

Ashley Waldron has found a way to use her passions to help empower women in the engineering field.

Ashley Waldron '10 | pages 4-5



President's MESSAGE

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." — Nelson Mandela

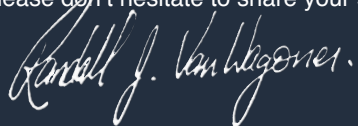
The words of Nelson Mandela have never rung so true. Mohawk Valley Community College graduates are taking their knowledge and experience and running with it — to all corners of the community, and all corners of the world — as they embrace community, encourage excellence, instill confidence, and model the way to inspire others.

Within these pages, you will read about many MVCC alumni who are leaving a positive mark on all they touch. You will meet an engineer from Whitesboro who has already made an impact on the engineering field and has become an engaged role model for many young girls aspiring to study in the predominately male fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. You will learn about a refugee who learned to speak English at MVCC and is now working on her master's degree abroad and fighting for human rights around the world. You will meet a man who has dedicated his life to helping students and families facing serious illness, and has started a number of initiatives to help fulfill his mission.

You will read about MVCC graduates who are making the most of their talents in very enterprising ways: A culinary grad who returned to the Mohawk Valley to cook in a brand new downtown eatery, and a group of photographers and graphic designers who turned their passions for cars and design into a successful local magazine.

You also will read about the various ways that MVCC is working to help equip our students with the tools and skills they need to take on the region's future careers, including our new Mechatronics certificate program and additions to our Airframe and Powerplant program's fleet of aircraft. We are ever looking forward, anticipating the future economy's needs, and meeting them before they arrive.

We are immeasurably proud of our alumni's successes. Please don't hesitate to share your stories with us.



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



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GIVE BACK TO THE MVCC FOUNDATION

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- **Name MVCC in your will:** Make us part of your family. A gift through your will or estate is the easiest gift you can make today.
- **Put your IRA to work for MVCC:** Avoid the potential double taxation on your retirement savings if you designate them to your heirs.
- **Support MVCC in creative ways:** Did you know there are ways to support MVCC that don't affect your current lifestyle or your family's security? You can support MVCC with gifts that don't impact the way you live by designating MVCC to receive estate assets in the future or by making immediate gifts to us of assets that are "out of sight and out of mind."

Learn more by visiting mvcc.edu/give, or call Director of Institutional Advancement Frank DuRoss at 315.792.5555.

LABUZ AWARDED THE SUNY DISTINGUISHED TEACHING PROFESSORSHIP

This summer, MVCC Professor of Art Ronald M. Labuz, Ph.D., was awarded the 2015 Distinguished Teaching Professorship Award by the State University of New York Board of Trustees – the highest honor SUNY bestows on faculty.



Labuz '88, whose career has spanned more than three decades of inspired teaching, is the first MVCC employee to earn this promotion in faculty rank. A full professor since 1991, Labuz expertly teaches myriad courses, and compassionately mentors former and current students within the Graphic Arts program, for which he serves as coordinator.

The Distinguished Teaching Professorship recognizes and honors mastery of teaching. For this prestigious tribute to be conferred, candidates must have demonstrated consistently superior mastery of teaching, outstanding service to students, and commitment to their ongoing intellectual growth, scholarship, and professional growth, and adherence to rigorous academic standards and requirements. Further, a faculty member must have attained and held the rank of full professor for five years, have completed at least three years of full-time teaching on the nominating campus, 10 years of full-time teaching in the SUNY system, and must have regularly carried a full-time teaching load as defined by the campus.

“This year across the entire SUNY system, 18 faculty were recognized with this highest of possible teaching distinctions—and Ron Labuz is the only honoree who teaches at a community college,” says MVCC President Randall J. VanWagoner. “Ron exemplifies believing in students so that they can believe in themselves. The confidence he inspires in his students makes it possible

for them to go on to greater academic achievements and productive careers in our community.”

Labuz led the total redesign of the art program and serves as a teaching fellow in MVCC's New Faculty Institute. He currently serves on 16 separate college-wide committees as well as the Faculty Council of Community Colleges. He is the recipient of Chancellor's Awards for Excellence in Professional Service, Faculty Service, and Scholarship and Creative Activities. He has published 15 books, including *Faces of the Mohawk Valley*, which features MVCC students. He has the heart of a teacher, and the testimonials of countless students and colleagues spanning 34 years who powerfully attest to this.

MVCC ANNOUNCES MECHATRONICS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

This summer, MVCC added a new Mechatronics Certificate program, housed in the College's STEM Center. The one-year, hands-on program was designed to complement MVCC's existing Electrical Service Technician associate degree program and provides additional specialized skills for high-tech, high-skilled careers in advanced manufacturing fields such as nanotechnology. It is one of only a few programs in the region to offer this training.

“The strength of our economy is based on a workforce that has the skills to support our community's rapidly expanding manufacturing industry,” says MVCC President Randall J. VanWagoner. “Manufacturing as we know it is being transformed by new technology. MVCC designed this program to respond to the Mohawk Valley's need for a more robust, updated skill set in conjunction with the statewide initiative to provide programs featuring hands-on learning for high-tech industry, training workers how to operate the new technology that can help our community and economy thrive.”



Students in the Mechatronics program will gain the skills needed to work in the operation, installation, and maintenance of automated and robotically controlled systems. Graduates are qualified for immediate entry-level employment and may pursue careers in advanced manufacturing as machinists, tool operators, nanotechnology support, and other functions.

The program was made possible by funding from the U.S. Department of Labor through a Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant awarded to the State University of New York. The grant provided funding for MVCC to equip two new mechatronics labs that will provide students with hands-on learning opportunities.



MONTGOMERY '98 ON A MISSION TO HELP FAMILIES DEALING WITH SERIOUS ILLNESS

By Jennifer Fanelli

Dr. Mark Montgomery always knew he should be helping people.

“It’s just second nature to me,” says the 1998 graduate of MVCC’s Human Services program, who earned his bachelor’s degree from SUNY IT in 2001, master’s degree from the University of New England in 2003, and his doctorate in education from Walden University in 2014.

Montgomery is director of Student Success Initiatives at Alfred State College, helping at-risk students. He also is personally dedicated to improving the lives of others.

“I encourage my students to get up and do something different — make the world a better place by making a footprint they can be proud of,” he says. “And I inspire them by doing the same myself. There is well-documented research that shows students respond when they have role models who are walking the walk.”

Or in this case, riding the ride — all over New York State for the Ride for Joe. This is a bicycle ride to raise awareness of Joseph’s Experience, formerly the Montgomery Experience, a charitable corporation Montgomery started. The Experience helps enhance the quality of life for children and people dealing with serious illnesses, such as cancer and leukemia.

“I tell my students that whenever I get on that bike, it is such a feeling of honor and integrity,” Montgomery says. “I’m doing things people choose not to do — things to empower others through action.”

Joseph’s Experience helps families dealing with serious illnesses by providing supportive services and promoting family togetherness. It is named in memory of Montgomery’s brother, Joseph, who died of cancer on Sept. 17, 1996. “He was my older brother, but was more of a father figure to me,” Montgomery says. “Joseph was the definition of life: he was fun, full of laughter, and did not waste today.”

His brother’s death was the catalyst for Montgomery to take action. Montgomery had previously suffered with his own serious illness; in 1993, he was stricken with the pulmonary disease sarcoidosis. “I got so sick I planned my funeral,” Montgomery says. “Joe would spend time with me, take me places, take me fishing. He has had a huge impact on how I serve others.”

After recovering, Montgomery vowed to make a difference, and he launched his nonprofit corporation in 2011. “We aim to provide services, activities, and support 52 weeks a year because suffering doesn’t stop after an event, after a child returns from camp, or a family returns from a weekend away,” he says. “Cancer takes no time off.”

In addition to supportive services, Joseph’s Experience offers a physical retreat in Bridgewater, N.Y., which Montgomery originally built for his wife on land given to him by his father. “She appreciated it, but felt others could benefit more from it somehow,” he says.

The camp allows families to have time away from chemotherapy, doctor’s appointments, medical bills, and “what they perceive as a highly diminished sense of empowerment,” Montgomery says. “We provide real-time responses for people who need us today.”

He says these experiences are especially important for families dealing with a serious illness. “Because many families in these situations end up broken, we encourage familial activities through programming,” he says.

For example, any family can book time at a New York State park for free with Joseph’s Experience providing camping and hiking gear, if needed. The charity also hosts annual activities to bring people together, such as a Fishing Derby and Barbecue, a Christmas party, and a free Christmas tree farm for families dealing with serious illnesses. But perhaps one of the most unique services provided by Joseph’s Experience is the Chemical-Free Garden that honors veterans and those impacted by cancer and leukemia. The garden, started in 2014 with the help of Michael Latreille, owner of Michael’s Fine Foods in Waterville,



MVCC CULINARY ARTS GRADUATE COOKS UP SUCCESS FROM SCRATCH

By Katie Voce

Vita Watson '95 grew up in Barbados, a place where it was normal to grow and raise your own food. When she was 16 she began playing around in the kitchen at her mother's recommendation.

"My mom told me, 'You need to learn how to cook because you eat too much, and you're going to go hungry if you don't,'" Watson says with a laugh.

Ever since taking that advice to heart, Watson has been in a kitchen with a love for cooking from scratch with fresh ingredients.

"I did a lot of traveling and I did a lot of exciting things in my life, so that was fun," she says. "Then in 1988, I came to Utica because I wanted a little quiet place, and this was it."

For a while, Watson cooked in local restaurants, but cooked out of her home for others, as well.

"Somebody said go back to school and get a piece of paper to go along with your talent and then it would work out really well, so I took that suggestion and went back to school," Watson says.

She graduated from MVCC in 1995 with an associate degree in Culinary Arts Management and a certificate in Chef Training. She says MVCC was a good choice for a single mother of three, and convenient since she lived right on the bus line.



In 2008, Watson went on vacation to Barbados, and ended up staying there for four years to work as a chef in a health clinic run by her niece. After returning to Utica, co-owners Jake Davis and Emmie Pizarro asked her to be a part of what has become Emmie's Global Cuisine – a restaurant on Bank Place serving up Asian- and Caribbean-inspired food.

Since the restaurant's opening in May 2015, business has picked up tremendously.

"Business was really slow at first, but then people came in, and came back, and they brought others," she says. "It has been really exciting to see because nobody likes to fail."

Watson attributes their success to the uniqueness and quality of their food. She makes everything from scratch from fresh ingredients.

"Anybody can take stuff out of a box," she says. "We don't even have a microwave in here."

Watson says her 13-hour days can feel more like five, but loves cooking for people and seeing her food put smiles on her customers' faces.

"It's what I enjoy doing," she says.

provides chemical-free vegetables that are safe for people undergoing treatment.

Montgomery also has spearheaded fundraisers for Joseph's Experience, including the Cops vs. Celebrities Basketball Tournament, which began in 2012 and has featured local law enforcement officials such as Oneida County Sheriff Rob Maciol, and local celebrities like Utica Mayor Robert Palmieri. And then there is the Ride for Joe, Oneida County's first bicycle ride for those impacted by cancer and leukemia that also highlights all that law enforcement does to help the community. The inaugural event in August took riders from Bridgewater to the Willowvale Fire Department in Chadwicks. Montgomery says he was inspired to ride his bicycle in every county in New York State to help spread the word.

"(Maciol) handed me a printout of every county sheriff with their phone numbers – and there were 62!" Montgomery says. "I had already announced it, so I started making phone calls and making plans. I take my bike and ride under the theme, if you are impacted by cancer or leukemia, you suffer alone no more."

He made a lot of progress in just a few months: 22 counties since July! At one point during his ride, Montgomery accepted an invitation to shave his head and stand with 43 members of the Cattaraugus Sheriff's Department whose undersheriff was battling leukemia. Sadly, the sheriff passed away in October.

Montgomery has had a tremendous response from the families he's helped, and says he hears from them almost every day. "I also spend a lot of time meeting with families who have children in treatment," he says. "It's very fulfilling to my soul because I'm honoring my brother."

It's having a great impact on his students. "They say, 'You're doing what today? You are amazing.' I tell them there is nothing amazing about taking the time to serve others," Montgomery says. "And it's working, because I am making them think."

In the spring, Montgomery plans to ride to MVCC. "I want to make sure MVCC is part of the history of this ride," he says. "Everyone is welcome to join me."

To join him or to learn more about Joseph's Experience, visit josephs-experience.com and "Joseph's Experience Inc." on Facebook.



ASHLEY WALDRON '10

By Jennifer Fanelli

MVCC has proven to be a great starting point for Ashley Waldron '10, who has had a whirlwind five years since she graduated from the Engineering Science program.

She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in Civil Engineering from Clarkson University, landed her first engineering job at Barton & Loguidice in Syracuse, started her own successful photography business, and most recently, moved across the country for a new job at international consulting firm CH2M in Colorado.

"I was lucky because MVCC had my engineering program as well as classes that supported my passion for photography," says Waldron, a graduate of Whitesboro High School. But she says the small class sizes — no more than 20 students — and affordability were ultimately what sold her on the College. MVCC has the sixth-lowest tuition in New York State, and also offers many scholarships for different types of students.

"It can be hard to pay for school," Waldron says. "But between the numerous scholarships MVCC awarded me and my tutoring position in the math lab, I was able to pay for my college as I went along and didn't need to take out any school loans."

While at MVCC, Waldron earned the MVCC/Clarkson University Transfer Leadership Scholarship, a substantial financial award given to students who demonstrate outstanding leadership qualities and are positive contributors to their school and the community. She earned her bachelor's degree from Clarkson in 2012, continued to work on her master's degree there for two years, then spent a year writing her thesis while working at Barton & Loguidice in Syracuse. She graduated in May with her M.S. in Civil Engineering, and continued to work at the firm until September, when she was offered her new position at CH2M out of Englewood, Colo.

At both companies, Waldron took on the same role: She is a water/wastewater treatment engineer, which means she deals with the transportation and treatment of both drinking water and sewage/wastewater.

"At Barton & Loguidice, I focused more on wastewater treatment, I helped design new water sewer districts so that residents in need would have those services," she says. "At CH2M, I am more focused on water treatment. I jumped on to a few ongoing projects here, where we are helping local municipalities in different ways to treat, store, and distribute their drinking water."

Waldron says knew from the ninth grade that she wanted to be an engineer. She decided in her junior year of high school that she wanted to concentrate on civil engineering.

"My mom says I am one of two people she has ever met that made their mind up in high school about what they wanted to be and stuck with it the entire time in college and never wavered," Waldron says. "I always loved math and science classes in school and enjoyed brainstorming solutions to problems, so to me, engineering was always an appealing job."

She got a jumpstart on her engineering education at Whitesboro High School as part of Project Lead the Way, a track of engineering classes that students take throughout high school. "I took one each year," she says. "I owe a lot of my success to that program and my teacher Adam Smith and his teaching methods."

She says that MVCC and the supportive community she found in the College's engineering program helped to keep her on track. "All of the staff were passionate about their jobs, advisors and supporting staff were always very helpful, and the other students were very driven and positive," she

says. “I enjoyed every day that I was in my classes, and the fact that I got to stay at home and have more family time.”

Waldron also was able to hone her photography skills while at MVCC. She took Photography 1, which focused on shooting in film and darkroom techniques.

“It was a great experience to learn the basics of photography, composition, and what the different camera settings mean,” she says. “That class propelled my understanding and passion for photography, and has stuck with me to this day. Photography is still a big part of my life and job; I commonly shoot work events, and on a personal level, I shoot senior photos, family portraits, and even weddings.”

While at MVCC, Waldron was a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges, and was named to the President’s and Vice President’s lists. She also played on the College tennis team and was a tutor in the Math Lab in the Learning Center. She says the support system of professors, Learning Center staff, and her fellow classmates helped her to be successful.

“I had a couple professors twice or more while taking my engineering courses, and those professors knew how to create a bond and understanding with their students,” she says, counting Dale Horton, Chris Maxwell, and Joyce Baumann among the group. “Many of the other engineering students and I were tutors in the Math Lab, and it allowed us to practice our math and communication skills. And the group of engineering students I was a part of — we worked hard as a team and helped each other learn concepts, making plentiful studying a positive experience.”

Waldron says she felt very prepared when it was time to transfer to Clarkson for her bachelor’s degree.

“I always suggest MVCC to others considering the option and tell people that community college was a great choice before I pursued my bachelor’s at Clarkson,” she says. “MVCC was great to the transferring students when it came to helping us visit different colleges, making sure our credits transferred, and letting us know about scholarship opportunities. Clarkson also gave us a great tour when we visited and made us feel very special. Between both colleges, the transfer experience was absolutely seamless. All my

credits transferred, and I received a scholarship to Clarkson as one of the top students in the MVCC engineering class.”

Waldron also excelled in her studies and projects at Clarkson.

In Spring 2013, she worked with five other students in Dr. Shane Rogers’ Environmental Biological Processes class to develop a computer simulation of a local wastewater treatment plant. The class-long project was to digitally replicate the Potsdam Wastewater Treatment Plant by taking samples at different points in the treatment process and using that information to calibrate their model. “It worked out very well and may be used by Barton & Loguidice when they design the new plant additions they are building there,” Waldron says.

Waldron has become a role model for girls and women pursuing STEM education and careers, and it’s a role she has fully embraced.

“When I talk to students, I make sure to tell them that I was once their age, and that my talk will be about my journey from their shoes to mine,” she says. “Not everyone is able to visualize themselves in the place they want to be in five to 10 years, and it can be hard to truly believe it’s possible. Role models can help young adults understand their goals in a tangible way, and I hope that my talks inspire students to pursue their goals and show them that it’s possible.”

Last year, Waldron returned to the Mohawk Valley to speak to several Project Lead the Way classes at Whitesboro, then was the keynote speaker for MVCC’s WiSE/STEM Expo, which allowed her to speak about her experience to high school girls. “That was a great experience and I really hope to do more like it,” she says. “I think that other women in STEM can pursue similar efforts at their local schools. It’s very important.”

Waldron also thinks that high school students should be taught about the vast variety of jobs in STEM. “It’s a big deal, because many times they aren’t aware of just how many kinds of jobs are out there beyond the classic doctor, engineer, veterinarian, nurse, lawyer ...” she says. “Even for me, people would say, ‘Hey, you’re good at math and science, you should be an engineer,’ but in reality, that could have led me in many directions.”

Waldron also has found a way to use her position and her passions to help empower other women in the engineering

field. In August, she saw a news story about a woman who was chastised for “not looking like an engineer” in an advertisement, which **inspired a campaign to break stereotypes in engineering that went viral with the hashtag #ILookLikeAnEngineer.**

“It was an unfortunate reminder that not everyone treats both genders fairly,” Waldron says. So she put her marketing, social media, and photography skills to work.

“I took photos of other women at Barton & Loguidice



holding signs stating what they do for their jobs,” she says. “I posted the photo on Facebook, and it was shared over 20 times with over 6,000 views. It was really important to contribute to the ‘I Look Like An Engineer’ campaign because I personally don’t enjoy being seen as someone who can’t do my job as well as someone else purely because of what I am on the outside.”

Waldron says that for her, succeeding in college is about 20 percent brains and 80 percent motivation.

“There are a lot of smart people who stopped their program because they didn’t want to pursue it, and there were many hard workers who made it through because they desired to,” she says.

“I don't think anyone should stop themselves from pursuing a degree or job because they think they aren't smart enough. If you really want it, then you've already accomplished 80 percent of the battle.”



MVCC IS ALWAYS HOME FOR BREE '13

By Jennifer Fanelli

For Pawsansoe Bree '13, MVCC was more than a start in her education — it was a new start in life.

“For me, MVCC is where everything started,” she says. “My life, my dreams, and everything I have overcome started there. So for me, MVCC is always home.”

Bree came to Utica in 2008, after 13 years in the Nu Po Refugee Camp in Thailand, where she and her family lived after being forced out of the Karen State of Burma. They were not allowed to leave the camp, which consisted of small bamboo houses with no electricity or running water, and very limited connections to the outside world.

“Most importantly for me, there was limited access to education,” Bree says. “I felt completely disconnected. I had no freedom. I was a bird living in a cage, always looking out and wishing I could see the world.”

One of her sisters fell ill in the camp and couldn't be helped by the limited access to medicine there. A family friend who

worked for the United Nations was able to get Bree's sister into a hospital in the United States. One brother and another sister had to travel with her to care for her, so Bree then had three siblings in the U.S., which opened new opportunities for her. As soon as she was old enough, she signed up to go to the U.S., and arrived in Utica in June of 2008.

“I felt like a newborn baby,” she says. “I saw cars, beautiful houses, trees, flowers, and many different-looking people. Some had blue eyes and blond hair, some were very tall, some were dark or light ... but one thing they all had in common is they were very welcoming toward me.”

Bree started taking English as a Second Language at MVCC, which prepared her for her courses in International Studies. She received the MVCC Professional Association Scholarship, which is awarded to an MVCC student who has completed at least 30 credit hours with a 3.0 GPA.

“It was the first time in my life that I ever won a scholarship,” she says. “I didn't even know what ‘scholarship’ meant! But it gave me confidence and helped me get to the next level.”

As she prepared to graduate from MVCC, Bree won the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship, a selective award for the nation's top community college students. The Foundation provides up to \$40,000 per year for up to three years, making it the largest private scholarship for community college transfer students in the country.

“The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation helped me to continue my education, and without this scholarship, my dreams could never come true,” she says.

The scholarship enabled her to pursue her bachelor's degree in International Relations at Hartwick College, where she had the opportunity to study abroad in such places as South Africa, Thailand, Chile, Jordan, Nepal, and Cuba.

“It was my first time studying abroad in college,” she says. “I think it's the best way to see the world, to grow as an open-minded person, and great learning experiences.”

In the summer of 2014, Bree had the chance to work on her independent research in Thailand for more than two months. Her topic was “Resettlement-Related Decision-Making for Refugees in Thai Refugee Camps.” She also spearheaded a project to build a small library for refugee children at the Thailand-Burma border.

“For me, building a library for displaced children is not only bringing education to them, it is training them to be good future leaders — where they can support each other and create a better community for themselves,” Bree says. “I want to show young people that one person can make a difference in this world, and together we are stronger.”

Bree was able to visit nine refugee camps in Thailand. She says returning to the camps as a U.S. citizen and American college student gave her the power to travel to every part of Thailand, as she always wished she could. “It was amazing to be able to come back to a refugee camp where I once spent so many years,” she says. “It brought back so many memories, both good and bad. I was sad because my father was not there anymore (he died in 2011). He was the most important person in my life and everything I have today is because of him.”



The happiest part of her trip was being reunited with her mother after six years. “We both cried,” Bree says. “She told me, ‘I miss you so much and I think of you at night before I go to bed and every morning when I wake up.’ I promised her to visit every year.”



Despite her new experiences, Bree says, "I have never forgotten where I came from or what I have been through to get here." She wants to take her experience and use it to help others. "My goal is still the same: I want to spend my life helping other refugee people around the world. My goal just gets more specific the more I get into a higher education level."

After graduating from Hartwick, Bree chose to continue her studies in Webster University's Global Master of Arts program in International Relations. So far, the program has brought her to Vienna, Austria; Bangkok, Thailand; Geneva, Switzerland; London, England; and Amsterdam, The Netherlands. After she completes her graduate work, Bree plans to pursue her doctorate in international human rights law with a focus on international refugee law.

"I am really living my dream," she says. "When I was in the refugee camp, I told my friends that my dream is to travel the world to learn and grow. They did not believe such a dream for a stateless girl would come true. I know that I am very blessed, and there is a purpose for me traveling the world: To learn as much as I can, to travel as long as I can, and to be inspired by whomever I meet along the way."

FOLLETT TO MANAGE MVCC BOOKSTORES

In August, the MVCC Auxiliary Services Corporation (ASC) announced a new contract with campus store operator Follett Higher Education Group. Follett now manages both the Utica and Rome Campus stores. The MVCC ASC retains ownership of the stores and will receive from Follett a commission on sales, which ASC in turn invests in MVCC's educational resources for students. Current staff have been retained to work in the Utica and Rome stores.

Follett was in place for the start of the Fall 2015 semester. A major renovation of the bookstore space on the Utica Campus is planned for summer 2016, and the Rome Campus store is being renovated as part of the \$29 million renovation and construction project currently underway there.

MVCC selected Follett after a competitive RFP process led by MVCC Auxiliary Services Corporation. Follett brings the largest inventory of course materials and a network of more than 6,000 publishers and providers to offer students the greatest selection of affordable options. For more information regarding Follett's services, visit follett.com. For more information on the MVCC Bookstore, visit mvcc.edu/bookstore.

MATHIS NAMED TO ONEIDA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HALL OF FAME



REMEMBER WHEN: MVCC STUDENT PUB

For many years, MVCC had a pub that served beer and wine right on the Utica Campus. The Pub was tucked in a corner of what is now the Snack Bar on the first floor of the Alumni College Center, then known as the Student Union. The Pub was closed in August 1985 when the MVCC Board of Trustees voted to ban consumption of alcoholic beverages in the residence halls in anticipation of New York State's new drinking law, which raised the legal age for drinking from 19 to 21 on Jan. 1, 1986.



The Oneida County Historical Society has named David Mathis '70 to its Historical Hall of Fame. Mathis was one of 11 people named Richard W. Couper Living Legends for years of service as community leaders and their efforts in furthering the region's industries, culture, and educational opportunities. Mathis has served on the MVCC Board of Trustees since 1977, and was the

first African-American elected to public office in Utica when he became a member of the City School District Board of Education in 1983. He has been director of Oneida County Workforce Development since 1986.



APEX AUTO MAGAZINE DRIVEN BY CREATIVE MVCC ALUMNI

By Jennifer Fanelli

What happens when a bunch of car-crazed guys with a passion for design get together?

They start a local automotive magazine, of course.

"We want to show Central New York that if it's hotrods, bikes, dirt racing, tuner cars, or late-model performance that gets your gears going, there is a lot to love about living here," says Justin Palmer '05, creative director at Apex Automotive Magazine, a quarterly publication that features local car enthusiasts and their projects, area performance shops, tips on automotive care, coverage of local and regional events, and a listing of area car shows.

Oh, and another cool thing? Many members of the Apex creative team are MVCC graduates. "All the guys are very proud of their MVCC roots, and we have a lot to be thankful for," Palmer says. "It's a fantastic school, and the art department is truly one of the best in the country."

Palmer (Graphic Design) and Managing Editor Kevin Crandall '05 (Graphic Design) met in a digital illustration class taught by MVCC Assistant Professor Scot Connor '95. After graduating from MVCC, Palmer continued his studies at SUNY IT, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Information Design. He then started working at Mohawk Valley Health System as a graphic designer, and eventually became creative director, managing the visual brand of the organization. But Palmer says his passion was always automobile design: "I've loved cars and thinking about the look of cars since I was a child."

Crandall started working in the printing industry after college, and is now at Kenyon Press in Sherburne, N.Y. Palmer says the two stayed in contact and often would talk about the various projects they were working on. Then one day, Crandall asked about starting a magazine.

"At first I said no way," Palmer says. "But we talked through the idea, and since the whole reason I even got into graphic design in the first place was because of cars, I said, 'Why don't we do a car magazine?'"

Crandall loved the idea, and the two began planning. Palmer says he had always wished there was one local resource for car enthusiasts like himself. "I always felt like there are so many cool shops, shows, and personal builds that I see or hear about, and someone should shed some light on what the car scene in Central New York is really like," he says.

Palmer and Crandall then connected with MVCC alumni Chris Penree '14 (Photography); Tom Sblendorio '14 (Photography); and Mike Potaczala '04 (Criminal Justice), whom Palmer says is "basically a human car dictionary," as well as photographers Jordan Polizzi and John Zachary; and MPW Marketing Owner Matt Wilson (also a weekend racer) — and Apex Automotive Magazine was born.

"I realized I knew all the right people to make it happen," he says. "I had my dream team right in front of me!"

At their first meeting, the group realized they had a lot of work to do. Their goal was to create a free, high-quality publication that features local events, readers' rides, and shops. "We had to create an LLC, and figure out a lot of

things that people don't even realize go on behind the scenes to run a publishing company," he says. "All on top of our busy day jobs — and many of us work as freelancers. There were lots of all-nighters."

As creative director of Apex, Palmer oversees the stylistic direction of the publication, but reiterates that the magazine is a team effort.

"I'm constantly inspired by the work Chris, Tom, and Jordan bring to the table," he says. "After all, a publication like this is all about the photography. You can have wonderfully set type, but no one will read it without exceptional photos of cars, so I let the photos do the heavy lifting. My job is to make the type do their work justice, and convey the message at hand in a clean and concise manner."

The debut issue of Apex magazine — featuring MVCC Associate Professor Duane Isenberg's 1982 Corvette — hit shelves this past spring. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Readers love to see their cars — or cars they recognize — in the magazine. Palmer says Apex only runs ads related to cars, and advertisers appreciate the dedicated format. "It is a perfect medium to hit their target demographic," he says.

He admits that the success of the magazine has even taken him by surprise. "You know, being the pessimist that I tend to be, I didn't think it would take off that well," he says. "But yeah, I was wrong! People are over the top about the publication."

Currently, Apex is not making a profit, but Palmer says the team is reinvesting any money made into increasing the distribution of the publication, growing subscriber base, and reaching a larger audience.

"Car people are truly some of the best people you will meet," Palmer says. "One of the main things we hear is, 'This is a LOCAL magazine? WOW!' In that regard it kind of sells itself. And it's proof that design matters."

Apex Automotive Magazine is free at more than 200 locations throughout Central New York, including automotive parts stores, car dealerships, grocery stores, and gas stations. Check out the top-rate photography and design, then subscribe! Also make sure to visit Apex online at apexautomag.com, and "like" Apex Automotive Magazine" on Facebook.

The Apex Automotive Magazine team, from left: Kevin Crandall '05, Mike Potaczala '04, Justin Palmer '05, Jordan Polizzi, Matt Wilson, and Chris Penree '14. Not pictured: Tom Sblendorio '14.



'79-'81 DORM REUNION REKINDLES MEMORIES

MVCC alumni who lived in the residence halls between 1979 and 1981 reconvened this past July for a reunion on the College's Utica Campus – and some even spent a night in the MVCC residence halls.

The idea for the reunion began more than a year before when Tom Barnes '82 of Irondequoit, N.Y., contacted his former MVCC Resident Director George Nehme, who had recently returned to the Mohawk Valley after 20 years in Providence, R.I. The two decided to plan a reunion for the students living in the dorms during those years.

"On a whim, I started a Facebook page for alumni who lived in the dorms when I was an RD," says Nehme, now associate vice president for communications and development at Hamilton College. "Tom and I built an invitation list from memory, but we didn't have a way to contact everyone." Along the way, they connected with MVCC Coordinator of Alumni Relations Marie Kohl, who offered to help find contact information for some alumni.

"We each made phone calls, sent emails, and encouraged people to spread the word to see if it resonated with anyone," Nehme says.

And resonate it did. Not everyone who was interested could make it, but ultimately 16 alumni gathered on MVCC's Utica Campus on July 25 for a cookout prepared by Sodexo Campus Food Service, and a day of reminiscing outside in the Quad. Some people brought pictures, Barnes says, which helped bring back memories.

Several alumni even traveled a great distance to be there; Ann and Jim Hough came from Indiana, Carol Aggers Mangold came from Florida.

"It was pretty emotional," Nehme says. "We did all kinds of reminiscing. The drinking age was 18 when I was an RD, and there was a pub right on campus. It was a popular place back then."

Barnes was one of several attendees to spend the night in MVCC's Daugherty Hall. "Everybody had a ball," he says. "We wished it could have been a couple of days. We all gathered in the dorm lobby and chatted for hours after the reunion ended."

Nehme and Barnes say that the alumni were impressed with the new buildings on campus, and were especially curious about Bellamy Hall, the College's newest dorm complex. "Next time we would love a guided tour of the new residence hall, and also the new classrooms, and the gym," Barnes says. "The place has grown so much."

Nehme was one of two resident directors in the dorm complex in 1979. "Being an RD at MVCC was an interesting experience for me, because I had just graduated from college, and was the resident director to 18- and 19-year-olds," he says. "It was a great experience for a young man; I got to be a building manager, mentor, counselor, disciplinarian, and party planner all in one."

Barnes graduated from MVCC in 1982 with a degree in Advertising Design and Production, and is now working at Mercury Printing in Rochester. The two are already working on plans for the next reunion, tentatively set for July 2016. Those alumni who lived in the MVCC residence halls between 1979 and 1981 can contact Marie Kohl at mkohl@mvcc.edu or at 315.792.5340. They also can join the "MVCC Dorms 1979-1981" group on Facebook.

"People saw it on Facebook and know they missed a good time," Nehme says. "We hit it out of the park."

HAMER '70 NAMED ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD PRESIDENT



James M. Hamer '70 has been elected president of the MVCC Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Hamer graduated from MVCC with an associate in applied science degree in Retail Business Management. He received his bachelor's degree in economics from Utica College, did graduate

work at Syracuse University, and studied commercial lending at the University of Buffalo. He is currently business development officer at Pathfinder Bank, a New York State-chartered savings bank headquartered in Oswego with offices in Fulton, Mexico, Lacona, Central Square, Cicero, and Syracuse. He also is an associate for Nelson Financial Group, where he is involved in insurance and investment sales. Prior to this, he served as vice president of commercial banking for Adirondack Bank in Rome. He also held the position of commercial loan officer for Rome Savings Bank in New Hartford, and vice president of the Commercial Loan Office at Key Bank in Syracuse.

Hamer is past president of the Utica Kiwanis Club, where he is still an active member. He is also on the Utica Salvation Army Advisory Board, a member of the Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency Fiscal Committee, and is involved in several other local organizations. He resides in New Hartford with his wife, Patricia.

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

MVCC alumni, we want to hear from you!

Submit your Class Notes for future issues to Marie Kohl, coordinator of Alumni Relations, at 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 that we can stay connected.

And we're social! Make sure to "like" Mohawk Valley Community College at [facebook.com/WeAreMVCC](https://www.facebook.com/WeAreMVCC), and follow us on Twitter and Instagram at [@MVCC_UticaRome](https://www.instagram.com/MVCC_UticaRome). Stay in touch with the Alumni Association by joining the MVCC Alumni Association group on Facebook!

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SECOND AIRCRAFT IN MVCC FLEET PAINTED FEATURING COLLEGE COLORS AND LOGO

MVCC's "Hawk Air" is taking flight at the Griffiss International Airport as the second of the major aircraft in the Airframe and Powerplant Technology program has been delivered with its new paint scheme. MVCC now has the Boeing 727 and the recently acquired Gulfstream G2 sporting the colors and branding of the College.

The Boeing 727 aircraft was painted a few years ago, and now the mission is to have the two Gulfstream jets feature the same paint scheme.

"I want people asking, 'does MVCC have their own airline now?' The more they are asking what we are doing and why all those aircraft are painted with MVCC colors, they are talking about us and it is mission accomplished," says Walt Constantini, director of the Airframe and Powerplant Technology program.

The newly painted aircraft was built in 1976 and was painted by Premier Aviation, located just down hangar row. The paint scheme features the College's tea leaf on the tail of the aircraft, and the MVCC logo is displayed on the fuselage. Along the length of the fuselage is a stripe of MVCC colors. The third aircraft will be painted within the next year when Premier has the space. These Gulfstream aircraft enable the students to learn about 1960s technology from the Boeing 727 to the 1980s technology.

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Visit us online at mvcc.edu/alumni or join the group "MVCC Alumni Association" on Facebook.

Questions about Mohawk Valley Community College, its services, and its programs should be directed to the MVCC Office of Alumni Relations at 315.792.5340.

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