

# Golf benefit tribute to late Francis 'Doc' Baker

HOLYOKE - Former Holyoke Community College president David Bartley and the late Francis "Doc" Baker started caddying together at Holyoke Country Club when they were eight years old and started playing golf together when they were nine.



The late Francis "Doc" Baker

"It was my pleasure to have him as a friend for over 75 years," Bartley said Monday, Sept. 11, during the HCC Foundation's 30th Golf Classic, an annual fundraising benefit that this year was dedicated in memory of Baker, a lifelong Holyoke resident and long-time friend to the college who died July 23 at 84.

Baker, a local podiatrist who, like Bartley, was born and raised in Holyoke, served two terms on the HCC Board of Trustees (1984-1992), while Bartley was the college president, including three years as chairman. He was also a member of the HCC Foundation board from 1987 until his death and was a founding member of the HCC Foundation golf committee, on which he served as a committee chair.

"When it came to Holyoke Community College, Francis Baker was

always there," Bartley said.

More than 90 golfers played in the scramble-style tournament Monday at the Springfield Country Club in West Springfield. All the net proceeds from this year's event - more than \$25,000 - will go toward classroom equipment and student services at the new HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute at 164 Race St. in downtown Holyoke. As well, a room at the new culinary arts and hospitality education center will be named for Baker.

"Francis Baker really started this golf tournament 30 years ago," Bartley said during a tribute to Baker. "We raised a lot of money for this college."

Since the first HCC Foundation Golf Classic was played in 1988, the tournament has raised more than \$500,000 for student scholarships and educational technology.

Bartley noted that the HCC Foundation, the nonprofit fundraising arm of the college, now has an endowment of more than \$14 million, making it one of the largest and most successful community college foundations in the country.

"This golf tournament is a good reminder that the college really needs the support of the community," HCC president Christina Royal said to golfers and guests during the dinner portion of the program, "and so being here and partic-



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

HCC president Christina Royal joins HCC Director of Athletics Tom Stewart, HCC Foundation board member and golf committee chair Bill Bagshaw, and Dave Monaco on the fourth tee at the Springfield County Club during the tournament.

ipating, you're really helping to contribute to the college and to the students, so thank you."

During his tribute, Bartley added that his friend "Fran" was also a "beloved Irishman," and worked hard on behalf of the city's St. Patrick's Day Parade, serving as a parade president and a grand marshal.

"There are very few people who loved or worked harder for the city of Holyoke than Dr. Francis Baker," he said. "Fran is in a better place today, but he certainly had a major influence on Holyoke Community College and on the city of Holyoke. Thank you, Fran and God bless you. Until we meet again."