Success Stories

Where learning leads to a better life

Wayne County Community College District

A Multi-Campus Community College District
Serving 32 Communities Across Wayne County
The increasing complexities of today’s business offices have created the need for highly skilled employees who possess the knowledge and confidence necessary to handle a wide variety of administrative and office tasks. The Business Information Technology degree provides a strong foundation in office procedures, interpersonal and communication skills, customer-service skills, problem-solving skills, and skilled use of computer business software applications. Students completing the certificate program may pursue careers as office or data entry clerks.
Dear Colleagues:

This year, the Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) will be celebrating 37 years of educational excellence and commitment to the 32 communities and townships we serve. Within this time period, the College has graduated thousands of students. You may even find some of the colleagues you may have shared classes with at WCCCD in this District Magazine, which is making its debut. We are proud of our alumni as they continue making their mark on businesses, communities, education, government agencies, and organizations of every type throughout the nation. Their accomplishments bring pride to the WCCCD family, to Michigan, and especially, to their families, adding value to their degrees and educational experience at the College. We feel honored to share with you the success and achievement of our alumni with this special edition, which outlines and highlights our growth.

There is a strong possibility that the future will bring a number of major, and much needed new facilities to WCCCD. Our new Northwest Campus, Michigan Institute for Public Safety Education, and others being planned will expand our educational opportunities. A lot has taken place at the College and we thank the support from our community and constituencies.

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Chancellor
Board of Trustees

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Dental Hygiene

Under the supervision of a dentist, a dental hygienist inspects the mouth, administers local anesthesia and chemotherapeutic agents, removes stains and deposits from teeth, applies preventive agents, prepares clinical and diagnostic tests, completes dental x-rays and performs many other services related to oral care. Dental hygienists counsel patients about preventive measures such as nutrition, oral hygiene, and dental care.

Dental hygienist graduates are required to successfully complete comprehensive written and clinical examinations given under the direction of the State Dentistry Examining Board, the American Dental Associations Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations, and a Regional Dental Testing Service.

www.wcccd.edu
Financial support is available to Wayne County Community College District students through the WCCCD Scholarship Committee. Students may apply for scholarship support beginning March first of each year. Students must submit an application for the individual scholarship awards, which will vary in accordance with eligibility requirements. A list of the various scholarships and eligibility guidelines is available in the Student Services Office at each WCCCD Campus and at the District Student Services Office located at 801 W. Fort Street, Detroit, MI 48226. Students may also access and download this information from the District’s web site at www.wcccd.edu.
Criminal Justice—Law Enforcement

This program is designed to prepare students for entry-level employment in the criminal justice system and prepare those currently employed by a law enforcement agency for promotion. It will also provide a background in law enforcement for those preparing for studies such as pre-law and advanced study in police management, criminology, or social welfare. The program introduces students to the criminal justice system and its components. Persons interested in this program should be capable of working effectively with others. Previous participation in team sports, military service, and other group experiences are helpful. Prior course work in psychology, sociology, social studies, and law is also beneficial. Graduates are qualified for positions in law enforcement agencies, private security organizations, and businesses such as insurance companies, banks, and retail operations.
The WCCCD

These success stories fall in fields as diverse as medical, legal, and political, yet these WCCCD graduates credit education as the foundation behind their flourishing careers.

Success Stories

For the past 30 years, Wayne County Community College District has worked hard to become one of the foremost community colleges in the country. Our current success is due in large part to a hard-working staff and innovative partnerships with organizations in Southeastern Michigan and affiliations with other colleges.

Becoming one of the country’s most reputable institutions also requires focused leadership and Dr. Curtis L. Ivery, chancellor, has shown dedication to ensure that the College is a comprehensive multi-campus community college with a variety of programs to meet individual needs of students. By offering educational, career and lifelong learning, and technical programs, the College has forged ahead with impressive speed.

The mission to train students from Detroit and surrounding communities is being fulfilled as demonstrated by the alumni stories contained within this publication. Their stories of struggles and accomplishment attest to the successes and fulfillment of the College’s pivotal position in the community. The reputation of the College has exceeded all expectations due to new accountability procedures, continuous reporting of expenditures, and strategic planning. Expansion of all the local campuses guarantees that there will be many more alumni successes to report in the future.

As one matures appreciation of others’ struggles and achievements increases. One can only feel tremendous respect for the women interviewed for this magazine, who worked, raised children, and...
attended school. Their stories reveal their great effort as they did it all. The men were also high achievers and after some conquered demons, others overcame hardships, and they all saw the value of education. Both sexes revealed misgivings and hurts about relationships they had formed in the past but all seem to have resolved the major issues or are searching for ideal companions. All related a strong sense of family values and love for family. All mentioned religion, some pray daily, and all are devoted to giving back to community. These compelling stories verify the American dream and while, in many instances, being reduced to tears, one can be totally inspired.

Mission Statement
“WCCCD’s mission is to empower individuals, businesses, and communities to achieve their goals through accessible services, culturally diverse experiences and globally competitive higher education and career advancement programs.”
Saadiah Ahmed

Researcher and publisher of numerous medical presentations, a Doctorate of Osteopathy, Sigma Sigma Phi Honor Society Member, teaching and research assistant, Board Certified, Named Who’s Who is American College & University Students in 1996, Saadiah Ahmed easily qualifies as “Top Doc.” She also adds to her list of high achievements a top score in Internal Medicine examinations scoring in the 97th percentile nationally. WCCCD is proud to claim her as one of their outstanding graduates having awarded her an Associates Degree in Science in 1995.

Graduating from University of Detroit Mercy with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, she has completed her residency in Internal Medicine in Mt Clemens, Michigan, and is in the process of completing a fellowship in Endocrinology at Mt. Clemens General Hospital that started in June 2005. This two-year program, Specializing in Endocrinology, will add to her list of outstanding credentials. When asked her reason for choosing to specialize in endocrinology Saadiah confessed, “It was a tough choice because I loved all the aspects of internal medicine besides thyroid disease, diabetes, various conditions of the pituitary gland, and all other focuses of internal medicine. I made a final choice at the last minute before submitting my application.”

One interesting aspect is that some of the patients that Dr. Ahmed has seen as an internist, she is seeing again as a specialist. Saadiah helps patients discover how to integrate the body and mind in response to illness by developing a fighting spirit and actively participating in the doctor-patient relationship. She tells a story about one particular patient from England who complained of fatigue, hair loss, and malaise had been seeing a rheumatologist who recommended that a specialist might be able to diagnose the problem. By performing a biopsy on the patient’s thyroid,
Ahmed was able to determine that the nodules on the thyroid were not cancerous and could be treated; the patient became tearful and remarked, “You are the only doctor who ever listened.” One of the nicest things a physician can hear is, “Doctor, you really helped me a lot,” said Ahmed. Although, Saadiah says, “Sometimes, you feel like you’re drowning in your work.”

In addition to a medical practice she has made numerous case presentations at medical meetings. These case presentations include Acute Pancreatitis, Osteoarthritis, Syncope, Complications of Diabetes, Multiple Sclerosis, Hypocalcaemia, Hyperparathyroidism vs. Malignancy, Renal Artery Stenting, Acetaminophen Overdose, Toxic Ingestions, Morbidity and Mortality, Congestive Heart Failure, Electrolyte Imbalances, Pneumonia/Lung Abscess, and Vasculitis.

Saadiah, who is single, has five siblings and parents who reside in Michigan but travel six months out of the year. Her father, now retired, was the accounting supervisor for WCCCD and her brother, Mirza Furquan Ahmed, is currently the Associate Vice Chancellor of Finance for WCCCD. One sister is a journalist and a feminist; another, a teacher, is also designing a clothing line. “All five of us are graduates of WCCCD and have gone into professional careers,” she says, and states that the best gift she received from her parents was their prayers.

Saadiah works out daily at Lifetime Fitness, runs four to five miles daily, loves kick boxing, and weight training. She also rides a bike and goes roller blading. Her life and practice is all about a healthy life style. She is keen on good nutrition and studies healthy diets that include high protein foods, fruits, vegetables, and foods that produce high energy, which she demonstrates. She counsels patients to follow her healthy lifestyle.

Traveling being another one of Saadiah’s passions has taken her to the Florida Keys, Lake Tahoe, London, Jordan, and Israel. She has already traveled throughout much of the world and is only 30 years old. For relaxation, incredibly, this overachiever loves to sketch landscapes and is often able to do these while traveling. She enjoys shopping and putting outfits together. Sometimes when the right item cannot be found Saadiah designs it and has her sister who is developing a clothing line, manufacture it. Saadiah Ahmed seems to have discovered the prescription for a rich life evolving around her career, family, and healthy recreational activities.
Raymond Basham

Senator Raymond Basham arrived in Michigan in a roundabout way. Growing up in Virginia, he joined the U.S. Air Force when he was 17 and was honorably discharged in 1962 in California. Young and daring, he rode a 1957 Harley-Davidson all the way across the country. He laughingly recalls that, “Everything I owned was on the back of it”. Stopping in Michigan to see an old Air Force buddy, he ended up staying. “I never planned on coming to Michigan. I didn’t realize the winters were as cold as they are and I had to buy a car and I have been here ever since.”

A Ford Motor Company (FoMoCo) employee for many years, Basham became involved in his Taylor community in several ways. Community service became a focal point as a result of his home being broken into. He recalls, “I came home to discover the break-in and I felt like I had been violated; it motivated me to join the Auxiliary Police Unit,” a volunteer group charged with providing a ready standby force to assist public safety units in times of emergency. Subsequently, Basham was appointed to the Water Commission and was asked to serve as constable by the mayor. He was elected to serve on the Taylor City Council. Working at FoMoCo during the day and the courts at night, he also served as a court officer, which proved to be a good experience enabling Basham to know his community by becoming knowledgeable about many issues.

Transitioning from the private sector to the public arena, he ran for, and was elected to, the Taylor City Council. He served for two full terms over seven years and, “For whatever reason, I ran successfully for the state house seat. I had no idea what I was in for.” But by knocking on doors and meeting constituents he could see that his message resonated – service to community, conscientious government, hard work, and advocating for working-class people are core beliefs. Serving three terms, Basham became involved in various
committees on tax policy and technology. He contends, “I tried to give it my best.”

Of the senate, Basham says, “We are in session three days a week and I am really fortunate; I only drive one hundred miles to work and I spend one night a week in Lansing. Some legislators from the Upper Peninsula have to drive 500 miles.”

Basham is currently working on minimum wage legislation. Out of concern about the “invisible” or homeless people, Basham has sponsored legislation proposing to increase minimum wage from $5.15 per hour to $7.15 per hour phased in over a two-year period. Basham is familiar with state and local politicians. About Governor Jennifer Granholm, he says, “I am so pleased, she is the first woman governor. She worked very hard on her campaign and she has a strong work ethic for which I have great respect.”

Senator Basham has positive things to say about Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD). He did course work in psychology at the Downriver Campus and was awarded an honorary degree by the College 15 years ago. He was also the keynote speaker urging the graduating class to contribute to society. Basham feels that most people set their goals too low, saying, “They should set high, realistic goals, and they will achieve them.” Putting on his philosophical hat, Basham says, “People will remember you at the end of your life not by the car you drove – they will recall that he did this or did that – and you want your legacy to be about something you’ve done for mankind. What you give, you get back.” He recalls that when Dr. Ivery came in, the College began promoting what the College was doing, and passed a millage, “They’ve never looked back.” WCCCD is providing a niche for people who have a day job and can get classes when they need them and education equates to income.

The senator has a wide range of interests besides politics. Growing up listening to bluegrass music, he remembers turning the knobs on an old Eighty-Eight Oldsmobile, listening to Nashville, Tennessee, and The Grand Ole Opry. “I went to school with country singer Don Reno’s children, Ronnie, Dale, and Don Wayne.” Reno secured his place in history as the world-renowned Bluegrass banjo virtuoso. Ricky Skaggs, also a favorite, recently received five Grammy nominations for his bluegrass hit single, “A Simple Life,” which could easily describe Basham who says, “I still listen to Bluegrass driving down the highway on the way to Lansing.”

Basham is married to a nurse and has a daughter who is a nurse. My stepson has grown up to work in skilled trades. “I have four grandchildren and it is nice being a parent and really great being a grandparent,” he proudly exclaims. In his free time he likes to go deer hunting, saying, “I don’t go to shoot deer but for the fun of it. I go up there to be close to nature. I go with a friend who I worked with at FoMoCo named Royal Moning who also attended WCCCD and later got his master’s degree and is now a supervisor at Ford.”

Words from “A Simple Life,” could be used to describe Basham.

“Downriver’s Inside Secret

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“I live a simple life
A couple of friends I really like
A little house outside of town
An old car that gets me around
Complications may arise
But I live a simple life”
Nina Bernard

ADMINISTRATOR

Nina Bernard graduated in June 1976 with an associates of art in nursing and has been practicing nursing ever since. Currently, at The Detroit Medical Center (DMC) at Detroit Receiving Hospital, Nina is part of the Resource Management Department. She reviews all Medicare admissions for severity of illness and intensity of service based on national criteria, shares information with attending physicians, conducts in-service workshops demonstrating examples of improved clinical documentation, and tracks all appropriate documentation.

She is part of a program, relatively new, but being practiced around the country, called Performance Documentation Improvement. For the total group included in the training, The DMC hired a cadre of 12 nurses across the system and engaged a consulting firm to come in to teach the proper review of charts looking for opportunities for quality purposes and to enhance financial reimbursement.

This program was initiated in 1999 – 2001. Mike Duggan, DMC head, reinstated the program. The chief financial officer sees the value of the program, and fiscal responsibility and accountability at the DMC have turned the facility around.

“The medical center seems to be showing progress and Mike Duggan has taken hold and doesn’t seem to be willing to let go until he see greater successes than before,” says Bernard. Patient care has improved and customer service has become a top priority. Considering the pressures on medical care throughout the country, the burn out rate is not native to the DMC. In fact, management is trying to work out ways to help these front line workers rejuvenate. Bernard has a lifetime of looking at medical care issues accompanied by a keen mind with a great deal of background perspective to help her to see what the issues are. Clearly, her contribution to improvement at the DMC is showing positive results.
Bernard volunteers her time to participate in the Diversity Initiative at the DMC. Each year, during “Diversity Celebration Day,” awards are presented and each site does something to represent their uniqueness. She wrote a rap song called “Receiving Rap” that whimsically raps, “When it comes to wiping out adversity, what’s the main ingredient: diversity! Yes friends, it ain’t no mystery...At DRH it’s part of our history!”

Bernard started working over 30 years ago in the old Detroit General Hospital and has seen a lot of changes over the years. “In 30 years, one gains a lot of insight into the good, bad, and the ugly,” she observes. The only regret she has is because of personal situations she did not continue on the academic path of nursing, knowing now that she could have done even more to improve the health care system. “I just contribute what I can,” knowing that it is no small contribution.

In terms of the basic clinical skills taught by WCCCD, Bernard recalls that they did an excellent job. She has great respect for Mrs. Earlene Cottrell from whom she learned nursing basics, and says, “I do not think anyone could surpass her. I found her inspiring and firm enough so that we actually completed procedures and knew what we were doing. When we did the return demonstrations, we felt confident.”

She has not retired yet, claiming not to have managed money wisely but confesses to no longer being a compulsive shopper. She does attend gem shows to select special items for jewelry making and collects silver jewelry that she wears with panache! One can easily envision Nina entranced as she walks through the gem stone shows in churches and meeting halls enjoying the richness of beautiful gemstones and semi precious stones wondering how she can resist one more purchase.

Anyone familiar with the medical field knows there is little time for reading for relaxation since medical updates and information are voluminous, but Bernard has recently gotten back into novel reading. Her intellectual side comes out when she relates stories about the books she reads since becoming a member of a book club. She recently read “Fall to Your Knees,” by Anne Marie McDonald, a magnificent tale about the progression of a Canadian Family and the impact of poverty, religion, and Catholicism in the extreme. Bernard said that she is enjoying the assortment of the selections and is currently reading “Empress Orchid.”

Bernard has a son, 39 years old, born shortly after she and her husband moved to Detroit from New York. “Having loved the nursing program in NY, my husband was anxious for me to engage in furthering my education,” she says.

He brought her to WCCCD to enroll in the nursing program that was just taking shape. Nina’s husband was a victim of a homicide in 1978, “a devastating experience for both my son and for me.” Nina has pushed forward alone but with incredible inner strength.
Della Burton-Slater
NURSE

One could never guess that the favorite music of this sweet city woman is that of Elton John, singer and composer for whom she has a passion, and she owns most CDs he has released. She has unopened copies of “Candle in the Wind,” and says, “I refuse to put them in my car because if someone steals my car then they would have my CDs,” a collection that includes all but a few of the early recordings. Her favorite is, “Your Song,” and one verse could easily be translated into Della’s feelings for others.

And you can tell everybody this is your song
It may be quite simple but now that it’s done
I hope you don’t mind
I hope you don’t mind that I put down in words

How wonderful life is while you’re in the world

Burton-Slater graduated from WCCCD’s Nursing Program and recalls instructor, Miss Bell, who also graduated from WCCCD’s Nursing Program, who went above and beyond. “By relating the struggles she endured, she was teaching us how to walk in and do nursing by providing on-the-job training. Other instructors were supportive but Miss Bell was the one who inspired me. We worked with a patient one day, researched the problem, worked with the patient the following day and were evaluated. Classes were held during the day and Della held a part-time job. Throughout this entire time, she proudly claims that, “Not one time did I get a shutoff notice,” referring to her utility bills. She was also setting an example for her own children to have an appreciation and respect for learning by not missing class or taking time away from class despite other pressing issues.
“Sweet City Woman”

Obviously, it was a struggle for her to make ends meet while she was attending school.

“I was a licensed practical nurse (LPN) at the Detroit Medical Center (DMC) prior to coming into the WCCCD program. As a staff development and in-service coordinator, she interviewed applicants for hire, conducted orientations for new employees, and provided continuous educational training sessions for all staff. During this time, her children were in their early teens.

Currently, Burton-Slater is working at the Medilodge of Southfield as a charge nurse specializing in the care of the elderly. She says that she was always taught to respect her elders and loves her work. Some residents where she works are of Russian descent, making communication difficult but she works out ways to communicate. “One patient calls me Julia,” Burton-Slater says, “Perhaps I remind her of someone in her past. She can say or do certain things that I can pick up on, enabling me to use a different approach. Everybody tells me I am very patient; this was meant for me to do.” There are doctors who come into the home but the nurses who try to carry out doctor’s orders basically perform the care and the doctors are open to the nurse’s suggestions for improved care.

Della works 50 weeks per year and the pay is better now than when she was a LPN, but she stills has some financial problems since she owns three houses, two occupied by family members. She is helping her daughter who recently gave birth and a stepdaughter who is between jobs.

Another thing that is amazing about Della Burton-Slater is that she has had frost bite five times! Living on a boat for 10 months with her former husband, she experienced frostbite when the large motorboat was delayed on the East Coast enroute to the Virgin Islands. She recalls meeting a lot of really nice people, but the boat and the marriage broke down in Florida in 1993. Enduring another one of life’s hard lessons, Della returned to Detroit. Burton-Slater and her former husband remain friends.

She travels often with family and friends and has traveled to Paris and Italy, and plans to travel to China soon saying, “I am going on vacation for me!” She will not go on any vacation where she has to take a coat because she can’t stand to be in cold weather — below 70 degrees is cold to her. Even though her daughter has performed in the Thanksgiving Parade, Della does not attend—she can’t stand the cold.

Burton-Slater always brings back gifts from her trips for family and friends, saying, “Life is always about giving.” Her mother set the example. She laughingly recalls a friend with whom she often talks and how understanding they both are and suggests, “Let’s just get a big T-shirt that says, ‘I’m Understanding.’ We try to make everybody else happy with little thought about ourselves.” She serves on the WCCCD Nursing Alumni Association and is a part of the mentoring program for nursing students. A graduate of McKenzie High School, Della is on the committee that plans an annual class picnic.

Her hobbies include cryptogram puzzles, exercises, and collecting dolphins and clowns. Someone gave her a clown and she now owns well over 80. She does not permit her grandchildren to play with “grandma’s toys.” Della reads the Bible daily, loves the silence of her own home, sometimes not playing television or music, just to enjoy the quiet.

Still giving of herself and sometimes stretching herself to the limit you can be sure there will still be no “shutoff” notices.
Globalization, population changes in Detroit, and differing attitudes and policies about medical care are just a few of the factors that influenced Dr. Davis to move his dental practice to North Canton, Ohio, after practicing over a decade in the state of Michigan. Davis has a unique insight into the political process and how it has affected the working-class poor and offers plausible solutions for society’s ills. “When I learned of the Medicaid changes that discontinued residents in the city from receiving care in private practice, forcing city residents to go the hospitals, I was concerned about my medical practice. I knew I couldn’t wait for changes and made the decision not to continue to practice in Michigan.” In Ohio, there is a better understanding of the North Atlantic Free Trade Association (NAFTA) situation and related unemployment problems and the Medicare system is more outreaching. “I have to be aware of the forces that affect my business.”

Davis’ conversation leads one to believe that he could easily choose a political career as well as dentistry. Growing up in Detroit, he remembers after Roman Gibbs was mayor and Coleman A. Young was elected. Both men, along with others, tried to create better conditions for Detroiter. Recalling times after the ‘60s and
during the riots, Davis remembers being told to stay under the bed. After that, everyone was afraid. Although he didn’t know what was going on, he remembers hiding. Davis thinks we are bordering on the same things now – not black/white issues but have and have-nots. “We need leadership to recognize the problems and where the people fit into those problems; it is just a matter time,” he said.

In speaking of black millionaires, Davis says we are “crabs in a barrel,” and is mystified as to why they do not support each other. He says. “I could not have survived slavery, and I cannot understand why we can’t stick together.” Why are things separating neighborhoods – parents need to teach, ‘how good you are’ not ‘how good you look’. He calls the GED – general education decency. He has visions of writing a book about life experiences and will call it, From Worst to First.

Outside the office, Davis continues his art and has worked with his wife of four years on at least one painting. He occasionally plays video games and plays golf with an “educated slice,” he said.

Davis is considering moving to one of two possible destinations. He and his wife like North Carolina and Las Vegas. He is studying demographics to see which will enhance his life and his career.

After completing an associate of science at WCCCD in 1983 in the Dental Hygiene Program, Davis continued his education at Morehouse College in Atlanta. He credits Dr. Morris Dunbar, WCCCD biology professor, for guiding him to Morehouse. Davis earned a dental medicine doctorate from Temple University School of Dentistry in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1992. Working with his patients, Davis emphasizes the importance of leading healthy lifestyles, making responsible choices, and keeping life in perspective.

Davis said that he is, “truly honored and humbled to be fortunate enough to have the opportunity to set an example for other black men.”
Jonathan Edison

ENTREPRENEUR

“Edison Is Pure Electricity” is part of the slogan on Jonathan Edison’s promotional materials, therefore it is easy to compare him to the historic Edison from Menlo Park. This young entrepreneur is inventing himself armed with a vision/mission to inspire others. Becoming a millionaire at age 30, this WCCCD graduate wants to show all the others how to reap rich rewards.

Growing up in an environment that was a prescription for failure, young John John, the name his grandmother loved to call him, overcame many hardships. Love may have been the only constant factor in Jonathan’s early years, generously bestowed upon him by his mother, father, and grandmother although his childhood was extremely difficult: his mother left when he was seven years old after exposing him to drugs and violence, his father left home, and his grandmother died.

He graduated from Osborn High School with a grade point average of 1.63 and completed his first year of college with an even lower average prior to dropping out. Excelling in athletics, Jonathan was promised an athletic scholarship by a coach at Ft. Valley State College, south of Atlanta. His father gave him one hundred dollars to take a Greyhound bus to the college and said, “Good luck, son!” Upon arrival, Edison was informed that the coach had been fired two weeks earlier and the new coach knew nothing about any arrangements.
Detroit’s Edison

for Edison. Confessing failure to his father seemed unbearable, so he took a job at McDonald’s and lied to his father about his weekly athletic conquests. That worked until his father informed him that he was coming to watch a game—to see him play—so the jig was up. Edison confessed and sadly took a bus back to Detroit. Edison, who now partners with his father, recalls that his father said, “When you are a good kid, not only do you add years to your parent’s life, but you add life to your parent’s years.”

Finding success at WCCCD, he discovered that the College, “Gave me the wings to be able to fly.” He took remedial classes in 1993, graduated with an associate’s degree as part of the Urban Teacher Program in 1995, continued his education at Wayne State University, receiving a bachelor’s and master’s degree, and completing requirements for a educational specialist in 2001. Throughout his college years, he was a bus attendant, worked in a restaurant, and often slept in his car so that he could hold down his jobs and attend classes.

Edison is currently the CEO and President of Edison Speaks International, a motivational and training development company dedicated to empowering others. He markets Success Wear clothing and markets the book, “John John and Friends,” the stories he has written about his childhood. He attributes his success to some outstanding mentoring along the way. LaVan Hawkins, Pizza Hut CEO and founder, helped him make some wise investment decisions after Jonathan sold his first business, Edison Fitness & Private Personal Training in Ferndale, Michigan. He recalls the encouragement that Dr. Wallace Peace, WCCCD history professor, gave him and credits many people for his current successes.
Artina Tinsley-Hardman

Representative

Artina Tinsley-Hardman has recently been appointed by Governor Jennifer Granholm to the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) Parole Board. She served three terms in the Michigan House of Representatives representing the Third House District. Representative Tinsley-Hardman has served as chairwoman of the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus for the past three years. She commutes the 100 miles each way, as a former state representative, it was something to which she became accustomed. She returns daily about 5:30 or 6:00 to her faithful dogs, Boomer and Sassy. Tinsley-Hardman was awarded an associates degree from WCCCD in liberal arts and remarks that, “The best thing about the College is that it works with all of the students who come and satellite offices make course work accessible.

"At WCCCD, all instructors were notable and the seniors from the community who attended the classes were inspiring to me," she said. These people, between 40 or 50 or 60 years old, coming to college, wanting to learn, "That to me was inspiring!" she exclaims. They were taking classes in geriatrics. Tinsley-Hardman worked as a Licensed Practical Nurse at Henry Ford Hospital and worked in the Model Neighborhood Clinic. She remembers adults who had drug abuse problems who were 18 and older were given methadone which was mandated and they are now addicted to the drug. "In the '70s, heroin was the drug of choice and, again, addiction is on the rise. Young women and men are destroying their lives and their families lives," she said. Hardman observes the consequences on a daily basis in her capacity for the Parole Board.

The 10-member Parole Board is divided into three-member panels. Each case is assigned to a panel and the decision whether or not to grant parole is made by majority vote of that panel. In making parole decisions, Hardman and others consider current offense, prior criminal record, institutional behavior and programming. She interviews potential parolees and, if paroled, they are followed up by probation but the rate is too high. "We (parole board) want to know what are the parolee's future plans and what kind of support system is in place with family and job possibilities." There can be a period of up to several months between the approval of a prisoner’s parole and his or her

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A Life Full Of Purpose

Tinsley-Hardman was married briefly from 1971 to 1975 and currently is a single woman, “still looking for Mr. Right.” She describes Mr. Right who, “Would have to love the Lord, understand that we all make mistakes, must be a loving person, not self centered, and concerned about mankind.”

She admits reading volumes of materials pertaining to her job but she constantly reads and re-reads “The Purpose Driven Life” and keeps a copy in her car to read parts over and over because they are so inspiring. “If you don’t know what your purpose is, there is a reason for your being,” she says with conviction.

She does not feel that the barriers in Detroit are coming down saying, “Unfortunately, there is a big lack of trust and it seems to be greatest between the haves and have-nots. Unemployment in Detroit has hovered around 14 percent for much of the year, the highest in the state according to The Detroit Free Press, Wednesday, August 3, 2005. There is an anti-Detroit sentiment in the legislature. There are many issues—being the insurance gridlock that punishes people who have never had an accident because they live in Detroit. Property taxes are high but people of Detroit vote to tax themselves because of strong community commitments. Detroit used to have a population of over two million but many have left. She sees transportation as a big problem and emphasizes that, “We need a way to move people outside where jobs are.”

Artina was the founder of Women of Vision—Sisters Overcoming Struggles (SOS) in 2003 to advocate, educate, motivate, and empower women who are going through everyday life struggles. Transitional housing is needed for women and their children. She dreams of converting a large building into a place where women who need to get out of difficult circumstances could live until they transition into a more stable phase of life. Tinsley-Hardman said, “If you teach a man to read, you have done a wonderful thing but if you teach women to read, you have taught a whole family,” and illiteracy impacts all families in Detroit. She bases her rationale on recent reports, locally and nationally.

Noting that illiteracy in Detroit is “alarming” according to Keith D. Williams, Wayne County Commissioner representing the 6th District. Williams writes in The Detroit News, “Detroit ranked 69th out of the 79 cities studies. The study suggests the city’s less-than-literate status may now be worse than the distressing 1993 National Institute for Literacy study, which found Detroit had one of the highest illiteracy rates in the country, with 47 percent of our adult residents classified as functionally illiterate.”

Lovingly recalling her childhood growing up in Detroit, she says with a smile, “It was awesome! There were so many people in Detroit. One could go anywhere; there were recreation centers and a swimming pool at St. Jean and Kercheval. We didn’t have all this sex on television, people were happy. Neighbors were good neighbors—they watched out for one another, people sat on their porches.” She remembers that if she misbehaved, her neighbor would scold her and then her parents would scold her again. “People weren’t scared about being sued for disciplining their children,” and Artina believes, “We can get there again.” She attended Scripps Elementary, Foch Junior High, and Southeastern High School. She recalls accompanying her mother to church choir practice and her favorite hymn is “Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior,” and “Have Thine Own Way Lord.”

Her father Will and mother Mary Louise died one year apart in 1998 and 1999. Sister Vivian lives in California and retired 1 year ago. Brother Lonnie is retired and sister Alberta Tinsley-Talabi has served as a member of the Detroit City Council and is seeking another term. Her youngest sister is named Daisy. One sister, Mary died in 1984 from colon cancer.

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Jerry Hill

NURSE

Interaction with patients and helping others is what makes Jerry Hill smile. Starting off in 1970 as a Wayne County health technician, in 1980 he became a Wayne County health inspector and performed in that capacity for 23 years. He took an early retirement in 1991 when he was responsible for air quality control. Wayne County was the only county within the state that had its own department but gradually the Wayne County program was taken over by the state of Michigan.

“The recent fire in Romulus shows you a perfect example of safety systems working perfectly and if I were still with that department, we would have been there,” he said. In a chemical plant there is a protocol that must be followed. He concludes that, “Since nobody was hurt, they evacuated properly.”

Jerry has recently returned to Minorah House in Southfield following a serious illness that has kept him from working since August 2004. Healthy looking and vigorous, 57 year old Hill is still recovering from four surgeries and anticipates having one final surgery. Never being off work in his entire life, he could tolerate being home only so long before he was yearning to get back to work. People were urging him to take it easy but Hill couldn’t take it.

Returning to work in a limited capacity, Hill is serving as a staff nurse. He formerly worked in management as director of nursing where he was accountable for the planning, developing, and implementation of long-term care for the American Acquisition Corporation. Hill says that management was much more stressful
Hill Climbs Mountains

than the direct nursing care that he is currently doing since the previous job required keeping abreast of federal regulations and policies. He cites the shortage of registered nurses needed for long-term care vital to a growing older population who are on Medicare or Medicaid. This nursing is quite different than working in a hospital and the transition for some is difficult. “For me, sometimes the care with older patients is trying, but there are lots of ways to solve a problem and I always come back to work in the morning with a positive attitude. Kindness will always win out,” says Hill.

“When I was in nursing school one of my instructors told me to find my niche and be happy within it,” he said. Finishing nursing school at the age of 40, he went to Harper Hospital and was assigned the “preceptor from hell!” A preceptor is a mentoring nurse assigned to new nursing graduates. He enjoyed working in the hospital as a nursing student but after graduating encouraged by the assistant director of nursing to try long-term care, which gave him fulfillment. Hill says, “At the end of the day, when you go home, you know you have done something significant.”

Hill recalls Mrs. Earlene Cottrell who set the pace for nursing at WCCCD. She took nursing seriously and inspired students to thoroughly learn the fundamentals of the nursing process.

Hill is an avid music collector, preferring Jazz. He likes Nancy Wilson, Aretha Franklin, Marc Anthony, and wistfully recalls Marlina Shaw’s, Joe Williams', and Johnny O’Neil’s performances many year’s ago at Baker’s Keyboard Lounge. He also recalls seeing Sarah Vaughn, Lou Rawls, and Nancy Wilson at the Top of the Ponch. While at home relaxing, he listens to music and plays computer games. He plays Spades, Hearts, Gin Rummy 500, and all the games on the Hoyle Game Program.

Hill speaks fondly of his extended family that includes several special people who are still living nearby. Religion is an important part of his life and he believes that a lot of strength comes from prayer. Jerry Hill is currently reading “Religions of the World Made Simple,” in an effort to understand all people, which could be translated into his own philosophy of life devoted to understanding and helping people.
Patricia Kukula-Chylinski  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

When it comes to expertise in management of complex projects, few people can compete with Patty Kukula-Chylinski, executive director of Physician Sales and Services for the Detroit Medical Center (DMC). Responsible for the recruitment and retention of physicians, Kukula-Chylinski has developed a division to organize physician-related services provided to new physicians to encourage loyalty of graduating residents from the 10 hospitals and institutes of the DMC. She conducts outreach programs with Wayne State University (WSU) School of Medicine. WSU, one of the country’s leading medical schools trains and retains physicians year who stay and practice in Michigan. Patty contends that, “Our physicians have a commitment to society and community and are much more compassionate, she says. “They make miracles happen.”

Reading from Crain’s Detroit Business, Kukula-Chylinski says, “In the last 18 months, the DMC has turned a profit,” and has started to build its reputation on Wall Street. Last year was the first year they showed a profit for many years.” Crain’s further states, “The DMC erased a 133 million dollar deficit and made a profit of $2.5 million and are projected to be in the black again at the end of 2005.” Kukula is proud to play a key role in this turn around.

Kukula-Chylinski recalls taking evening classes offered by WCCCD and held in the Grosse Pointe Public Schools. The highly qualified teachers impressed her. Continuing her formal education, Kukula-Chylinski received a bachelor of science in occupational therapy in 1979.
Grosse Pointe Public Schools have recently focused on diversity issues. All parents have been required to register their students with resident documentation. Ever the community activist, Kukula-Chylinski volunteered, welcoming the more than 60 parents who registered their students during the two-hour period during which she served. She reports a positive exchange with all the diverse families.

For the past four years, she has served as mayor pro-tem for the city of Grosse Pointe Woods. She has demonstrated her dedication to her constituents by advocating for small businesses over the last few years on the Woods City Council. She worked to free up liquor licenses over the past three years feeling that the licenses would boost the businesses on Mack Avenue in Grosse Pointe Woods. She asserts that the restaurants need all the tools available to them to deliver a dining experience that people will enjoy close to home, saying to a local paper, “If people come here for our businesses, they will see what we have to offer as a community and a place to live.” Kukul-Chylinski aspires to stabilize residential property values and increase commercial business.

During her tenure on the Woods City Council, Kukula-Chylinski lobbied for outside seating at Robusto’s, new professional city management, audible traffic signals being proactive for people with disabilities, worked for an amiable agreement with the surrounding neighbors and a new Flagstar Bank to alleviate parking problems. She wishes to change the appearance of community living saying, “Taxes should be used in ways that benefit the people.”

Recalling advice she got from her father, “You make your bed and you sleep in it,” she says, “Whatever you do, you have to live with it.” And she passes this guidance along to her two children, Randi Elaine and Jaclyn Alice, ages 14 and 9, respectively. She and husband Wayne County Circuit Judge James Chylinski have been married for 26 years. This is one tech-savvy lady who was multitasking throughout our interviews. Using her Blackberry, she was fielding cell phone calls, instant messaging, replying to e-mails while giving thorough, thoughtful answers to all the interview questions. Can she handle the mayor’s job? No doubt. High energy, Kukula-Chylinski, taking her father’s advice, has made her bed but she is obviously not resting there often.

Multi-Tasking Miracle

In addition to all her community activities, Kukula-Chylinski plays softball, a sport she has enjoyed for the last 24 years as right center with the Southfield City League. She has participated in the Detroit Free Press marathon, regularly rides her 10-speed Schwin Continental, and practices yoga.
Melody Light

LAWYER

With a combination of drop-dead beauty and city savvy, Melody Light has developed coping skills that will serve her well throughout her life. She attributes much of her inner strength to her family background. The nurturing and support she experienced through tough times translates into the warm and understanding person she has become. When she talks about her southern family of five and the values instilled in her, she recalls that her mother was class valedictorian and in Light's words, "a very wise woman." Initially her mother had been unusually talented as a singer but children and poverty put her in slum housing with rodents, wind through the windows year around, and little to eat. Melody remembers her mother's strengths and failings. She does not believe that her plight was an aberration saying, "You play with the cards with which you are dealt, I see myself as a person who can bridge gaps" saying, "There is always a way to survive and make a living."

A Catholic family sponsored her family, enabling them to purchase a home. "All of us had different fathers," Melody recalls, and the streets were calling. Ringing in her ears were taunts about her, "She's gonna have a baby, she's gonna be a nothing." Light knows she was headed for disaster in an area where young people did not learn, drugs more prevalent than textbooks, and violence was just around the corner.

Dropping out of high school, Light somehow made it to WCCCD where she was able to complete a general education degree (GED). This was a breakthrough and Light continued to enroll in classes. Dr. Kandi Baba Kumasi (deceased), English instructor and author of "Down the Nile," "King Tut," and "Queen Neferet," encouraged Light to go back to school. She says, "Teachers are the people who make you what you are." This welfare mother earned an associate degree in applied science in 1984, a bachelors in 1986, a master in 1988, a master's degree in 1991,
and a law degree in 1994. Work for the law degree was completed, she proudly recalls, in two years and nine months. This outstanding record of credentials is testament to Light’s perseverance.

Light recalls the day she passed the state bar exam on the first attempt. She was ecstatic and had achieved this without the support of her husband. He obviously threatened, was critical of her studies since she had large student loans and she was unable to generate income while studying for the bar exam.

Melody has learned a lot about the political process after running for judge and losing. “I don’t know when I can get the energy to run again,” she laments. “I still have a desire to be a judge but I have a lot of debt including my student loans and additional loans that have been taken out to put my children through school.” Light knows that her resume looks better than it has ever looked but feels the need to focus on making a living first.

Light At The End Of The Tunnel

Having no positive male role models and yearning to learn something about her father, Light took a Greyhound Bus to Jackson, Mississippi, to meet him. He had been in the service when he and her mother met. Melody was excited about meeting him and he did not disappoint, a good-looking tall, 6’7”, man, smart and successful, but he totally rejected her. Light has called him every year to give him an update on her achievements but, regrettably, it has not made a difference in their relationship.

Despite judge’s salaries, based on a percentage of the Michigan Supreme Court salaries, Light continues to aspire to become a judge. Flashing back to a fourth grade teacher who told her mother that Melody demonstrated, “an innate ability to judge fairness and had a great sense of fairness,” Melody confesses that she always kept this in mind. This statement was kept in her soul and the vision was never far from sight. Light ran for judge in 2000, losing by only 5,000 votes in a field of 12 candidates and if she can muster enough courage, she may try again, saying, “Perhaps I’ll be a judge someday.”

“I think I stand out in this world,” says Light who still believes in giving back to the community and considers teaching women who have circumstances similar to her own as another option. “I was headed for disaster and school was my ticket,” and one can sense that this is high-definition Light and it is genuine!
Joseph E. Mendrysa

Fireman

“People call us heroes, but we just do our job.”

Claiming that he never knew what he wanted to do in life, Joseph E. Mendrysa has landed with both feet solidly on the ground. Passionate and enthusiastic, Joseph found out early in life that rescuing people and saving lives gave him great satisfaction. He had the opportunity to save people while working as a lifeguard in the summers during his high school and college years. After two years of college, concentrating on business courses, he discovered what really got him excited – The Paramedic Program at WCCCD.

This future fireman has completed certificate programs in EMT, Firefighter I and II where he was the class valedictorian. He is currently enrolled in the Paramedic Program and has Michigan Certifications in Firefighter I and II, Hazmat, Medical First Responder Awareness and Operations, CPR, and First Aid.

Mendrysa has excelled in sports since early childhood and his involvement has included everything water related. He swam on the Huron High School swim team and he recalls fond memories of fishing with his dad in Lake Erie, which he continues to do. He enjoys swimming, boating, and water skiing. Going up north to a family cottage at Higgins Lake is the destination of choice year round.

Mendrysa’s mom works for Visteon and has served on the Huron School District Board of Education for the past 12 years. His two brothers, Jeff, age 21, is also enrolled in the Firefighter Curriculum at WCCCD, and Eric, age 18, who is interested in horses hopes to become an equine veterinarian. His dad, a UPS driver, and his mom have provided strong family support and have encouraged the boys in all their endeavors.
guiding them to, “Be yourself and be happy.” Joseph credits his mom, saying, “She is the reason I am who I am,” and Visteon awarded him an educational scholarship. He also received a MEAP scholarship. Combined with scholarship money, and his present job as a parts distributor for D&E Automotives, Mendrysa is working his way through school.

Playing in a rock band is one of Joseph’s favorite hobbies. He plays bass with friends in a five piece alternative rock band called X = Y, with whom he has been “jamming” since high school. The band practices weekly in “The Loft,” located in an empty warehouse and many successful engagements have turned a profit for the group.

Finding time to study is one of Mendrysa’s biggest challenges since he has many interests and jobs. He says he studies the paramedic facts, statistics, and procedures anytime he can having developed good study skills in high school. He admits schoolwork is fairly easy for him. He has always excelled in science and had been interested in becoming a high school science teacher until he learned about firefighting and paramedics. These jobs are certainly more risky occupations but according to Mendrysa, “The rewards are worth the risk.”

Living a life among heroes is what keeps him in the program. He has been particularly inspired by the competence and dedication of WCCCD’s EMT and paramedic instructor Gerald Glotfelty who, Mendrysa says, “Makes learning fun – like putting puzzle pieces together.” He also says that Fire II instructor Mike Brandt from Wyandotte and Liam Carroll from Lincoln Park, “really know their stuff – highly skilled instructors.” One of Mendrysa’s most exhilarating experiences was learning how to extricate people out of cars using the Jaws of Life.
Bettye Misuraca has been an energetic Detroit supporter for more than four decades. She is a passionate civil rights activist, a major player in politics working on political campaigns since 1964, a visionary, and winner of over 30 special recognitions and awards for public service. Her memberships with charitable foundations include the Salvation Army, the Goodfellows, YWCA, St. John’s Hospital Auxiliary, Boniface Human Services, and the Board of SHAR – Self Help Addiction Recovery. Currently president of SHAR, she continues to steer a committee with other key volunteers for the annual Human Service Awards Dinner fundraiser. SHAR’s most visible and successful fundraising affair each year. Awardees have included Mayor Coleman A. Young, Dave Bing, Owen Bieber and Tom Turner.

Misuraca earned an associate degree in liberal arts from WCCCD in 1976. She states, “First of all, I know that WCCCD gave me my foundation, the start of a great career and important friendships.” Bettye believes that when one comes into contact with important people, it is important to have the skills. Otherwise opportunities are limited.

From childhood, Misuraca knew she was destined to make an impact on society. Born in 1936 in Montgomery, Alabama, Bettye recalls that her mother worked in the police department in Montgomery and was on duty when Rosa Parks was arrested. “Mr. Strickland, the boss at the time, told my mother just to sit with Mrs. Parks until they decided what they were going to do. Mr. Strickland was a very kind man,” Bettye says. So my mother sat and talked with Mrs. Parks until Virginia Durr and her husband came in and posted bail and got Mrs. Parks out.”
Hillary Clinton later honored Virginia Durr for her public service. Although Bettye didn’t have the opportunity to know any African Americans during her childhood days, she met Rosa Parks later on in life. “I really didn’t know Rosa Parks until much later but destiny has a way of catching up and leading us where we should be.”

Misuraca worked her way through a number of government jobs having her civil service credentials and became the executive assistant to Edward H. McNamara. She says, “Every administration gave me another view of life, and all have come together in a beautiful collage.” Three years ago, she retired and has been taking care of her elderly mother since last November but that has not slowed any of the consulting and committee work with which she is currently involved. When Misuraca retired, McNamara wrote about her saying, “While she has helped legions of people, she has a legion of friends who know and admire Bettye because they all know one thing about her — when you really need help, Bettye is always there.”

Perhaps the most significant contribution to the College will come next year when the Public Service Credit Union will become a part of the scenery at WCCCD on the Downtown Campus. Misuraca is excited about having the opportunity to form a partnership that will benefit students and is proud to be in a position to give back to the institution that gave her a start. The credit union will be of value for WCCCD students as financial courses and seminars are planned. Students will learn how to build credit, restore credit, and three students will be hired from the college with the opportunity to earn union wages while completing their degrees. These students will be trained as tellers and learn how to become loan officers. They will be allowed to work at the credit union during times that do not conflict with the courses in which they are matriculating. The Public Service Credit Union has already established a relationship with the Romulus School District, and it is hoped that those students will become interested in advancing their education at WCCCD. Misuraca says, “This is a win for the College and a win for the credit union, and I am glad to be in a position to make these connections; if I had the opportunity to learn about more financial information when I was a student, I could have accumulated more wealth and that is my hope for these young students. I had no one to tell me if I had saved $10 a week what it would have grown to,” she said. Misuraca’s vision is to expand these services to other campuses around the District. She explains, “As many of us have observed as we are shopping, some clerks and cashiers can not count money so this will give students hands-on experience with money — ‘money 101, if you will, and they will learn about free checking.’

Misuraca is married to Robert Jarrett, retired chief engineer — Department of Public Works, Wayne County and has two children and a granddaughter. Misuraca’s daughter, Denise, teaches in the Detroit Public Schools at Davis Aerospace School and is hoping to become an administrator.
Carol Ann Owens

Clown

Carol Ann Owens (aka on stage, Carey Ann) is both a children’s entertainer and dance instructor. Known for her lively humor and dynamic delivery, she spent 25 years as a dance teacher providing plenty of interaction with children from very young to teenage and more recently with many adults. As a clown for the past 15 years, Carey Ann performs with Mister Ro for concerts, children’s birthday parties, company picnics, and special events.

As the founder of Carey Ann’s Clown Caravan, Owens has a troupe of clowns and entertainers who provide magic, games, face painting, storytelling, and balloon sculpture. During the holiday season, Santa and Mrs. Clause (Carol and her husband), along with their elves entertain audiences. Her husband, Roland (aka Mister Ho-Ho-Ho), was a folk singer in the Detroit area back in the ’60s. Since retirement in 1996, he has joined Carey Ann on stage, providing the musical side of the duo with song, guitar, and banjo.

For some of the concerts, Carey Ann has created a wild looking 5’x6’ canvas Dream Machine. The machine enchants kids and when they ask to climb into the contraption the answer is no — they can’t — because the Dream Machine has already climbed inside of them! “The Dream Machine,” contends Carol, “is in your mind and one can do anything, be anyone, and go anywhere.” She describes it as the heart of one’s imagination.

Over the years, Owens has become entrepreneurial developing a myriad of topics and venues for education and business training programs. “Citizens Under Construction” developed for elementary schools, teaches
The Class Clown

Owens and her husband love to scuba dive and travel to Cozumel annually for vacation. Carry Ann, the clown, scuba dives with dolphins. She and her husband have developed relationships with school systems in Cozumel, allowing them to take their message into areas where English is not spoken but they have found no problem communicating. “It does not matter what nationality,” says Owens, “The clown is easily understood.” She and her husband are producing a film to educate children about caring for the earth, above and below the sea.

Owens graduated from WCCCD with an associate degree in Liberal Science. The Downriver Campus was close to her home so commuting by riding a bike or driving her Model A Ford was a quick trip. While taking a history course offered by the College at Greenfield Village – currently known as The Henry Ford – she was given preferential treatment when pulling up in the vintage car, which is actually a replica. Even the museum guards believed it to be authentic. She recalls that Dr. Allan Bramson, Sociology and Social Sciences was a wonderful WCCCD instructor. For graduation, she was selected as the speaker since everyone was eager to hear the message from the “class clown.” She has since received additional awards and accolades. In 2002 she was awarded the John Lennon Award in the children’s division. She and her husband have six grandchildren and two new puppies so one may conclude that the frolicking never ends. Owens says, “I wish everyone could find a way to earn a living and have as much fun as we do.”

Owens and her husband are currently developing life-size concert puppets. They are involved with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and have served as chairpersons for Downriver’s annual Light the Night Charity Walk. They are also involved in a program called, “Kids Unlimited,” hoping to bring kids into partnerships with community, making for a better world. The two meet each morning in their “Creative Castle (a newly constructed site on their property)” where they brainstorm about new endeavors. Owens wakes up occasionally in the middle of the night with a new idea, which she writes down immediately.

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Entering the Chelsea Proving Grounds, one is immediately impressed with the security and scrutiny. Tough looking security guards communicate a no non-sense attitude. No one is allowed on the grounds without a specific purpose. Some of the technology housed on the proving grounds is one of a kind in the automotive industry and is closely guarded. “When a vehicle comes to the proving ground, this is where the entire vehicle comes together for testing and where any kind of driving conditions that exist in the nation are replicated,” says Terry Packer, supervisor Facility Services at DaimlerChrysler Chelsea Proving Grounds.

Located outside Ann Arbor, the 3,850-acre site is devoted to comprehensive testing year round in laboratories and on specially designed roads. The initial land purchase in 1947 opened a facility devoted to automotive excellence and continues to improve the facility’s testing capabilities with 700 employees working three shifts per day, seven days per week. Christmas and New Year’s are only two days when the track is closed. The total building area is 700,000 square feet with 95 lane miles of roadway composed of asphalt, concrete, gravel, and off road trails.

Packer’s function includes scheduling of all events, local and national and special activities. He recalls the recent 50th anniversary celebration with an anticipated attendance of 2,000, which mushroomed into 20,000 guests and visitors, creating a logistical challenge that was met by Terry and his outstanding team. He laughingly recounts a special request such as the recent one from Link Belt, a company in Lexington, Kentucky, that wished to use the test track to test two 45-ton cranes in a 65 mph drag race. Of course, Packer made it happen! Packer and the four people who assist him in executing all the activities associated with his job also coordinate the facilities, video conferences, ensure that all comply with OSHA guidelines,
coordinate the Employee Assistance Program for counseling, and the Workforce Violence Prevention Programs. Packer has certification in Employee Assistance Programs and Critical Incident Stress Management.

Packer is a real “people person” who believes in treating those with whom he works the way he would like to be treated. He values employee suggestions for improvement. His great sense of humor comes through when he talks about being a coach and mentor, mentioning the occasional, “Come to Jesus meeting”.

Believing that behind every great student is a commitment to excellence; Packer is passionate about creating opportunities for young people. He is actively involved in the Southfield Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Southfield Kappa Foundation that awards scholarships to deserving students, and serves on the Edwin Denby Center for Children and Family Services Advisory Council and Detroit Repatory Theatre Board of Trustees. Son Sean, who got into the Skilled Trades and also attended WCCCD, passed away while sleeping in 2001, a result of an undetected heart condition at the age of 31. The Sean Eugene Packer-Baldwin Memorial Skill Trades Scholarship is presented annually. “I felt that helping another parent’s child would be the very best way to celebrate my son’s life,” Packer said.

Driving through the proving grounds, it becomes obvious that Packer is an expert on all the details that include skid traction facility, vehicle dynamics area, the handling and evaluation road, an automated durability road, paved grades for general use, and off road use, unpaved grades, and a Rubicon Trail (Sluice Box Sections). The oval test track completed in 1953 is six lanes of concrete 4.71 miles long and is listed in the 2005 Guinness Book of World Records. Packer takes pride in discussing the dedicated workforce and many features of the proving grounds, such as the 140 mph neutral steer condition on Oval Test Track that makes it possible to orbit continuously, “hands free” by maintaining a steady speed of at least 100 mph until the vehicle runs out of gas or is stopped voluntarily.

Packer, born in Rantoul, Illinois, relocated to Detroit in the early ’70s from Albuquerque, New Mexico. He graduated from WCCCD in 1974 with an associate of science and proudly displays his diploma that also indicates he was awarded the College Board Engineering Scholarship. Recalling graduation day with pride, Packer remarks that he is the first male in his family to complete a degree. He continued his education at Central Michigan University where he was awarded a bachelor in industrial science management and supervision and has done master’s level coursework in science and administration and hopes to complete this degree as his schedule permits.

Heaven and hell is here,” and there is always someone to help you through the bad times and share in the euphoria in good times. “If I am able to do something good that gives me a good feeling,” Packer speaks quietly and modestly, “I hope I’ve impacted someone else in a positive way. I’ve never aspired to be rich but I would love to have the financial ability to help a whole school – that’s my idea of being rich.”

Packer likes to travel and speaks fondly of his 10-year old granddaughter, Alisha Marie who is interested in dance. To encourage her, Grandfather Packer has escorted her to “Beauty and the Beast,” in NYC, performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D. C., and “The Lion King,” in Toronto.
Success Stories

Sean Ryan

FIREMAN

Following in his father’s footsteps, Sean Ryan is continuing his education by matriculating in the Firefighters and Emergency Medical Services offered by WCCCD. He has completed and passed state of Michigan exams for certification in Basic EMT, Firefighter I and II, HAZMAT Awareness and Operations, and is currently enrolled in the Paramedic program. Believing in lifelong learning, Sean will continue to complete Hazmat courses at the technician and specialist level. He expresses admiration for WCCCD’s EMT instructor Gerald Glotfelty who has been teaching since 1974, and according to Sean, “really knows the subject.”

Ryan has gained the respect of his peers and instructors for his dedication and perseverance. While working at the Woodhaven Fire Department, he is determined to become an outstanding and highly competent firefighter by increasing his knowledge about water rescue, trench rescue, high and low angle rescue, ice rescue, paramedic procedures, and drug identification, to enable him to make quick decisions about patient care. He carries a stack of cards in his pocket so that he can quickly study and memorize all the details about prescription drugs so that he will have the knowledge to react quickly in an emergency. He prefers to leave fire rescue in a confined space and other rescue operations within a confined space to others. Sean is a large man. His size, though, should be an advantage in other rescue operations.

Routine fitness tests require that each firefighter is capable of dragging a 200-pound dummy up and down stairs within a time limit. Additional requirements that must be met before any candidate can apply for a fire department position include moving a mannequin, carrying heavy equipment, raising and lowering ladders, moving fire hoses, going in and out of a window in a simulated window rescue.
Outside the safety area, Ryan works as a cook at Amigo’s Mexican Restaurant, Woodhaven, Michigan. He has worked his way up from being a busboy, prep-cook, server, and presently is the cook. Sean specialized in making fajitas along with other Tex-Mex fair but his favorite fast food is McDonald’s dollar menu since he is always counting his pennies to make sure he can pay his college tuition and maintain his car.

An outdoor man, Ryan loves “roughing it” by camping with his friends, playing Wally-ball, and recently went on a white-water rafting trip in Pennsylvania. He has also enjoyed trips to New Hampshire, Cancun, and the Florida Keys. He claims to have no occasions to meet girls since working full time and going to school occupy most of his time. He is devoted to his mother who supports his endeavors but sometimes cringes with fear about the obstacles and dangers he will face as a firefighter.

Ryan’s father, a Detroit Fire Fighter, passed away in 1989 immediately after fighting a vicious fire. Breathing apparatuses, not up to current standards, did not protect fire fighters then. Ryan’s dedication to fire fighting and saving lives is obvious and he worked at the firehouse in Woodhaven throughout the holidays.

Talking with Sean Ryan reveals that he is dedicated to helping others and one can believe that his chosen profession will bring him rich rewards which cannot be measured financially since a starting firefighter’s salary is typically under $30,000. One can be assured that the fire department that snags Sean will have an outstanding team member.

"Put the wet stuff on the red stuff" – fireman’s mantra.
Bishop John H. Sheard

Bishop John H. Sheard, presiding prelate of the First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Michigan Southwest, has recently been elevated to the office of Board of Bishops by his peers. By serving in this four-year position, his leadership abilities are demonstrated in Detroit and internationally. Bishop Sheard is a unique individual whose charisma has attracted a diverse group of people to his congregation. He takes time to recognize people as individuals, impacting their lives with his profound teaching ability and they, in turn, leave with a fervent desire to tell others in need to come and see Greater Mitchell’s inspirational leader.

Religion has played a major role throughout Bishop Sheard’s life. Serving as a junior deacon, senior deacon, and chairman of the Youth Department of Bailey Temple, he was recognized for his leadership and in 1982 Bishop John Seth Bailey consecrated Sheard Pastor of Mitchell Street Church of God in Christ. Sheard’s dynamic ministry immediately drew parishioners resulting in two relocations to accommodate growing congregations. In 1993 the Greater Mitchell Temple Church of God in Christ came to its present facility at 13737 Curtis. Under his leadership, Bishop Sheard has renovated Bailey Cathedral (jurisdiction headquarters), improved relationships with jurisdictional pastors, ensured financial solvency and fiscal integrity for the jurisdiction, provided financial assistance to widows of deceased pastors and awarded numerous student scholarships annually.

Having a background rich with a myriad of experiences, Bishop Sheard has been able to bring many different dimensions to his present job. Sheard says it does help him to relate to people within his jurisdiction. He has been able to draw on his collective experiences to bring
Listen to the Lambs

dreams to fruition. As he speaks his personal mission statement, his deep beliefs are revealed, "Personally, as a leader, I am constantly trying to equip parishioners with tools for their natural and spiritual benefit for God's people and the world."

Born March 27, 1936, in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, Sheard moved to Detroit in 1954 having just graduated from Mound Bayou Consolidated High School. Two years later, he married Willie Mae Gordon and began attending college. Possessing a strong personal drive for education, Sheard attended WCCCD, earning an associate's degree; transferring all credits to Wayne State University, he received a Bachelor of science in 1974 and masters of arts in humanistic psychology in 1981.

Sheard appreciates the unique experiences afforded him by WCCCD. He recalls, "Mr. Dobbs, a physical science teacher, who was considerate and always willing to review the subject material. I also remember Mrs. Dauphine Walker-Shivers, (deceased) Speech Department, who taught humanities and both were inspirational." By taking evening classes, Sheard was able to work all day as a driver's training instructor and a tax preparer. "The satellite centers WCCCD operated at the time enabled me to easily attend class," said Bishop Sheard. By working two jobs, he was able to attend school 12 straight years and support his family. He says, "Somehow, I kept everything going," and claims that he was, "never smart, just careful and persistent."

Subsequent to completing his degree, Bishop Sheard taught in the Detroit public schools. He relates that he taught from practical experience saying, "My students were like my very own children. I encouraged them to develop habits. I told them to brush their teeth, wash their body, comb their hair, and save money constantly." When asked about what objectives are important in today's schools, Sheard reinforces his practical experience lessons and says, "Practical life skill should be a part of the curriculum." Sheard says, "Good stuff works — if one is honest and saves money it will bring rewards."

Bishop Sheard's perseverance and success in the ministry would not have been possible if it were not for the love, support, and prayers of his wife and children. His sons, Drew and Ethan, have also chosen the ministry. Mother Willie Mae Sheard, his spouse, is active in the church’s missions and one son is a Superintendent in the church, following in his father's footsteps.

Bishop Sheard asserts that his top priority is the ministry but, in speaking about Detroit, Sheard says, "I think we should use good from all leaders and put it into action for the city. " When asked about additional government programs he says that he is researching faith-based initiatives and is cautious about policies that would not be beneficial for his parishioners. He is committed to those he calls, "my people."

Sheard claims to have no hobbies and reports that his family says he does not relax. Bishop says, "If you like doing what you do, that becomes your hobby and I like my religious work."
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Fire Protection Technology is an associate degree program that prepares students for employment in a firefighting department. The objectives of the program are twofold: to instruct qualified high school graduates who want to become firefighters, and to update off-duty firefighters and officers on new and advanced firefighting techniques. Typically, program graduates qualify for entry-level firefighting positions, with advancement potential through competitive examination. Job opportunities also exist with private industry. Core skills include the ability to work under stress and get along well with people, being a team player. Good mechanical aptitude and maturity are essential. Because firefighting is a physically demanding career, job candidates are required to pass a rigorous physical endurance exam and state certifications exams.
BROWN & JUANITA C. FORD ART GALLERY

Located on the College’s Downtown Campus at 1001 W. Fort St. in Detroit, the gallery features the work of globally renowned artists. The mission of all three of the College’s art galleries is to create a learning atmosphere that is stimulating to students and community members. By providing this environment, it is hoped that people who wish to pursue art as a career or those who want to learn about and appreciate art will find the galleries welcoming and educational.

In September 2005, a reception for the exhibit, was held featuring paintings and drawings of Saffell Gardner and Sabrina Nelson, two local artists who have a strong following in the community. Gardner earned his bachelor of fine arts (BFA) and master of fine arts (MFA) in painting from Wayne State University (WSU) and is the recipient of a regional artists project grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and has participated in arts mentoring programs in local public schools.

Sabrina Nelson, a native of Detroit, received her BFA in painting from Center Of Creative Studies (CCS). Her influences are Faith Ringgold, Freda Kahlo, and Harriet Powers. She uses a variety of media that reflect her ideas and images about African deities or Orishas and the family life that focuses on the strength of African American females.

Other Ford Gallery’s past exhibits include “ABSTRACTICA: ICONS OF FAITH AND OBJECTS OR INSPIRATION – Anita Bates” and Jocelyn Rainey’s latest works. Rainey, a former WCCCD student, was thrilled to return to her alma mater. While attending CCS, she completed her liberal arts studies at WCCCD. Anita Bates creations are inspired by observing parts of the natural landscape that are often overlooked, such as details of rock, concrete floors, and weather-worn walls of torn down housing projects.

Richard Mayhew’s works entitled, “Community Traditions,” was featured last March. Mayhew’s work is represented in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the National Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum, and in the Manoogian and Charles H. Wright collections.

David Driskell has a special affinity for Detroit. Driskell was honored for his extraordinary commitment to perpetuating the visual arts legacy of African American artists and his book, “The Other Side of Color,” depicts the African American Art in the collection of Camille O. and William H. Cosby, Jr.

The Theodore Wells Exhibition in 2004 was well received. Wells received his BFA from North Carolina A&T State University and master of fine arts from the Tyler School of Art, at Temple University. His work has been exhibited at The Wilmington Trust Company, The Warehouse Gallery – Robin Hood Theatre, Arden Delaware, and The Stella Elkins Tyler School of Fine Arts of Temple University in Philadelphia.

True Exposure – a photography exhibition in 2004–featured works of John Ganis, Bill Sanders and Kay Young.

He received his MFA in photography from University of Arizona, a recipient of Michigan Council for the Arts grant; Ganis is currently department chair at CCS. Bill Sanders received his BFA, and MFA from WSU. He has exhibited for over 22 years in the DIA Foundation in New York, Scarab Club, Sherry Washington Gallery, and Willis Gallery. L. Kay Young, a Detroit based artist originally from Manchester, Tennessee, is currently an instructor in traditional photography, digital, and alternative processes at CCS.

Ford Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. On Wednesdays, the gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Group tours of the gallery with docent lecture are available and may be arranged by calling (313)496–2634 during gallery hours.
**WESTERN ART GALLERY**

The Western Art Gallery, located at WCCCD’s Western Campus, 9555 Haggerty Road in Belleville has been the site for many interesting exhibitions, the most recent being internationally recognized and Detroit-based artists Nancy and Russell L. Thayer. Nancy Thayer, a Michigan State University professor, is widely exhibited, collected, reviewed, and published. Russell Thayer’s work is different; as he explains, “it is work I created for the sake of art, for myself, and therefore defined solely by me.” Russell is working full time in his sculpture studio and has many major commissions throughout the United States. Most recent installations include Dearborn Community and Performing Arts Center, and St Mary’s Hospital in Saginaw, Michigan. He studied art at University of Michigan and at the Royal College of Art in London, England.

In writing about her art, Nancy Thayer says, “As a painter, I have worked with abstract interpretations of the landscape for over 20 years. Most recently I have been experimenting with cold patination on ferrous materials, attempting to gain control over the various hues caused by oxidizing steel.” The panels being created by Thayer suggest the natural environments free from human clutter and the panels indicate the relationship between the results of oxidation and the painter’s interpretation. Nancy Thayer studied art at Michigan State University and Instituto Allende in Mexico.

Gilda Snowden’s work is connected to the tradition of abstract expressionism. It often depicts urban realities and a wide range of emotional experiences. Snowden’s works are created with a respect for the depth of emotion and for the craft. Wayne State University (WSU) awarded Snowden’s BFA and MFA. Snowden is a curator, art critic, and art teacher currently professor of fine arts at CCS.

Richard Lewis is a Detroit native and a graduate of Cass Technical High School. He earned a BFA from CCS and a MFA from Yale School of Art, he was an artist in residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem. Lewis is a realist painter and his images are about life. Lewis has taught at Oakland University, CCS and Yale School of Art. Nora Mendoza is one of six artists working on the restoration of the Detroit Music Hall. Her work is highly biographical in that she uses the beauty of the dusty landscapes of Mexico and Texas to take the viewer on a journey of the Hispanic existence. She studied at CCS and is the recipient of numerous awards.

Chun Hui Pack was born in Seoul, Korea. She received her Bachelors of Fine Arts from the Art Institute of Chicago and a MFA from Yale University School of Art. In 1990’s she studied digital art and printmaking at CCS. Pak is a recipient of a number of grants and awards.

The Western Art Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursday, and Fridays and Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 6 pm. Additional information about upcoming exhibitions may be attained by calling (734) 699-7008.

**DOWNRIVER**

The Downriver Council for the Arts Gallery, located at 20904 Northline Road, Taylor, is an historic site that was renovated through a Masco Corporation partnership. Located near the Downriver Campus, WCCCD rents the space for the purpose of presenting art exhibitions and conducting educational training programs. Guest artists are invited to exhibit their work and provide hands-on workshops for local high school students. Art exhibits include “Local Color: Contemporary Realism” curated by Chris Melikan and featuring work by Anne Fracassa, Stephen Magsig, Chris Melikan, Jim Nawara, Lucille P. Nawara, Mary Potts, Mel Rosas, and Claudia Shepard. Other artists who have exhibited include Pauline Ender, Lenore Gimpert, and Richard Lewis.

Pauline Ender is a figurative and landscape painter. Ender studied art at Wayne State University and The Center for Creative Studies.

Lenore Gimpert, a graduate of CCS who holds a MFA from WSU. A love of history, particularly the Greek Hellenistic, Baroque, and rococo periods is portrayed in her painting and drawings. Her work encompasses classical statues, wrought iron gates, furniture details, and corsets.

Gallery hours are Wednesday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday, from noon to 3 p.m. Group tours for the gallery may be arranged by calling (734) 287-6103.
Surgical Technology

Graduates of the program are prepared to function as members of a surgical team. Surgical technologists are allied health professionals who are an integral part of the team of medical practitioners providing surgical care to patients in a variety of settings. The surgical technologist works under medical supervision to facilitate the safe and effective conduct of invasive surgical procedures. This individual works under the supervision of a surgeon and a registered nurse to ensure that the operating room or environment is safe, that equipment functions properly, and that the operative procedure is conducted under conditions that maximize patient safety.

A surgical technologist possesses expertise in the theory and application of sterile and aseptic technique and combines the knowledge of human anatomy, surgical procedures, and implementation of tools and technologies to facilitate a physician’s performance of invasive therapeutic and diagnostic procedures. The Surgical Technology Program is an associate degree accredited program, which begins each fall. The curriculum is designed to provide students with communication skills, basic sciences, introduction of surgical skills, and hands-on-simulation of current technology in the form of mock surgical procedures. Students are prepared to take the National Certification Examination for Surgical Technologists. Graduates will be eligible to work in hospitals, surgery clinics and other surgery specialty areas.

www.wcccd.edu
The Computer Information Systems program prepares students for a career in computer information systems, with an emphasis on microcomputer end-user support and helpdesk training. Microcomputer specialists are much in demand. Typical positions available to graduates include microcomputer specialist, microcomputer technician, microcomputer trainer, PC technician, computer applications technician, microcomputer sales representative, network technician, helpdesk support, PC support specialist, operation specialist, and service specialist. Core skills include effective interaction skills with people, analytical problem-solving, ability to work independently and in a team setting, and good written and oral communication skills.
Veterinary Technology

The Veterinary Technology program is designed to prepare graduates as assistants to practicing veterinarians or as technical assistants in veterinary medical laboratories in a variety of settings. The program offers promising careers for people interested in paraprofessional occupations in the field of veterinary medicine. National attention has been given to the need for veterinary technicians to help with general animal hospital activities, allowing veterinarians to spend more time with patients. Graduates from this program receive training in science, language arts, and areas of assistance to the veterinarian. Graduates can work as a certified veterinary technician for veterinarians, biological research workers, scientists, and business or organizations that provide care for animals. Students are prepared to take and pass the state certification assessments.