

**Mohawk Valley  
Community College**

**Alumni Newsletter**

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*"I found a rewarding career using art."*

Victor Lenuzza '92 | pages 4-5

## President's MESSAGE

This is an exciting time for the Mohawk Valley, and an exciting time for its community college.

Nanotech, entrepreneurship, and other business developments have created new opportunities and pose new challenges for our region. As the Mohawk Valley gets energized for what will come, MVCC is poised to lead and support the region as it grows into this new phase of economic growth. MVCC is on the front line of providing the skills needed to land high-paying nanotechnology jobs that will be coming to region.

In this issue of the Alumni Newsletter, you will read about MVCC's academic programs that lead to jobs in the nano field, as well as one alumnus of our Electrical Engineering Technology program who has found great success working in the clean room at the chip fab in Malta, N.Y.

You will read about one alum, an artist who, after living and working in other cities around the country, moved back to Utica, N.Y., to find rewarding and inspiring work helping others unleash their creative energies. Another alumnus, a wheelchair-racing champion, is accomplishing feats that would have seemed near impossible when he was a small boy in Bosnia. You will meet an alumna who, with her family, escaped civil war across the world to make her home here, and whose perseverance and hard work has led to her dream job in New York City. And you will meet one of our dedicated faculty, who started her college education here, then returned to teach, and is changing the lives of her students.

Our alumni are leaders in business, industry, service, and the arts, and are helping to revitalize and energize the Mohawk Valley in many ways. Reading their stories is always inspiring. We would love to hear yours.



Randall J. VanWagoner, Ph.D.  
President, Mohawk Valley Community College



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# MVCC IN POSITION TO TRAIN NANO WORKFORCE

As technology companies invest billions to create “Nano Utica,” Mohawk Valley Community College is positioned to train the workforce for the more than 1,500 new high-tech jobs coming to the region.

Highly skilled people will soon be at work designing, building, packaging and delivering cutting-edge computer chips, and delivering all the support services required to build a new industrial hub in the Mohawk Valley.

MVCC is on the front line of providing the skills needed to land one of these high-paying nanotechnology jobs with one-year certificates for Electronic Technicians as well as Industrial and Commercial Electricity. MVCC also offers two-year associate degrees in Computer Science, Electrical Engineering Technology, Electrical Service Technician, Engineering Science, and Semiconductor Manufacturing Technology.



Since 1946, MVCC has been the region’s primary educator for the technology and trades workforce. These degrees and certificates can lead graduates into such career paths as inspectors and testers; electrical equipment assembly; mechanical electrical engineering technicians; supervisors and general managers; computer technicians and IT specialists; purchasing agents, accountants and auditors; as well as industrial machinery mechanics and operators.

John Metott ’11 is a maintenance technician at Fab 8 at Global Foundries, a full-service semiconductor foundry in Malta, N.Y., that manufactures 300mm wafers for many of the world’s largest semiconductor companies.

Metott studied Electrical Engineering Technology while he was at MVCC, and says the program prepared him well for his career.

“Attention to detail is very important in this industry, and MVCC helped me learn to stay focused,” he says. “I believe that the electrical, hands-on experience I had at MVCC has helped tremendously in my work, especially when troubleshooting at Global Foundries.”

Every day, Metott says, he “suits up like a doctor” before entering the cleanroom, where he maintains the large, expensive equipment used at the fab.

He says that in his first week at work, he learned how to put on the clean suit, because the slightest error can contaminate and compromise a large number of wafers.

“Anyone who has worked in maintenance knows how dirty you can get on the job, but here, you could come in to work in a white suit and go home clean,” he says. “Everything is spotless, and everything in the fab is controlled. The temperature, humidity, everything.”

Metott says that MVCC’s instructors went out of their way to make sure students understood the material.

“Some instructors would bring videos from home for when we had finished our classwork,” he says. “I remember that one was about how the wafers are made from silicon, which was really cool. Now I know how it all works, but back then I didn’t, so it was amazing to see. That is the kind of above and beyond that distinguishes MVCC’s instructors over other places I’ve been. The curriculum is great, also, but it’s the instructors who make the difference. They really connect with their students, and students need that.”

Metott adds that his instructors helped to connect him with his job at Global Foundries.

“The school helped me set up the interview,” Metott says. “I came out here, thinking it was too far from my home, but once I got here, they hired me and offered me a great salary. And it’s a beautiful place to work.”

MVCC has the widest array of nanotechnology-related degree, certificate, and professional development programs ready to diversify the region’s workforce. Associate degrees that relate to the nanotechnology field include Semi-Conductor; Air Conditioning Technology; Building Management and Maintenance; Civil Engineering Technology; Chemical Technology; Computer Information Science; Computer Science/Cybersecurity; and Mechanical Engineering Technology. The certificates are in Computer Science/Cybersecurity; Heating and Air Conditioning; and Carpentry and Masonry, to name a few.

Some short-term professional training includes project management, principles of entrepreneurship, mechatronics, forklift training, tractor-trailer driving, and soldering.

MVCC has established a single point of contact to help all kinds of prospective nano employees start their new careers. **To learn more, call 315-792-5354, email [admissions@mvcc.edu](mailto:admissions@mvcc.edu) or visit the Student Service Center, Payne Hall Room 104, on the Utica Campus.**



John Metott



## MVCC WAS 'MY ROCK,' SAYS MUJEVIĆ '07

It seems that Selma Mujević '07 is living the dream. Having relocated to New York City, the senior marketing planner is working for NBC at 30 Rockefeller Center, on the same floor as Jimmy Fallon, and planning to publish a children's book.

But getting here wasn't easy for Mujević, who was born in Eastern Europe. Her family moved to the United States to escape the civil war that engulfed the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, and elementary school proved to be a rough time for her.

"I towered over all my peers, and I didn't speak English well, which made me feel extremely awkward, and uncomfortable in my own skin," says Mujević, the eldest of four children. "I was teased a lot in school, and I'd always think the grass is greener on the other side, even though I didn't know what 'the other side' was."

At age 13, she returned to post-war Bosnia, and was stunned to see a civilization that was once a leader in Europe degraded to third-world status.

"This changed me," says Mujević. "I immediately learned how precious life is and how nothing is certain. It made me believe in humanity, tolerance, respect, and the power of human will."

This trip made her think very differently about life and her outlook.

"I chose to look at the positive in every seemingly negative situation," she says. "And I consciously make an effort to remember the humility in every personal victory."

Her personal victories are many. Mujević's family chose to return to the United States when she was a high school senior, so she transferred to Utica's Proctor High School, leaving her friends in Europe behind.

"Everything seems so dramatically visceral and present while you're a high school student, regardless of where you are," she says. "It was hard to adjust, but Utica proved to be a really welcoming place. I made new friends, excelled in my classes, and even though I missed all my old high school friends, I viewed change as a good thing."

While Mujević was a student at Proctor, a visit with an MVCC admissions counselor made her realize that the nearby college might be a perfect fit for her.

The counselor talked about the different types of colleges, the costs, and pros and cons of each. It made Mujević consider her priorities: She knew she wanted to be able to transfer to a four-year school, she wanted to be close to her family, and her education had to be affordable because she didn't have a college fund or a financial cushion.

"I had to analyze my situation," she says. "The Open House I attended was informative, the staff seemed really warm, and the campus was beautiful. It was just what I was looking for at the time."

Mujević's interests were so varied (from social sciences and business to different cultures and creative arts) that she decided to dual-major – in Media Marketing and Advertising Management, as well as Liberal Arts – at MVCC.

"As a child, I was exposed to so many different life paths and careers – my parents were lawyers, my aunts and uncles were doctors, sociologists, artists, architects, carpenters, and home makers – that I had too many interests to commit to one field of study," she explains. "At the time I wanted to work for the United Nations, so Liberal Arts allowed me to create an International Relations curriculum, then explore other classes as electives."

Mujević was thorough in her research. "I read the titles of literally all the classes in the back of the catalog," she says. "I stopped at the description for an advertising communications class, took it, loved it, and decided I

wanted a degree in Media Marketing and Advertising Management, as well. I thought putting these two majors together really encompassed what I was looking for comprehensively."

As a dual major, Mujević was busy with her classes, but that didn't stop her from getting involved with campus activities as well. She was vice president of programming for MVCC's Program Board and was elected Student Representative of the Cultural Committee, vice president of the International Club, and voting member of the Lambda Beta Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa international honor society.

"I was always taught that you get back only what you put forth," she says. "So, I decided to apply myself – I really lived in the moment of every class and tried to do as well as I could in order to get into a four-year school."

While she didn't realize it at the time, Mujević's extra-curricular involvements helped her in her future career.

"I learned how to run meetings, work collaboratively, and multi-task," she says. "I also had the privilege of being sent to the APCA (Association for the Promotion of Campus Activities Conference) while an MV student. I was exposed to all kinds of talent and acts. This definitely helped me in my current role at NBC, with our local talent and news anchors."

Mujević says she also enjoyed the diversity of MVCC's student body, and the physical environment offered different places for study and inspiration.

"I enjoyed studying on the grass, in the shade of a tree, watching the art class paint outside on nice days – it was so peaceful and inspiring," she says. "I also liked that I had classmates from all walks of life – each with a different story of struggle and triumph, yet the same jumping board into an opportunity to achieve personal success."

Mujević transferred to the Fashion Institute of Technology for her bachelor's degree. She says she feels her MVCC education prepared her well for her studies, especially her skills in live participation, collaborative brainstorming, effective note taking and active listening.

"I really wanted to absorb what I was learning as well as challenge it, so that I could apply and relate it to my own world," she says. "I remember a quote my history professor, David Katz, once said: 'Different paradigms create different

# GARIC '13 WINS MIAMI MARATHON PUSHRIM DIVISION TITLE

Hermin Garic '13 has been building his reputation as an accomplished athlete, first with the adaptive sports program Sitrin STARS, and then as a competitor in the Boilermaker 15K Road Race Wheelchair Division, in which he has placed second for the past two years. Now he has bragging rights to a new victory: Garic won the pushrim division title at the Miami Marathon in February, with a time of 2 hours, 7 minutes, and 18 seconds.

"It was bittersweet," Garic says of his marathon win. "I was hoping to finish in less than two hours, since I have been working on my conditioning and endurance. But some technical issues with my chair occurred halfway through the race and I had to stop for a couple of minutes to fix the problem. But in the end, I was very happy to have finished first, and I was glad that I had a lot more energy than I did with my first marathon."

His training regimen is rigorous – endurance training is key to getting the body used to the distance.

"I do strength training, cardio, and of course, road training, or pushing in the racing chair," he says. "My road training, weather permitting, would usually include about 30 miles a day, consisting of flats, uphill, and down hills, which vary on what I want to focus on for the day."

Such a feat might have seemed nearly impossible 20 years ago, when Garic, just 4 years old, suffered a severe injury during the Bosnian war. As he and his family were running to a safe house, a rocket-propelled grenade exploded above them, sending shrapnel into Garic's back, knocking him unconscious. His father rushed him to his uncle's house to be bandaged, and the three proceeded toward an ambulance close by. On its way to the hospital, the ambulance crashed into a lake, resulting in Garic's spinal cord being severed.

In 2000, Garic's family moved to the United States, where medical treatment was more advanced.



"We had family in Utica, which made it an ideal place to move," he says. "The doctors and rehab professionals here have helped me tremendously. I have gotten back sensation in my lower extremities, as well as gaining strength and balance over the years."

Becoming active in the Sitrin STARS (Success Through Adaptive Recreation and Sports) was another way for Garic to help himself improve his strength, endurance, balance, and coordination in a supportive environment with fellow MVCC alumnus Marc Deperno '94, an occupational therapist and director of the Sitrin STARS.

"I started playing wheelchair basketball with the Sitrin STARS in 2003, and they told me about the Boilermaker Wheelchair Challenge," he says. "The challenge was to complete the Utica Boilermaker (9.3 miles) in a standard wheelchair in less than 2 hours and 15 minutes, in order to win a brand new racing chair. I completed this challenge in 2005 – in 1 hour and 16 minutes – and have been racing ever since."

Garic hopes that he can help to raise awareness of adaptive sports.

"I want to make racing my profession," he says. "I'd also like to expose more individuals to the world of adaptive sports, because they can really change people's lives."

realities' – this hit me like a brick. It was so simple, yet so unlimitedly pronounced. I used it in future discussions, and people would really take notice."

Katz was just one of many professors at MVCC to inspire Mujević. "I hate to name names, because I don't want to leave anyone out, but he was my first professor that made me think, 'Wow, what a real-life example of human resilience, the will to survive, and be strong.' His attitude was so impressive. It impacted me."

Mujević adds that the Student Activities Office also helped her to feel empowered to lead and manage a double major in addition to all of her extra-curricular tasks.

"Sandy Cummings and Dennis Rahn, in particular, were really instrumental in giving me the support and encouragement I needed to participate and handle all of my extra-curricular roles," she says.

At FIT, Mujević took an internship class that connected her to prospective companies. One of those was NBC.

"I was ecstatic," she says. "The interview was rigorous. I showed up at 30 Rockefeller Plaza. You needed special access to get anywhere, and I was escorted into a conference room, right next to the Dr. Oz studios. After four hours of what felt like an interrogation, I was told 'We'll let you know.' I got a call that same day."

Mujević graduated from FIT in 2010. She had just finished her internship with NBC and the job market was difficult to break into. She worked several jobs before a serendipitous post on LinkedIn led her to apply for another position at NBC, her current role as Senior Marketing Planner for the local News Station's sales team, where Mujević helps to develop creative advertising strategies for prospective clients.

Mujević has a lot on her plate and a lot to look forward to. "I have a lot of ideas, and goals," she says. "Currently, I'm in wedding planning mode, as I'm happily engaged to my best friend."

She realizes that change is constant, so is flexible with her goals and herself. But she is confident that her choices have been the right ones.

"I always knew that MV was my stepping stone," she says. "But it really turned out to be my foundation – my rock – as I evolved academically, socially, and professionally."

## ARTIST LENUZZA '92 FINDS REWARDING, INSPIRING WORK

Victor Lenuzza '92 unrolls a length of raw canvas in front of a paint-splattered wallboard in an art studio at Upstate Cerebral Palsy's Sauquoit site, where Stephanie Giuffrida has just arrived for her weekly painting session.

"Here's our future Hallmark card designer," he says, as Melinda Karastury brings Stephanie's wheelchair in front of the board, which acts as an easel. This is where Stephanie will spend the next hour painting as part of the agency's Artistic Realization Technologies (A.R.T.) program, an art expression program designed for those with limited use of their hands and limited or no vocabulary, which allows them to express their creative energies by painting with the aid of a tracker, or studio assistant, using a laser or point system.

A.R.T. is part of Pieces of Heart, a program of Upstate Cerebral Palsy that features artistic works in a variety of media. Artists like Stephanie work in watercolor, acrylics, mixed media, and recycled materials to express their thoughts and feelings. Their work is often displayed at galleries, and helps to increase public awareness of the talents and creativity of those with special needs. The agency also offers art classes for the community.

The bond between Lenuzza and Stephanie is immediately apparent. She gives him a big smile, and immediately reacts when she sees him unrolling the canvas. She is the artist. He is the tracker, trained to be solely driven by the artist's intentions.



"I am just her hands," he explains. He shows Stephanie a length of canvas and says, "You tell me how big you want the canvas to be." He moves a ruler across the canvas until Stephanie tells him to stop, indicating how wide and deep she would like the canvas to be.

This time, she has chosen a very horizontally shaped canvas, which Lenuzza attaches to the board. The next step is choosing a color from a large palette. Stephanie points to bright green, a refreshing contrast to the grey February sky.

"Stephanie loves using bright, spring-like colors," Lenuzza says, mixing green paint in a small bowl. His attention turns immediately to Stephanie, who is excitedly waiting to begin her latest masterpiece. "Do you have an idea of what you want to paint?" he asks.

Stephanie nods, and Lenuzza affixes a laser pointer to a visor, which he places gingerly on top of her head. The excitement in her eyes is undeniable. She moves her head up, down, and around, causing the laser to move about the canvas in long, deliberate strokes, and her vision starts to take shape.

Lenuzza follows the laser point across the canvas with a paintbrush, feverishly trying to keep up with Stephanie's quick brushstrokes while replicating her speed and movement.

"As you can see, she's pretty energetic," he says, as he chases her laser point about the canvas. "It's tough to keep a loaded brush, she paints so fast."

After a while, the entire canvas has taken on a bright green hue.

"It's all very calculated, as you can see," Lenuzza says, pointing out the different brushstrokes and paint textures. "She makes sure the whole canvas is covered. Then, when the paint dries, you see all of her movement in the paint strokes."

For a few minutes, he holds a small hairdryer up to the green canvas and dries it so that Stephanie can move on to the next step in her piece. Stephanie studies the canvas, deep in thought.

"She likes to analyze it and think about her next move," Lenuzza says, looking at her expectantly.

Using the letter board on her wheelchair, Stephanie spells out what she wants to paint next: "Red Heart."

Lenuzza mixes red paint into a bowl. He then holds a ruler up to the canvas and moves it slowly, waiting for Stephanie to indicate where she wants to paint the heart. She ultimately centers it. He helps her mark the size and shape using a

plastic strip with a pushpin, which he uses to bend into the shape of a heart with Stephanie's guidance.

The laser-equipped visor goes back on, and Lenuzza follows the laser point within the heart shape, painting it red. Stephanie traces the lines and fills in the empty spots of the heart with her movement.

Lenuzza, an artist who grew up in Utica, has been working at Upstate Cerebral Palsy since 2012, when he and his wife, Kristy, moved back to the Mohawk Valley after living in Boston.

"I was able to find a rewarding career using art," he says. "Some people knock Utica, but for me, it's my family, my friends, everything is here."

And that is what keeps bringing him back. He has lived in many different places, including Brooklyn, Italy, and Kansas City – and each place has influenced his artistic vision. In Kansas City, he lived with other artists and worked with illustrators at the top of the industry, such as Mark English, Gary Kelly, and Fred Otnes. He traveled to Italy to be closer to



In high school, his art teacher pushed him to apply to art schools in New York City, as well as MVCC, which was known for its Advertising, Design & Production program. “I found out that MVCC had one of the best degrees in the country,” he says. “And I loved it – it was different than anything I had done. Having art all day long was fascinating. I never worked so hard. It was like I just lived to draw and paint.”

He fondly remembers instructors in the program, including Alex Piejko, Larry Migliori, Bob Clarke, James O’Looney, and Hattie Hilliard. “They were all solid, strong professors. It was a great experience.”

Lenuzza adds that MVCC’s program was very thorough and diverse. “I loved that MVCC had drawing, painting, photography, and production. I got to learn it all.”

After graduating from MVCC, Lenuzza, with some prodding from MVCC Professor Alex Piejko, decided to transfer to Syracuse University’s College of Visual and Performing Arts, which he learned had one of the top illustration programs in the country.

“The instructors at SU said that MVCC students had a way better foundation than other students,” he says. “So by going to MVCC first, I saved a lot of money and built a strong base for my bachelor’s degree.”

In his own art, Lenuzza employs oil and acrylic on canvas, collage, and abstraction to shape impressionist scenes of gently lit figures in everyday life, eating at a café, having a drink at a bar, or dancing on a stage.

“There are always moments to capture,” he says. “And there will always be new work. Sometimes I don’t know what I want to paint, so I just start. I feel compelled to cover the white canvas – it’s very gratifying. I have to keep moving forward.”

He has exhibited widely in the United States and abroad, including in New York City, Italy, and Switzerland. Some of his paintings are currently on display at Ancora Tapas Bar & Restaurant in Utica, where he worked for several years. “Sometimes it’s like having a personal gallery,” he says. “A lot of the people who come in know those are my paintings on the wall, so we talk about them. I love making those personal connections.”

Back at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, as Stephanie finishes up her session with trackers Lenuzza and Karastury, it is clear that this personal connection is a powerful one. After she gets all suited up to brave the elements outdoors, she pauses to send a message using her letterboard.

“I love you all,” she says, eliciting smiles from everyone in the room before leaving the studio to catch the bus.



## Pieces of Heart Exhibit ♥

Featuring the works of Upstate Cerebral Palsy artists  
 Tuesday, June 24 - Friday, July 25  
 Juergensen Gallery  
 MVCC Information Technology Building, Utica Campus



his roots, and he learned to speak Italian and was surrounded by art. He would sit and draw from life, then turn those sketches into paintings.

He had lived away from Utica for so long, that the prospect of returning and having his first art exhibit was daunting. “I was nervous,” he says, “But so many people packed into that tiny room for my first show. It was great to have all that support.”

Lenuzza’s interest in art began at a very young age.

“My mom would take me to Munson-Williams, and I always loved it,” he says. “I started drawing seriously, from life and from photos, when I was in fifth grade.”

## MVCC'S FUOCO '79 INSTILLS CONFIDENCE IN HER STUDENTS



For **Assistant Professor Rosemary Fuoco '79**, watching her students cross the stage at graduation is one of the most rewarding parts of teaching in the Center for Business, Information and Social Sciences at Mohawk Valley Community College.

"A lot of students don't have confidence," she says. "They don't think they can do it. But many of them just need someone to talk to. So I listen to them, and I try to give them advice."

Some of that advice includes staying organized, being punctual, and learning to prioritize – the fundamentals of a successful career.

Fuoco says that she always wanted to teach, and for her, teaching does not end in the classroom.

As an advisor to the Administrative Assistant program at MVCC, Fuoco encourages her students to learn skills that will not only help them in their careers, but in life. Each spring and fall, she brings her students on field trips to professional office settings, so students will know what to expect in the field. She also organizes a business etiquette dinner each spring designed to expose students to real-life business situations and teach them about proper dress and etiquette at business events. This year's event will be a bit different; Brian Earle from Cornell University is going to put on an Interactive Career Placement Event where he will provide unique insight on behavior interviewing, networking, use of social media, and speed interviewing. She also invites speakers to talk to her classes about different professions, and what to expect in the working world.

"Business internships are highly encouraged," Fuoco adds. "Many of the students get jobs from those internships."

After graduating from MVCC, Fuoco transferred to SUNY IT, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Vocational Technical Education. She received her master of science in education from SUNY Oswego in 1986.

She was an adjunct instructor for many years at MVCC before joining the faculty full time in 2007. She also held jobs in the Oneida County Department of Social Services Legal Department and at Utica National before starting her teaching career.

All of her experiences influence Fuoco's commitment to helping her students on to a path of living successful and productive lives.

"One student just recently sent me a note, thanking me," she says. "This girl didn't have the confidence she needed to reach her goals. Now she is a tutor in the Learning Center. She said that I saw something in her that she never saw, and now she knows she is capable of anything."



## REMEMBER WHEN: 1969-2004

The 1960s were a burgeoning time for the radio business, and MVCC students had their own piece of the glory. In February 1969, the Radio Club received a \$3,000 grant from the Student Government Council to establish an AM radio broadcasting station on MVCC's Utica campus. The station, WRMT (540 AM) would transmit via AM carrier in the College Center and residence halls from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., broadcasting music, campus news, sports events, and student-faculty discussions. Electrical technology student Charles Sawner coordinated its development. The first broadcast was on Sept. 17, 1969. The first deejays were Chuck Kraushaar (also president of the station), Jack Bergen, Barry Banks, Bill Shepherd, Jim Morrison, and Jeff Levine. The advertising manager was Ron Witt. The club hoped to eventually establish an educational FM station that would transmit within a 50-mile radius of the campus. Sadly, the station's broadcasting was discontinued in 2002, and the station was dismantled in 2004.



# SALVATORE LONGO '83 NAMED MVCC'S ALUMNUS OF MERIT



Salvatore Longo '83 has been named the winner of this year's MVCC Alumni of Merit Award. Longo is the founder and CEO of Northern Safety and Industrial, the largest privately held safety company in the country, headquartered in Frankfort, N.Y.

Longo earned his AAS in Mechanical Engineering Technology from MVCC. After graduation, he founded Northern Safety, a national supplier of safety and industrial supplies. Throughout his career, he has held almost every position within the company, from order-taker, and shipping and receiving, to purchasing and advertising. While his role and responsibilities have evolved and increased, he's still involved in many aspects of the business.

After leading the company to double-digit growth throughout most of its history, Longo developed a new line of products under the company's own NS Brand trademark. What started with the flagship brand of N-Specs Safety Eyewear has grown to include NS Gloves, respiratory products, ActivGard Protective Apparel, MonsterZorb Spill Control, and several more

product lines. The NS Brand of products has filled the needs of the company's customers by providing high-quality products at a great value. The entire NS Brand offering has steadily grown to become one of the company's most popular product lines.

Under his leadership, Northern Safety has acquired five companies since 2006. The company now has 15 locations in six states across the North, South, and Southwest regions of the country, as well as an office in Shanghai, China. The company currently employs nearly 500 associates across those locations.

Keeping America's workforce safe has always been a priority for Northern Safety. In 2013, Longo and his team welcomed National Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. as its spokesman. Longo recognized that Ripken's record-breaking streak of playing in 2,632 consecutive games showed his commitment to keeping himself safe and able to work every day. Ripken and the Northern Safety Team have since collaborated on an exclusive line of products designed to help workers get home safe every day.

Realizing that Northern Safety had an opportunity to offer a service that no one else in its market offers, Longo and his team created a new custom business in November of 2013. The business is located in the Frankfort Industrial Park, providing screen printing, pad printing, and embroidery services for safety products, as well as a host of other products.

Longo is grateful for all of the support the community has given him and the company over the years, and he's happy to be able to give back. He and Northern Safety are big supporters of and participants in a host of community events. In addition to being the start and finish line sponsors of the Boilermaker Road Race, the company also sponsors the start line at America's Greatest Heart Run and Walk, and is a major sponsor of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kids' Sake event.

Northern Safety also sponsored the transportation of Porter, the new sea lion for the Utica Zoo. And earlier this year, the company sponsored the construction of the second cat room at the Stevens-Swan Humane Society.

In his free time, Longo enjoys studying business, playing golf, and spending time with his wife, Kathie, and their three children.

## AlumniAssociationMESSAGE

The MVCC Alumni Association has been working hard to extend its outreach into the college community and beyond, and we are proud to say we have been making some great strides in this area.

On Dec. 5, the Alumni Association held a blood drive in which we raised 84 pints of blood. To increase student involvement in the event, we challenged the students living in the residence halls to see which dorm could bring the most donors to the drive. The dorm that had the most donors won a party on campus catered by Moe's. Later that month, volunteers from the Alumni Association gave out free popcorn, coffee, and doughnuts to students taking night classes in the lobby of the Academic Building on the Utica Campus. Many students who take night classes also work all day, and this simple gesture was a great end-of-semester pick-me-up for these students.

At the Feb. 15 doubleheader basketball game, as the women's and men's teams played Hudson Valley Community College, the Alumni Association provided free pizza, popcorn, and beverages for those in attendance. Both games were great; the Hudson women won, 68-65, and the MVCC men won, 82-68.

On March 7, the Association held an alumni night at the Utica Comets home game at the Aud. All MVCC alumni, faculty, staff, and students were able to purchase discounted tickets to the game. This event was such a success that we hope to plan more of them in the future.

In April, the Association hosted the Turning Stone reunion for all graduation years, and the Annual Show of Alumni Work opened in the Academic Gallery on the second floor of the Academic Building on MVCC's Utica Campus. The exhibit of illustration and graphic design will be on display through May 16.

We hope to keep up this momentum, and plan to add more events in the future. For the most updated list of Alumni Association events, please visit [www.mvcc.edu/alumni-events](http://www.mvcc.edu/alumni-events).



Gene Militello '84  
President, MVCC Alumni  
Association

# MVCC RENAMES ART GALLERY TO HONOR JUERGENSENS

In November 2013, MVCC honored two former art professors at a naming ceremony for the art gallery on the second floor of the Information Technology Building on the Utica Campus.

Formerly known as the Small Works Gallery, the space is now called the Virginia M. and Edward Juergensen Gallery. Virginia and Edward were accomplished artists who were instrumental in the College's art programs. She began teaching at MVCC in 1967, and he arrived in the 1970s. Virginia formed a nationally recognized curriculum in graphic design, and her influence continues today in the teaching careers of her students, who are now faculty throughout the United States.



Virginia had begun her career in art and graphic design in the 1950s, working as a graphic designer in the local electronics industry. By the early 1960s, she decided to continue an educational career that began in Buffalo at the Albright-Knox School. Graduating from Syracuse University in 1965, she was a pioneer – one of the first women in America to

graduate with a master's degree in design and, two years later, one of the first women in America to teach graphic design at the collegiate level. She taught at MVCC through the 1990s.



During WWII, Edward served in North Africa, the Italian campaign, and in Germany. After completing his service as an officer in the U.S. Army, he returned to Central New York and attended Syracuse University, where he honed his skills in painting and drawing. After completing his degree, he worked in industry and was a successful freelance cartoonist.

Later on, Edward started a local art supplies store and, by the 1970s, was teaching at MVCC as a drawing and cartooning instructor.

Edward passed away in 1993, and Virginia died in August 2003. The degree to which she and Edward loved MVCC was demonstrated, a final time, in Virginia's generous bequest to MVCC, the financial portion of which funds scholarships, and The Juergensen Collection, more than 500 pieces of art by the couple.



To learn more about the Virginia M. and Edward Juergensen Gallery, visit [www.mvcc.edu/gallery](http://www.mvcc.edu/gallery).

## SEND US YOUR NEWS!

MVCC wants to hear from you! Alumni may submit Class Notes for future issues to Marie Kohl, Coordinator of Alumni Relations & Annual Giving, at [mkohl@mvcc.edu](mailto:mkohl@mvcc.edu) with "Class Notes" in the subject line. Please include your name, graduation year, and your major, as well as some information about what you've been up to lately. Also remember to keep your contact information up to date so we can stay connected.

# MVCC STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHY AND ARTWORK PUBLISHED IN BOOK

Did you get your copy of "Faces of the Mohawk Valley"?



The book features striking images of people who make up the diverse fabric of our region taken by MVCC students and faculty. "Faces of the Mohawk Valley" began as an art project to celebrate diversity. With the help of MVCC students and faculty, the walls of the College's campuses in Utica and Rome came alive with images of people who call the Mohawk Valley home. Students and faculty from MVCC's Center for Arts and Humanities became the artists, telling stories through photographs and other media. The images decorate the walls of the IT Building lobby on the Utica Campus, and the Plumley Atrium on the Rome Campus.

The project evolved further when Center for Arts and Humanities Dean Lewis Kahler suggested the images be cataloged in book form. Professor of Art Ronald Labuz worked closely with Brigitta Field, a Business Alliance intern from Whitesboro High School, to capture the story of our region with these photos.

The result is a beautiful, full-color photo book celebrating the diversity of the Mohawk Valley. Copies of "Faces of the Mohawk Valley" are available at the MVCC Bookstore, Barnes & Noble in New Hartford, and at North Country Books Store, 220 Lafayette St., Utica, and online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). The cost of the book is \$20, and proceeds will fund an annual scholarship for an MVCC student who has been assisted by the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees.

For more information on the project, visit [www.mvcc.edu/cah/faces-of-the-mohawk-valley](http://www.mvcc.edu/cah/faces-of-the-mohawk-valley).

# MVCC Foundation MESSAGE

**Frank DuRoss, Executive Director of Institutional Advancement at MVCC**

This is an exciting time to be living, learning, and working in the Mohawk Valley! The region is bustling with positive news about new businesses, new jobs, new technology, and new opportunity, and Mohawk Valley Community College is ready to help support the region in this phase of development.

MVCC is working with a number of regional partners on a variety of projects to help bring businesses back to the area. Here is a brief overview of a few things we are working on:



**thINCubator**  
the home for **INNOVATIVE NEW COMPANIES**

**thINCubator** (short for “the home for innovative new companies”) is a business incubator and student accelerator at 106 Genesee St., in the Bagg’s Square West district of Utica, N.Y. thINCubator provides people, programs, and a place to accelerate the ideas of entrepreneurs. Modeled after other successful accelerators, thINCubator has secured support from dozens of community mentors, who work with student teams during a 14-week program, helping them refine and pitch their business ideas. Participating entrepreneurs have access to business and entrepreneurship courses taught by MVCC, as well as mentorship from experts in business law, information technology, finance, and other relevant fields.

Participating teams will have 24/7 access, desk space, meeting space, computer and Internet access, server access and will have ongoing coaching in a collaborative environment.

The program aligns with entrepreneurship-boosting goals of the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council and enjoys administrative support from MVCC and other local colleges and universities. Significant financial support is provided by the MVCC Foundation, Empire State Development Council, Workforce Development Institute, Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, Inc., and the Coleman Foundation. **For more information, contact John Liddy at 315-560-6622 or**



**StartUp NY** is an innovation-based economic development program that will create tax-free business sites – with no New York State income tax for employees and no sales, property or business tax for 10 years – at MVCC and other SUNY campuses across the state. StartUp NY will help existing New York State businesses and attract new business and investments from across the nation and around the globe to New York by offering an opportunity to operate tax-free while partnering with world-class institutions of higher education, research and innovation. StartUp NY has the potential to create jobs; generate new partnerships and new investments on or near our Utica and Rome campuses; increase industry-sponsored research funding; enable more selective student recruitment; increase co-op opportunities and provide a richer student and faculty experience.

**For more information, contact Frank DuRoss, Executive**



**Director of Institutional Advancement at MVCC, at 315-792-5526 or [fduross@mvcc.edu](mailto:fduross@mvcc.edu).**

**YEA! (Young Entrepreneurs Academy)**, MVCC’s groundbreaking and fun enrichment program for our most talented, dynamic, and driven students, is a 24-week program that takes motivated middle and high school students through the real processes of launching and running their own real businesses in a fun, exciting, projects-based approach. Complete with dynamic guest speakers from the business community and trips to local companies, students develop professional skills, launch their own real, legal business, and may participate in a national scholarship competition.

**For more information, contact Carolyn DeJohn at 315-792-5300.**

**These projects are in addition to what MVCC has always done well, which includes our noncredit courses through the Center for Corporate and Community Education (CCED), which provide professional, business and leisure learning opportunities in the area. For more information, contact Carolyn DeJohn at 315-792-5300.**

**The College’s Center for Social Sciences, Business and Information Sciences houses myriad academic majors that can support and expand entrepreneurship locally. For more information about these courses, contact Center**

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## OLYMPIC LUGE BRONZE MEDALIST ERIN HAMLIN DELIVERS SPRING COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Mohawk Valley Community College has chosen Olympic bronze medalist Erin Hamlin as the keynote speaker for Spring Commencement. A three-time Olympian, Hamlin is the first-ever American to medal in singles luge. The theme of Hamlin's remarks to MVCC graduates and their families is, "You're never too small to hit the big stage."

"Erin Hamlin is a great local success story and an inspiration," said MVCC President Randall J. VanWagoner, Ph.D. "We are honored to have her reflect on the accomplishments and potential of our graduating class of 2014."

Hamlin opened her lugging career in 2005. Her first major international victory was the gold medal in the women's singles event at the 2009 FIL World Luge Championship in Lake Placid, N.Y. Hamlin's victory marked the first time in 99 races that a German woman was not the top finisher. Hamlin finished 12th in the women's singles event at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin. She was selected in December 2009 to compete at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, and named Athlete of the Year by USA Luge multiple times. Her bronze-medal finish in Sochi was part of an historic seven-medal haul by the USA sliders, a high-water mark for the team that has set even loftier goals for the 2018 Winter Olympics.

Hamlin is a native of Remsen, N.Y. Her parents, Eilleen ('81) and Ron ('86) Hamlin, are MVCC alumni.

More information on Erin Hamlin can be found at [Twitter@ErinHamlin](https://twitter.com/ErinHamlin), [Facebook.com/OfficialErinHamlin](https://www.facebook.com/OfficialErinHamlin), and [ErinHamlin.com](http://ErinHamlin.com).

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Publisher: Gene Militello '84, President, MVCC Alumni Association  
Editor-in-Chief: Frank B. DuRoss  
Editor: Jennifer Fanelli '95  
Publication Design: Luciann Gould  
Photos: Sharon Zohne '87

Contributors:  
Marie Kohl '88  
Richard Haubert  
Matthew Snyder

MVCC Alumni Association, Inc.  
Officers and Directors:  
Gene Militello '84, President  
James Hamer '70, Vice President  
Ushona McLean '98, Secretary  
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Marie Kohl '88

Visit us online at [www.mvcc.edu/alumni](http://www.mvcc.edu/alumni)  
or follow "MVCC Alumni Association" on Facebook.

Questions about Mohawk Valley Community College, its services and its programs should be directed to the MVCC Office of Admissions at 315.792.5400. Comments or questions about this publication can be directed to MVCC Marketing and Communications at 315.792.5330.

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