

# HCC receives pledge of \$10 million gift

Alumna and husband donate largest gift to state community college

## Staff Report

**HOLYOKE** — Holyoke Community College has received a pledge of more than \$10 million, the largest single gift commitment in the college's 77-year history and one of the largest gifts ever to any community college.

The pledged gift is included in the estate plan of HCC alum Margaret (Peg) Wendlandt, Class of 1958, and her husband, Gary Wendlandt, longtime supporters and frequent donors to the college. The money, estimated to be at least \$10 million, will go toward student scholarships and the college's greatest needs.

The Wendlandts' many gifts to the college in their lifetime already total more than \$1 million and include donations to the President's Student Emergency Fund and two endowed scholarships administered by the HCC Foundation: the Peg '58 and Gary Wendlandt Scholarship (for students with financial need) and the Peg '58 and Gary Wendlandt Health Scholarship (for students in nursing or health-related fields).

In each of the past two



CONTRIBUTED BY HCC

**Gary and Peg Wendlandt have pledged \$10 million to Holyoke Community College, the largest gift in the community college's history.**

years alone, the Wendlandts have made matching gift donations of \$100,000 during the HCC Foundation's one-day "Together HCC: Drive to Change Lives" fundraising campaign. This year, the Wendlandts have again pledged to match up to \$100,000 in gifts from new donors and alumni for this year's campaign.

President Christina Royal said the Wendlandts are not absentee donors but remain intensely interested and engaged in college activities, initiatives and programs. "It's humbling to think about them providing the largest gift ever

to a community college in Massachusetts, and I'm deeply grateful," Royal said.

Peg (Laframboise) Wendlandt graduated from Cathedral High School in Springfield before enrolling at HCC when it was still called Holyoke Junior College. After graduating, she went on to the University of Massachusetts and later to the Western New England School of Law. Her career included work as a family law attorney, a substitute teacher in Holyoke Public Schools and an actuarial assistant at MassMutual.

As the first HCC alumna to earn a law degree, she re-

ceived a Distinguished Alumni Award from HCC in 2007. In 2014, she received a Distinguished Service Award at commencement. Gary Wendlandt is a graduate of Washington University and a retired insurance executive. They live in New York City.

The Holyoke Community College Foundation manages assets of more than \$20 million, the largest community college foundation endowment in Massachusetts.

Over the years, HCC has been the beneficiary of two \$1 million donations, one from HCC alum and Yankee Candle Co. founder Michael Kittredge in 2003 and another from the estate of HCC alum, professor emeritus and textbook author Elaine Marieb; as well as a \$7.5 million donation in 2020 from the Marieb Foundation, which was then the single largest donation ever to a community college in Massachusetts.

The \$10 million-plus gift from the Wendlandts will be among the largest to any community college in the United States, rivaling a \$15 million gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott to Amarillo College in Texas in 2021 and a \$10 million gift to Arapahoe Community College in Colorado from the Sturm Family Foundation in 2019.