Gurdon and Jackie Biondi.**

multiple positions, providing leadership down the stretch in many games. Arnold also had a strong season, finishing in the top 50 in two NJCAA Division II categories: 22<sup>nd</sup> in blocked shots per game (2.5 blocks per game), and 41<sup>st</sup> in rebounds (9.9 rebounds per game). Ar-

nold and Mellon were named to the Second Team All-GSAC along with freshman Morgan Cullen, the only Lady Viking to average double figures on the season.

Tenaglia and his freshmen look forward to next season. In addition to the return of Erin

Sobkowiak, Jackie Laurenti, Alyssa Walsh and Taylor Wright, the Lady Vikings also expect to have Heather Gurdon back in the lineup after a season-ending injury last fall.

Tenaglia was assisted by Jane Berlinger and Samantha Cobbs.



**Forward Chelsea Arnold and guard Jackie Laurenti.**



## Baseball

The Vikings' baseball dreams ended in jarring fashion, as the team lost its first two games in the highly competitive, double elimination NJCAA Region 19 Tournament, played at Del Tech Owens May 10-12. The losses were squeakers – 5-4 to host Del Tech Owens and 6-5 to Lackawanna.

Clearly that was not the way the story was supposed to end for the no. 1-seeded Vikings, who earned a "bye" in the region play-in round and were ranked no. 12 in the nation.

Still, the Vikings' talent and their considerable achievements this season are without question, says Head Coach Kevin Kerins. He points to the team's overall record of 32-15 and its Region 19 record of 11-3.

Two members of the MCCC roster were named among Region 19's top five players: outfielder Mark Tomei (no. 3) and pitcher Paul Piromalli (no. 5). Coach Kerins, who is completing his first full year at the helm, was named Region 19's Coach of the Year.

Both Tomei and Piromalli were selected to the All-Region First Team, along with infielder Heath Fillmyer, who was also a National Gold Glove nominee. Outfielder Dan Denton was named to the All-Region Second Team.

Said Kerins, "Though we fell short of our goal to earn a berth at the NJCAA World Series, there are many positives to take from this season. We earned national recognition with our no. 12 ranking and we are very proud of our sophomores who will be moving on to play at four-year schools, including some who have had Division I and II offers." Fillmyer was selected by the Colorado Rockies in the 28<sup>th</sup> round of the Major League Baseball draft.



**Pitcher Paul Piromalli with shortstop Heath Fillmyer at the ready.**

Kerins is already looking enthusiastically to next year, when his strong group of freshmen will return and talented new recruits are expected to join the team.

"The staff is hitting the recruiting trail to finalize this year's incoming roster. Our goal is to continue to build on the standard of excellence we have set for our program," he said.

"We want our players to use Mercer as a springboard," Kerins continued. "I am proud of this team's accomplishments, especially our sophomores, who set such a good example on the field and in the classroom."

Kerins was assisted by Fred Carella and Shawn Reindel.

## Softball

While the Mercer softball team fell one game short of winning the Region 19 championship, Coach Ryan Zegarski sees a lot of positives from this past season.

"We had a good year," Zegarski said. "The girls competed every day."

The Lady Vikings finished the season with a 27-18 record and had a shot at the Region 19 crown, needing to win one out of two games against Burlington County College, a team they had defeated the day before. But on May 5, the final day of the tournament, Burlington swept their last three games to claim the title.

"Burlington had all the momentum in the world," Zegarski said. "We just couldn't

take it from them."

In Zegarski's nine years as coach, the Vikings have advanced to the regional finals seven times and took the title twice. This year presented some tough challenges, including injuries and a roster that included 10 freshmen. But the team gelled early, and excelled.

Offensively, freshman Alyssa Bauer paced the Lady Vikings' attack, followed by freshman Courtney Clee. On the mound, freshman Stacie Denucci led the team in wins with a 7-3 record, followed by freshman Kiele Eichlin at 5-2.

Bauer, Clee, and Eichlin were joined by freshmen Brianna Castellano and Morgan Cullen as members of the All-



**Kiele Eichlin is on the mound and Stacie Denucci is on first base.**

Region 19 Team and the All-Garden State Athletic Conference Team. Eichlin was named GSAC Player of the Year.

Clee, Eichlin, Cullen and Denucci joined sophomore Chelsea Arnold and freshman Erica Benedetti as members of the All-GSAC Academic Team.

Clee, Arnold and Benedetti also received All-Region 19 academic honors.

Zegarski is already looking forward to next season, with at least eight returning players and possibly six incoming freshmen ready to take the field for Mercer.



## Men's Tennis

Coach Marc Vecchiolla readily admits that he and his players were disappointed that the Vikings were unable to qualify as a team or individually for the NJCAA national tournament.

"It was a heart breaker," Vecchiolla said of the Region 19 Tournament, played at the Mercer County Tennis Center May 3-4. "We were the region's clear third-place team going in, but that's not the way the tournament is set up."

He explained that Mercer earned no points for three flights in the first round because Brookdale, the eventual third-place winner, was missing players. Then they faced seeded players in the next round.

It was a tough tournament all around. Even the team's strongest player, freshman Ahmed al-Shawafi at no. 1 singles, who had beaten his Brookdale rival three times during the regular season, couldn't pull out the win in the Region 19 final.

Gloucester went on to win the national championship in Texas for the fourth consecutive year, while Bergen placed third. Brookdale won nationals at first singles and first doubles.

Vecchiolla observes that the Vikings, who completed the season with a 10-8 record, once again found themselves up against the nation's best teams in Div. III men's tennis.

"It makes the goal of winning the title even at the regional level a major accom-



**The 2013 men's tennis team, standing from left, Elias DeLeon, Stefan Neagu, Kirill Lebedev, Dario Moriello, Yasser Farid, and Head Coach Marc Vecchiolla; kneeling from left, Michael Greiff, David Clavijo, Ahmed Al-Shawafi and Nicholas Mastalesz.**

plishment. But it also makes our players better because they face such talented opponents," he said.

According to Vecchiolla, al-Shawafi was the Vikings' breakout player. He was 19-4 on the season and was selected to the All-GSAC Team and

the All-Region Second Team. Other team members were freshmen Yasser Farid (no. 2), Dario Moriello (no. 3), David Clavijo (no. 4), and Kirill Lebedev (no. 5), and sophomore Elias DeLeon (no. 6). Al-Shawafi and DeLeon were co-captains. The roster also

included freshmen Nicholas Mastalesz and Stefan Neagu.

Vecchiolla is already looking forward to next year, when al-Shawafi, Farid, Moriello, Mastalesz and Neagu will be back.

He was assisted this season by Ralph Bencivengo and Barb Pleva.



**Ahmed al-Shawafi at no. 1**

## Mercer Student Athletes Score Big in Classroom

With 31 athletes named to the Garden State Athletic Conference (GSAC) academic team, 21 named to the Region 19 All-Academic team, and two named as Academic All-Americans, it's obvious that Mercer's athletes don't leave it all on the field or court.

They save plenty for the classroom.

"This is the largest list of student athletes receiving academic honors in my 16 years as athletic director," said Athletics Director John Simone at the Annual Student Athletes Breakfast on May 21.

"We call them student athletes; we never just use the word athlete," Simone said. "They are student athletes. And this year, it was especially true."

In addition to individual honors, Mercer's women's cross country team was named an All-Academic team by the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Cross Country Coaches Association.

Special recognition was also given to individual student athletes, including basketball player Armando Davis, who was named Male Student Athlete and cross country runner Sierra



**Women's Cross Country was named an NJCAA All-Academic Team. Pictured are, from left, Athletics Director John Simone, runners Erika Manley, Jaqueline Goncalves, Sierra Downs, Diana Taveras and Karizma Brown, and MCCC President Patricia C. Donohue.**

Downs, named Female Student Athlete and also selected for the Dr. Cynthia Schaffer Memorial Scholarship. Tennis player Alina Vitukhnovskaya was named the Women's Tennis Scholar Athlete. Baseball player Steve Spadafino and Chelsea Arnold, a three-sport athlete in softball, soccer, and basketball, were selected for the Art Forman Sportsmanship Award.

### On Their Way

**Thirty-three student athletes have announced their transfer plans for next year. See where these talented students are headed by visiting [www.mccc.edu/athletics](http://www.mccc.edu/athletics).**





Support Mercer County Community College.  
Visit [www.mccc.edu/give](http://www.mccc.edu/give)



## Kelsey Theatre Fall 2013 Calendar

*Something familiar, something peculiar, something for everyone, a comedy tonight....*

### Full-Length Family Events

***A Funny Thing Happened  
on the Way to the Forum***  
September 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15

***A Flea in Her Ear***  
September 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29

***Big River***  
October 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13

***The Laramie Project: A Staged Reading***  
October 6

***Carrie, The Musical***  
October 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27

***Rosmersholm***  
October 24

***Working***  
November 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10

***Monty Python's Spamalot***  
November 15, 16, 17, 22,  
23, 24, 29, 30; December 1

***ANNIE The Movie, Sing-A-Long***  
December 13, 14

***El Sueno***  
December 15

***Love! Valour! Compassion!***  
January 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19

***The Actor's Nightmare  
& A Night in the Theatre***  
January 24, 25, 26

### Kelsey Kids Series

***The Velveteen Rabbit***  
October 19

***Heidi***  
November 9

***'Twas the Night Before Christmas***  
December 6, 7, 8

***The Nutcracker***  
December 20, 21, 22

***Alexander and the Terrible,  
Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day***  
January 11

**For tickets to Kelsey events,  
call 609-570-3333 or visit [www.kelseytheatre.net](http://www.kelseytheatre.net).**



## Events at The Gallery

A full slate of exhibits will be coming to the MCCC Gallery during the 2013-14 academic year. View the schedule soon online at [www.mccc.edu/gallery](http://www.mccc.edu/gallery).

## Academic Calendar

Most Fall semester classes begin Aug. 26. Later-starting five-week, seven-week, and ten-week terms are also available. Visit [www.mccc.edu](http://www.mccc.edu) for course listings and dates.



Read prior issues of *The Viking*, published twice a year, at [www.mccc.edu/viking](http://www.mccc.edu/viking). And keep connected with MCCC 24/7 at [www.mccc.edu](http://www.mccc.edu) for all the latest news, events, and offerings from your community college.