

Alumni Connection

HOLYOKE
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

SPRING 2015

INSIDE

FROM HCC TO ACC

James Lombella '03 takes charge at Asnuntuck

SECOND ACTS

The path to a new career often starts at HCC





HCC President William F. Messner

Few people follow a linear path to a career. We enter the workforce before, during and after earning a college education, in a process that, through intention or luck, exposes us to a variety of environments in which we can discover our interests and affinities. This issue of Alumni Connection looks at that process, and at the career and life changes of alumni as they traveled the path to and from HCC.

On the subject of comings and goings, I know you will join me in bidding a fond and grateful farewell to Alumni Association president and professor emerita Gloria G. Lomax, '75. Gloria has worked tirelessly on behalf of HCC, inspiring and mentoring generations of students and alumni. We know she will

remain connected to our community.

Alumni Council member Dawn Bryden, '89, has assumed the role of interim Alumni Association president. Our thanks to Dawn for her service to HCC and the Alumni Association in this time of transition.

We welcome Bonnie Zima Dowd to her new position as director of Alumni Relations. Bonnie served as the director of the annual fund and associate director of development at the Isenberg School of Management at UMass. We look forward to working with and getting to know her in the months to come.

As we prepare this issue of Alumni Connection, Massachusetts has broken records for cold and snow accumulation. I hope the sun will be shining and the snow behind us when you hold this issue in your hands.

Sincerely,

William F. Messner

Are you part of a multi-generational HCC family? If your parents, grandparents, children and/or cousins attended HCC, the *Alumni Connection* would like to interview you for a story. Call Bonnie Zima Dowd at 413.552.2253 or email alumni@hcc.edu.



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Bonnie Zima Dowd, ex officio

Center for Health Education takes shape

It wasn't a traditional ground-breaking ceremony – no holes were dug or dirt lifted – but administrators and board members put on hard hats and picked up shovels in November to observe the start of work on the 22,000-square-foot building now being transformed into the Center for Health Education for HCC's nursing and radiologic technology programs. During the first few weeks, contractors pulled carpets, ceilings, pipes, ducts, wires and fixtures from the former photography studio on Jarvis Avenue in preparation for internal demolition. By mid-winter, with the building completely gutted, crews had already begun to frame out the new interior. Work is on schedule, and the state-of-the-art health education and training center is expected to be ready by summer and open for classes for the Fall 2015 semester.

HCC administrators and members of the Board of Trustees pose in front of the former Grynn & Barrett photography studios on Jarvis Avenue that is being turned into the Center for Health Education.



Grant seasons culinary options

Thanks to a \$1.75 million state grant, HCC will construct a Center for Hospitality and Culinary Excellence in downtown Holyoke. When it's done – sometime in 2016 – the college's popular Culinary Arts and Hospitality programs will move off campus to the new site, yet to be determined. This will allow HCC to expand enrollment in the programs and add a two-year associate degree option in Culinary Arts, as well as increase HCC's offerings of noncredit workforce training programs, especially as they relate to jobs at the MGM casino coming soon to Springfield. "Training students for careers in today's competitive workforce requires providing schools with cutting-edge technology to help them succeed," said Greg Bialecki, secretary of Housing and Economic Development, who announced the grant. "Our great community colleges here can hold the key for many people to get a great job without having to go into a lot of college debt and to not just get a job but have a career."

HCC President Bill Messner distributed chef hats during a press conference in December announcing the grant to build a Center for Hospitality and Culinary Excellence in downtown Holyoke.

Adult education programs recognized

HCC's adult education programs were recognized last fall with an award from the Workforce Solutions Group, a statewide coalition that advocates skills training and education for low and moderate income individuals. Kermit Dunkelberg, HCC's assistant vice president of Adult Basic Education and Workforce Development, accepted the inaugural Anne Serino Memorial Award for Outstanding ABE and ESOL program at the 5th Annual Massachusetts Jobs and Workforce Summit in Devens, Mass. HCC was cited for the expansion of its ABE and English as a Second or Other Language programs and for combining adult basic education with career development and workforce training. "To be the first recipient is a great honor and a reflection of our own work bringing those areas together," Dunkelberg said. HCC offers various ABE programs on the main campus, and at satellite locations in downtown Holyoke, Ludlow and Springfield.



Students in HCC's Adult Basic Education Transition to College and Careers program celebrate their graduation last year.



Financial success center opens

Representatives from HCC, the United Way of Pioneer Valley and PeoplesBank gathered in early February to celebrate the grand opening of a campus resource center that aims to help reduce the financial barriers that often cause students to struggle in college. Thrive@HCC is a collaboration between those three institutions with support from the Davis Foundation. Among the services Thrive provides are free benefits screenings, money management classes, financial coaching, tax preparation and job training workshops. Thrive@HCC is the first of what its organizers hope will eventually be several Thrive centers in the region. "The fact that the first Thrive center is being established at Holyoke Community College speaks to the fact that acquisition of a college education is increasingly not just an issue of individual pursuit of knowledge and a career," said HCC President Bill Messner. "It's a social and economic issue."

Dora Robinson, president and CEO of United Way of Pioneer Valley, speaks at the grand opening celebration for Thrive@HCC.

Boston Foundation lauds training partnership

HCC was recognized by the Boston Foundation for the work the college is doing through Training and Workforce Options, a partnership with Springfield Technical Community College that offers customized training and workforce development programs for regional employers. TWO, as it is known, was selected for the first annual Deval Patrick Award for Community Colleges, which was created to recognize excellence in establishing partnerships



with employers. TWO has partnered with some 200 businesses since October 2011 and trained hundreds of workers in programs such as Advanced Precision Manufacturing, which was praised by the former governor during a visit last summer at STCC. "This award acknowledges the work we have been doing with our friends at STCC for the last three years," said President Bill Messner. "Through TWO, we are not only educating and training future workers, but helping employers better position themselves to grow and prosper, thus expanding the regional economy and adding even more jobs for our graduates."

Speaking last summer in Springfield, then-governor Deval Patrick praised an Advanced Precision Manufacturing Training program run through the HCC-STCC workforce training partnership known as TWO.



HCC welcomes first international faculty scholar

Last fall, HCC welcomed its first visiting international fellow in a program designed to teach outside educators about Learning Community courses — and spread the word about HCC. The Learning Community Faculty Scholars program was created after HCC English professor Miles Liu gave a lecture at Tangshan Normal University, a teaching college in Beijing, China. Zhu Yan, a teacher there, was intrigued by Liu's description of Learning Communities, special HCC classes that combine two academic subjects and two teachers focused on a common theme. As a result, Zhu spent eight weeks at HCC immersed in Learning Communities, observing and interacting with teachers and students. She is now back in Beijing and designing Learning Community courses she hopes to teach in the fall. "I loved my experience," she said before she left HCC. "I think this is really wonderful and I am hoping in the future that my college will send more to teachers to HCC." HCC welcomed two more LC faculty scholars from China this spring.

President Bill Messner, left, holds a handmade paper-cut scroll from China that was a gift from visiting educator Zhu Yan, right. It now hangs outside his office.



Director of Alumni Relations
Bonnie Zima Dowd

Thank you for welcoming me into the Holyoke Community College community!

There is no doubt in my mind that our trustees, faculty, staff and students have “a lot of love” for this special institution. So too, do our alumni, community members and other stakeholders. Therefore, I consider myself extremely fortunate to be a part of this community to which you are dedicated.

As I attend events and meet with alumni and friends, I've been inspired by the wonderful stories about your time here: the life opportunities an affordable HCC education provides; tales of talented professors who shaped student's lives and told you “You can do this,” (whatever this may be at any given moment) and “You are not alone;” caring staff who nurtured women and men on their educational journeys; stories of long-lasting friendships

that were formed in small classes; or the occasional love story of finding one's spouse in college.

Yes, this is a community college rich in history, with proud and grateful graduates and I look forward to building on the solid foundation that Joanna Brown and Gloria Lomax established. Together we will write the next chapter of HCC's alumni story! There is a lot going on at 303 Homestead Avenue. I hope you'll make the trip to visit us soon—virtually or in person.

With HCC pride and kindest regards,

Bonnie Zima Dowd
Director of Alumni Relations

Alumni Survey Results

In June 2014, the HCC Alumni Office invited 9,114 alumni (for whom there were email addresses), to participate in an online survey. A total of 420 responses were received. Following are some key findings that emerged from the survey analysis:



- 93% of responding alumni were satisfied with their experience as HCC students
- 94% of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed that their educational experiences at HCC had a positive effect on their educational development
- 91% of respondents described their feelings toward HCC as positive/strongly positive.
- 1% received a doctoral degree
- 1% earned a law degree
- 4% reported earning a credential beyond the associate degree other than those listed above.

Giving to HCC

Fifty-nine percent of respondents reported donating to HCC at least once since they had last attended HCC.

The top three reasons for donating to HCC were:

- Believing in the mission of HCC
- Desiring to help the next generations
- Feeling that their experiences at HCC changed their lives

To view complete survey results, including alumni comments, go to: www.hcc.edu/alumni

Highest Degree Received

- 33% of respondents reported that the highest degree attained was an associate degree
- 36% of respondents reported having completed a bachelor's degree
- 22% completed a master's degree
- 3% attained a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS)

THE LAST WORD

When I reflect back on the 43 years I have been affiliated with Holyoke Community College, my heart fills with joy.

I transferred into Holyoke Community College in 1972, a wife and mother with four children. My husband was an officer and navigator in the United States Air Force and was often away in Vietnam, so I managed my family and my education at the same time.

At HCC, I met a wonderful counselor by the name of Bob Evans, the first African-American professional at the college. He encouraged me during my studies here and upon my graduation from HCC told me that someday I would come back to Holyoke Community College to teach.

That burning vision inspired and empowered me to get all of the education

I could so I'd be prepared to teach on the college level. I transferred into the early childhood education program at the University of Massachusetts and earned my bachelor's and master's degrees and worked toward my doctorate.

I then applied to teach at HCC and upon accepting my position as an early childhood education instructor, I found the joy of interacting with HCC students and encouraging them to apply themselves and be the best they could. Out of that encouragement, many of my students went on to obtain their bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees and teach at every level from preschool to graduate school. Others went on to establish their own early childhood education centers or become principals of schools or deans of colleges and universities.

Before I retired from full-time teaching at HCC, I realized that I wanted to step forward in a leadership role with the Alumni Association, and I have been honored to



serve as its president for 15 years. In that capacity, I worked with Victor Thomas Sr., a long-time math professor and former registrar, to raise money for two "Fund A



Above, Gloria with her grandson, Christopher, and HCC alum state Rep. Aaron Vega, '90, at HCC.

Have some news to share?

Send it to the Alumni Office, Holyoke Community College, 303 Homestead Avenue, Holyoke, MA 01040 or via email to alumni@hcc.edu.



Future” endowed scholarships, and then I endowed a third scholarship in my own name. These scholarships will provide support to students for generations to come. I also dedicated three evenings a week to work with Joanna Brown, the retired director of Alumni Relations, to call alumni and ask for their annual support. Our alumni program has been recognized as one of the most successful community college fundraising programs in the United States.

Often, former students approach me in banks, stores or other public settings, to tell me about the difference I have made in their lives, as teachers, as parents, and as people. That is the greatest gift a student can give a teacher – to know that you have made a lasting difference in a person’s life.

I am most grateful to have been a student here, to have been able to teach here for 27 years, and for the opportunity to have served the Alumni Association as president for 15 years.

Last but not least, I feel honored to have shared an office with Joanna Brown, who has shared my sense of integrity and purpose in serving HCC alumni. Our relationship has grown on many levels, and it will last a lifetime.

Gloria G. Lomax

Gloria G. Lomax '75
Professor Emeritus
Retiring President, Holyoke Community
College Alumni Association



Above, Gloria with HCC alum Steve Richter, '75; below, Gloria with state Rep. Ellen Story.



From HCC to ACC

By Janice Beetle

James Lombella learned the value of hard work on a 60-head cattle farm his widowed grandmother ran in Southwick throughout his childhood.

After his grandfather died in 1974, Lombella's grandmother managed the farm for nearly 15 years before his parents took over. There Lombella would rise before dawn to milk and feed the cows and mend fences until after it was dark again.

"That's where my work ethic came from," said Lombella. "It was a very unique childhood."

That work ethic was reinforced at HCC, where Lombella attended classes over the course of 14 years on his way to a certificate in microcomputer technology and an associate degree in business management in 2003.

Like many community college students, Lombella's path was non-traditional, and he struggled to find the right balance between education and the other parts of this life – work and family. In particular, he remembers the encouraging words of retired HCC professor Richard "Rich" Defoe, who told him, "You can do it, and it will get easier and easier."

"His positive words just always stuck with me," Lombella said.

Lombella's experience at HCC gives him a unique insight into the lives of students at Asnuntuck Community College in Enfield, Conn., where he has worked since 2009 and, last year, was named president. While Lombella, 44, is not the first HCC graduate to go on to lead a community college — that honor belongs to David M. Bartley, '54, president of HCC from 1975 to 2004 — it is certainly a very small club.

Lombella graduated from Southwick High School in 1989 and leveraged his experience working with animals



James Lombella '03 takes charge at Asnuntuck



LOMBELLA IN THE HALLWAY AT ASNUNTUCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

to launch a pet store as a 19-year-old entrepreneur. He opened the store in August the same year and enrolled full time at HCC a month later. As the business grew, though, he was forced to scale back his studies, first taking classes part time and then putting college on hold altogether after his first son was born.

In particular, he remembers the encouraging words of retired HCC professor Richard “Rich” Defoe, who told him, “You can do it, and it will get easier and easier.”

The pet store flourished and grew, but Lombella wanted more out of his career. Eventually, in 1997, he sold the store, shifting from retail into manufacturing with companies such as Jen Coat Inc. in Westfield, Plastipak Packaging Co. in East Longmeadow and Pepperidge Farms in Bloomfield, Conn. He served in quality control positions and oversaw operations and hundreds of employees.

“I was able to concentrate on school and finally graduate,” he said, and in the process became the first person in his family to earn a college degree.

He went on to earn a master’s degree in management from Cambridge College, and is now enrolled in an online doctoral program at Nova Southeastern University’s Abraham S. Fischler School of Education in Florida,

majoring in higher education leadership, with a minor in community college leadership.

Acting on a long-held desire to teach in higher education, Lombella accepted a part-time adjunct position in Asnuntuck’s Manufacturing Technology Center in 2009. Embracing the familiar community college environment, he quickly shot up the administrative ladder. The same year, Asnuntuck’s president, Martha McLeod, invited him to join her cabinet as director of Workforce Development and Continuing Education. Soon after, he was promoted to associate dean of the same department. A year and a half later, he took on a second administrative role as chief financial officer for the college.

When McLeod retired in 2012, and with her recommendation, the Connecticut Board of Regents appointed Lombella interim president. Two years later, he was selected as the college’s fourth president.

His corporate skills turned out to be great training and transferred well to college administration, he

said, among them his expertise in budget and finance, quality assurance, employee relations and strategic business planning.

What Lombella said he also brings to his work at Asnuntuck are social skills and a solid foundation in business management as well as a knowledge of technology. All of that, he said, came from HCC.

“HCC opened the door to interactive learning as many of my classes had assignments that required group engagement and group learning,” he said. “Each forum gave me the opportunity to interact with different groups and a diverse population of students. Having come from a smaller hilltown high school, HCC opened my eyes to a diverse learning experience, which I carry with me to this day.”

Lombella knew he had found a home at Asnuntuck, he said, after attending his first commencement there. At the ceremony, one of his students came up and introduced him to her daughter, who was then about eight years old.

“She thanked me because now she could put food on the table for her daughter and pay her rent,” he recalled. “At that point, I realized, we’re changing lives.”

Asnuntuck itself is relatively young, having opened its doors in 1972. It serves roughly 4,000 students annually, about 90 percent from nearby communities in northern Connecticut. The college offers some 50 associate degree and certificate programs for those who may be considering transfer to four-year schools as well as those seeking direct entry into the workforce.

During his brief tenure as president, Lombella has taken the lead over minor and major changes. He oversaw the upgrading of artwork and seating areas in the hallways of the 166,000-square-foot campus, for instance, and has also managed million-dollar renovations.

An \$8.3 million project to revamp the front entrance and consolidate student-centered activities will break ground this summer. The new two-and-a-half-story addition, with its glassed-in entrance, will hold a student senate office, cyber café and a bookstore.

This project comes on the heels of a \$2.2 million, 6,000 square-foot expansion of the Manufacturing Technology Center, where a ribbon-cutting



versatility, warmth

**“At that point
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Lombella knew he had found a home at Asnuntuck after attending his first commencement ceremony.

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ceremony was held in February.

In the next year, a \$25 million state-funded project will add another 27,000 square feet to the campus. "We are in design and development on that now," Lombella said, noting that between the three projects, "We will be expanding across the front and across the back."

Lombella's face is well known at Asnuntuck. Staff and students greet him and wave as he leads a visitor on a tour of the campus.

All classrooms and administrative offices are encompassed in one large, two-story building. Student-centered activities, such as student government, registration, the campus radio station and the library, occupy the main corridors with classrooms and other campus centers in the more interior spaces.

"I want to showcase students," he said.



Lombella narrates as he walks, making note of changes under his watch such as the expansion of allied health programs from two to 12 and the moving of computer stations from a far-off corridor to the campus library.

In one corridor, Lombella spots former president McLeod, seated in an office. He says hello.

"When I first met Jim, I recognized quickly what an asset he was to the manufacturing program," she said. "He focused on training students so they could complete the program and get jobs."

McLeod said what's behind

Lombella's achievements are his versatility, warmth and focus on success.

In the technology center, Lombella stops to talk with Steve Goodrow, an HCC student from the 1970s, who serves as head of the welding department and is busy setting up his shop since renovations were completed.


He tells Lombella that Asnuntuck students designed the welding booths in the new department and fabricated everything from the wall-mounted racks to the metal fencing out in the back of the shop.

Lombella smiles like a proud father. It's a familiar feeling. He has two children of his own, Alec, 17, and Aiden, 10, who live with him in Suffield, Conn. As someone who juggled a career and raising a family while completing his own education, he understands well the challenges faced by Asnuntuck students.

"It is because I have both experienced and understand these barriers that I have been so effective and supportive in aiding and removing these barriers for my own students," Lombella said, noting that Asnuntuck offers free childcare, tutors, academic support and public transportation.

He advises students to build a support network around themselves, and to take part in study groups – as he did at HCC – for moral support.

That's the way to succeed, no matter how much work or how many years it takes.

"There is no better experience," Lombella said, "than seeing a student who has struggled walk across the stage as I hand them their degree." 

SECOND ACT'S

Stories by JUDITH KELLIHER

The path to a new career often starts at HCC



Susanne Ollman, '76, earned her first degree from Mount Holyoke College, a bachelor's. She went on to the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and a 10-year career in international relations before she realized she wanted a more creative job.

What did she do?

Like many other people who want to launch a new career, Ollman, now 47, enrolled at HCC. Not once, but twice.

First, she earned an associate degree in graphic design in 2011, graduating as valedictorian with a GPA of 4.0. She returned in 2012 to take marketing and entrepreneurship classes to support her fledgling business as a freelance photographer, Ollman Photo.

Although the information is only anecdotal, Margaret Downing, coordinator of career planning and placement at HCC's Center for Career Development, said she believes the number of students like Ollman who come to HCC after having worked in one field for a number of years is on the rise.

They come to HCC for many different reasons, she said. Often, they have been displaced from other jobs; they might be looking to learn new skills to transition to a different field, or perhaps they just want to try something new, drawn to HCC for its affordability, convenience, career counseling services and diverse programming.

"We find a number of people returning to school who are just looking to do something more meaningful, or something they put off or developed as a hobby and want to take to the next level," Downing said. "We really tailor our services to meet different populations of students. And we help them get up to speed on what employers are looking for now and how the hiring process works." Here is a look at a few students who turned to HCC to prepare for a second act.

Peter DeBarros, '12

Testing the college waters



Peter DeBarros, '12, was ready for a change after working 24 years in the Connecticut Department of Corrections, including two decades supervising maximum security prisoners. After hitting the 20-year mark in "hazardous duty," the Agawam resident was eligible to retire.

"I had a decision to either stay with corrections or take retirement," he said. "My love for people helped me decide to go back to school and become a nurse."

After being out of the school setting for so long, DeBarros, now 47, dipped his toe in the college waters with just one English class at HCC with Prof. Elizabeth Trobaugh in 2006. Over the next several years, while still working full-time at the Cheshire Correctional Center, he took two or three classes each semester to fulfill his prerequisite class requirements before entering the college's associate degree nursing program.

"That class with Prof. Trobaugh was a very wonderful experience. That pretty much set the ball in motion if I was to continue with the education or throw in the towel and do something else," said the husband and father of two. "My choices all depended on my initial experience with professors and the college atmosphere at HCC, which was a tremendous blessing in and of itself."



John Cipora At home in the classroom

"I still think of Gloria as a mentor and an exemplary instructor"

John Cipora, a longtime sculptor and freelance designer, can thank HCC professor emeritus Gloria G. Lomax, '75, (pictured together above) for helping him completely change careers after taking just one of her early childhood education classes in the 1980s.

When a college friend started a family, Cipora, now 67, realized he knew little about young children.

"Suddenly I was 'Uncle John' to three little kids and I knew nothing about little kids," he said. "I am an only child. I didn't babysit. I had all these astonishing little people around."

That's when he decided to take some courses at HCC, which was close by the art studio he then owned in Holyoke.

Still immersed in his art and design, Cipora had no intention of turning his HCC classes into a launching pad for a new career. Had he not taken those HCC courses though, "I would not have realized the depth of my interest in the field," he said.

"I still think of Gloria as a mentor and an exemplary instructor," he said. "She came to her work with extraordinary enthusiasm and wonderful knowledge and insight. It was her depth of passion for the field that galvanized her students and just made that experience so vital and vivid and evocative."

After his brief HCC learning experiences, Cipora went on to earn his master's degree in early childhood education and his doctorate in child and family studies, both at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His new career included designing, developing and teaching psychology and sociology courses at HCC as an adjunct professor in the Social Sciences Division from 2001 to 2010.

Cipora is now an assistant professor in the School of Human Services at the St. Johnsbury, Vermont, campus of Springfield College. Besides teaching early childhood education classes, he also serves as Early Childhood Education Curriculum Coordinator for all 10 campuses of the Springfield College School of Human Services.

DeBarros said he chose HCC because of its inviting campus, affordability and the dedication of its professors and staff. Excited by the challenge of the nursing program, he retired from the DOC in 2010 to fully focus on his studies.

"The professors realize that people come from various walks of life. I was never a studious person. Education has been something I had to work at. Folks at HCC really understood that," he said.

Today, DeBarros works two nursing-related jobs. When hours are available, he works per diem at the Hampden County House of Corrections in Ludlow and full-time at Bridging Care for Families in Springfield.

"When you're a correctional officer your relationship is not as nice as the relationships you have as nurse. Being a nurse, people want you around. As a CO, the guys did not want me around," DeBarros said with a laugh.

Camille Theriaque, '12 Frontline experience



Theriaque wanted to take her years of firefighting experience and couple that with learning how to counsel anyone who is on the front lines of high-stress service.

During the 18 years Camille Theriaque, '12, worked as a Holyoke firefighter, her job ran the gamut from teaching kindergarteners how to “stop, drop and roll” to rescuing people from burning buildings.

Although she viewed the job as exciting, challenging and rewarding, she retired as a lieutenant in 2008 for medical reasons.

In choosing what to do next, Theriaque, now 50, recalled the work of the Western Massachusetts Emergency Medical Service’s Critical Incident Stress Management Team, which helps emergency personnel cope with the emotional difficulties of the job, including how to handle when children lose their lives in fires.

She wanted to take her years of firefighting experience and couple that with learning how to counsel firefighters, veterans, police officers – anyone on the front lines of emergency or other high-stress service.

Earlier, in 2000, she had taken a conversational Spanish class for medical professionals at HCC. The campus was familiar and close to her Holyoke home, so it made sense to choose

HCC as the place to jumpstart her new career.

She started taking psychology classes in 2010 on her way to an associate degree in liberal arts in 2012.

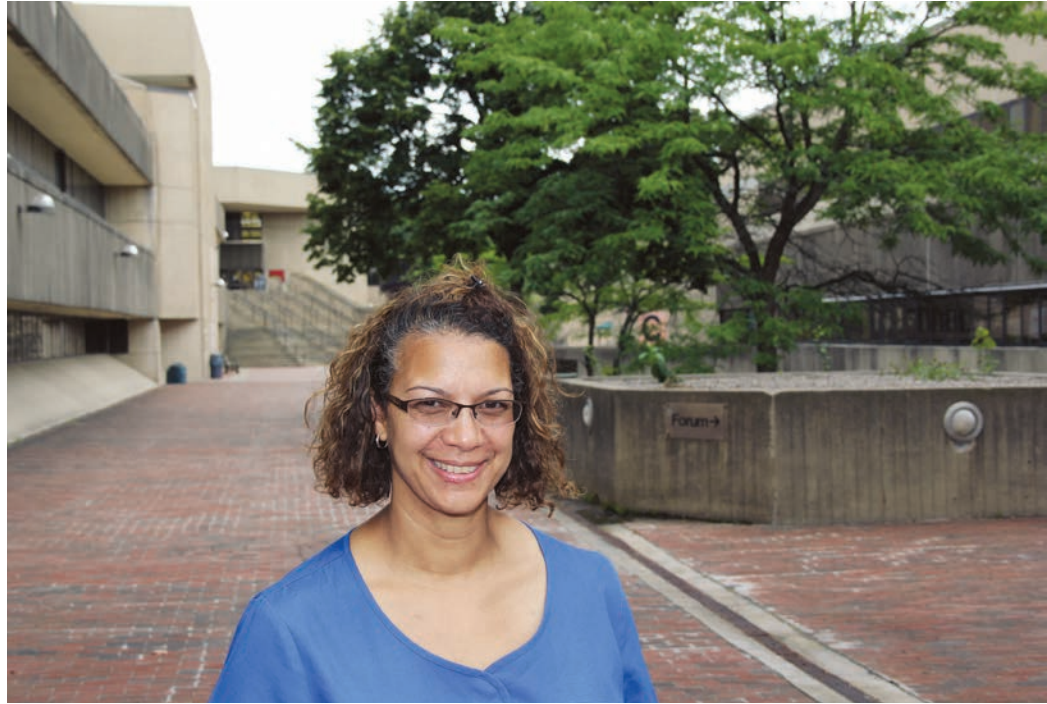
“The professors, staff and faculty at HCC all want to see you succeed,” she said. “They are there to help you, guide you and give you a push if you need it to get you where you want to go.”

Through Irma Medina, senior coordinator of HCC’s Pathways Program, Theriaque learned her choices for continuing her education at a four-year college were not limited to just state schools, and that there was financial aid available. She won a scholarship from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, which paid for her two years at Mount Holyoke College. She will graduate this May with a degree in psychology and no debt.

Theriaque plans to pursue her master’s in social work to become a counselor.

“My goal is to have my own practice as a clinician and to work with veterans and firefighters,” she said. “As a female firefighter in life and death situations I have the experience to relate to these people, especially women veterans.”

“I really saw a lot of needless disease processes that went on. People in the Hispanic community needed someone who could deliver information and provide education through the cultural and linguistic lens.”



Ruth Amador, '05 Bridging a cultural divide

After earning her mortuary science degree from Mount Ida College in Newton in 1995, Ruth Amador became the first Hispanic funeral director in Massachusetts.

After a 20-year career she decided to add “nurse” to her resume.

Now 45, Amador says she wanted to continue working as a funeral director but expand her ability to help others, particularly those in the Hispanic community, where she found a significant lack of information on medical issues such as diabetes, hypertension, breast cancer awareness and prevention. The Springfield resident earned an associate degree in nursing from HCC in 2005.


“In my role as funeral director I saw a lot of barriers between Hispanics and the community and promoting health education,” she said. “I really saw a lot of needless disease processes that went on. People in the Hispanic community needed someone who could deliver information and provide education

through the cultural and linguistic lens.”

Amador, who still works as a funeral director in Holyoke and Springfield, said she chose HCC because the teachers understood her passion for making a difference through healing and education.

“The faculty at HCC were very supportive,” she said. “From my experience they really embraced diversity and were advocates of students succeeding. HCC also catered to working parents and single parents and has a reputation of being community friendly.”

In 2012, Amador earned a dual bachelor’s and master’s degree in science and nursing education at Elms College in Chicopee. She currently works as a registered nurse at Hartford Hospital in the medical surgical infectious disease unit.

One of her most important roles, she said, is as founder and president of the local chapter of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses. 

ALUMNI IN ACTION



Elegant family affair

Ada Fernandez-Rodriguez, '05, Jacqueline Fernandez, '05, and their sister Ivelise Fernandez, opened Elegancia in South Hadley, Mass., last summer. The new banquet hall is an extension of the Fernandez Family Restaurant, the well-known Puerto Rican eatery that Ada (Jr.) and Jacqueline co-own on High Street in Holyoke and that their parents, Ada and Rafael Fernandez founded more than 25 years ago. Elegancia, which means "elegant," offers both Puerto Rican and American fare and will focus on weddings, quinceañeras, birthdays, anniversaries, parties, corporate meetings and memorial receptions for up to 200 guests. "We do everything from planning and decorating to offering a full menu," Ada (Jr.) told MassLive last year.

Front, left to right: Parents Rafael and Ada Fernandez with their three daughters, Ivelise Fernandez, Ada Fernandez-Rodriguez, and Jacqueline Fernandez. Back: South Hadley Town Administrator Michael Sullivan and Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse attend the grand opening celebration. Photo by Dave Robak, *The Republican*.



Taking flight to Qatar

Robert Wing, '92, is the clinical supervisor of child life services at Sidra Medical and Research Center, a groundbreaking hospital, research, and education institution in Doha, Qatar. The Sidra facility focuses on the health and well-being of women and children, both regionally and globally. Sidra is a fully digital facility, incorporating the most advanced information technology applications in clinical, research, and business functions. Wing had previously been the director of child life services at UMass Medical Center for more than ten years.

Robert Wing at the Katara Cultural Center in Qatar. The structure in the background is a pigeon tower.



Grand re-opening

Susan M. Goff and her husband Lawrence Cromack, co-owners of Susan's Cafe and Spanky's Ice Cream on Hampden Street in Holyoke, celebrated the grand re-opening of the café in January with an event sponsored by the Holyoke Chamber of Commerce. The café had been closed during repairs to the building's foundation. The café now offers take-out meals in addition to restaurant dining. (Goff attended classes at HCC in the past and will complete her certificate this spring.)

Left to right: Lawrence Cromack, Susan M. Goff, '15, and Kathleen Anderson, '80, president of the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce.



Community clean-up

Alumni Council Secretary **Elizabeth Roman, '04**, and Joanna Brown, retired director of Alumni Relations, participated in a community clean-up day in the North End of Springfield last July, organized by HCC student Belal Awkal. This was the second community clean-up day Awkal has organized, and he plans to work with community agencies to sponsor additional days in the summer of 2015.

Elizabeth Roman and Belal Awkal, with some of the bags of litter collected by community volunteers.



HCC alumnae author reads

Author **Doris Mercado, '03**, read from her memoir, *The Armor of Love and Hope* (Florincanto Press 2013) in HCC's PeoplesBank Conference Room during an Authors@HCC event last fall. Mercado spoke personally about the abuse, neglect and abandonment she experienced as the middle child in a family of 13 children living in the mountains of Puerto Rico, and how the "armor of love and hope" protected her on her journey. Mercado is a foster/adoptive advocacy professional for a Connecticut nonprofit organization. Her book has been featured in *Kirkus* magazine and *LA Latino* magazine.

Front left to right: HCC English professor Patricia Sullivan, '77, Doris Mercado, '03, with students from Sullivan's writing class.

CLASS NOTEBOOK

1973

Paula J. Caproni, PhD, is on the Management and Organizations faculty at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. She earned her MBA from UMass and her PhD in organizational behavior from Yale. In addition to teaching leadership skills, effective coaching, power and influence, and creating high performing teams in the University of Michigan MBA and Executive programs, Prof. Caproni has served as the academic director of both the day and part-time MBA programs. She has also served as the lead professional development coach for the Executive MBA program and taught executives in more than 15 other countries. Her book, *Management Skills for Everyday Life*, is now in its third edition from Prentice Hall.

1980



Diane L. Provost has launched a new e-commerce business selling home security systems and personal security products, including pepper spray and Mace.

1984



Antti R. Kaisla's exhibit "My Last Link to Sanity," a collection of Neo-Cubist wall sculptures, was shown at the ECA+ Gallery in Easthampton, Mass., from June 3 to June 28, 2014. Kaisla was born in Finland and came

to the United States to study art. After graduating from HCC and earning a bachelor's degree from the Mass College of Art, he spent 20 years working in the fields of graphic design, pre-press, and printing. In 2010, he enrolled in Westfield State University's post-baccalaureate Teacher Licensure program and is now an art teacher.

2000

Brenda J. Ainsburg is a channel program manager for Siemens PLM. She studied Spanish at HCC, then traveled to Spain with the UMass summer language program. Since then, she has traveled to Brazil, Japan, and the United Kingdom. She fled "the frozen tundra" (of Massachusetts) and has moved to Georgia, where she hopes never to lift another snow shovel.

2001

Mary Ann Carrasquillo-Rodriguez is a computer teacher in grades 1-8 at Holyoke Community Charter School. In her computer classes, Carrasquillo also teaches presentation, writing, and critical thinking. She earned her bachelor's degree in general studies from UMass-Amherst and her master's degree in educational technology from Lesley University.

2006



Bobbi Rougeau is the owner of Alphabet Soup Child Care, which has two locations in Granby, Mass., (West State Street and Taylor Street), and one on Ferry Street in South Hadley, in the former

Center School building.

2008

Danna J. Niedzwiecki Lockwood graduated from Smith College in 2011 as an Ada Comstock scholar majoring in economics. She is a production editor at Sinauer Associates, Inc. in Sunderland, Mass., where she directs the manuscript to textbook process for science, neuroscience, and genetics textbooks. She also volunteers at Dakin Animal Shelter in Leverett, Mass., and she and her husband, Bill, foster rescued dogs.

2009

Maryam A. Sullivan is a high school English

literature teacher at Ruya Bilingual School in Sabah Al Salem, Kuwait. She is also the owner and director of Covered Girls Collective, a performing arts and media literacy group for immigrant girls and teens. She holds a master's degree in creative writing and literature from Regis University. Sullivan is the author of the critically acclaimed urban Islamic novel, *The Size of a Mustard Seed*, the award winning children's book, *Hind's Hands – A Story About Autism*, and another children's book, *The Princess and The Good Deed*. Sullivan also writes for several online publications and lectures at colleges in the Middle East and U.S.

2011

Ryan Budhu graduated from UMass-Amherst in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in public health. He is now enrolled in the Accounting and Taxation master's degree program at American International College.

2012

Dylan N. Pilon earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from the Isenberg School of Management at UMass-Amherst in 2013. While participating in a Digital Marketing/eCommerce internship with Newell Rubbermaid, Pilon launched Cloud 9 Marketing Group, a digital marketing agency that builds brand awareness via social media and provides content creation, community management, search engine optimization and copy writing services.

2014



Carolyn Velazquez is enrolled in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at American International College in Springfield, Mass. She came to HCC through the English as a Second Language program,

majored in liberal arts and was a Profile of Excellence for Commencement 2014.

Have some news to share?

Send it to the Alumni Office, Holyoke Community College, 303 Homestead Avenue, Holyoke, MA 01040 or via email to alumni@hcc.edu.

In Memoriam

We are saddened to learn of the passing of the following members of the HCC community:

Richard Leon Provost, '49
Thomas C. Catigan, '57
Clement A. Messier, '57
Beverly C. Page, '58
John M. Ginley, '60
Phyllis V. Vanasse, '65
Michael P. Woods, '70

David M. Stark, '73
Sheryl Frey, '77
Patrick R. Forhan, '81
Ruth D. Cognac, '82
Patricia A. Sypniak, '91
Constance D. Grave, '97
Daniel L. Scott, '98

Joseph P. Bachand, '02
James R. Kelly, '11
Barbara DeMaio,
*retired secretary in transfer affairs/
career services*
Marie Fitzgerald,
retired professor of biology

Alumni Letter

HCC alumni connections can span decades, life transitions, and many miles.

"Is this the Paula Caproni you know?" I asked my husband after seeing Paula's name below mine in the giving section of an HCC Annual Report. "No," he said, "the one I know here in Ann Arbor graduated from Yale's business school. She couldn't have gone to community college."

Well, as I determined after further exploration, Paula did indeed graduate from HCC. I was surprised by the coincidence, but not to learn that a fellow HCC graduate was a faculty member at the University of Michigan's top-10 ranked Ross School of Business.

Paula's career journey (See Class Notebook, previous page) mirrors my own. After graduating from HCC in 1969 and working for a while, I – then all of 23 – attended Smith College in a pilot program for adult students. I subsequently won a full fellowship to and received an MBA in healthcare management from Northwestern University. My professional path has taken me from the corporate world in Chicago to a technology startup in California, to my current role as managing director of a new University of Michigan initiative to improve healthcare and inform public policy.

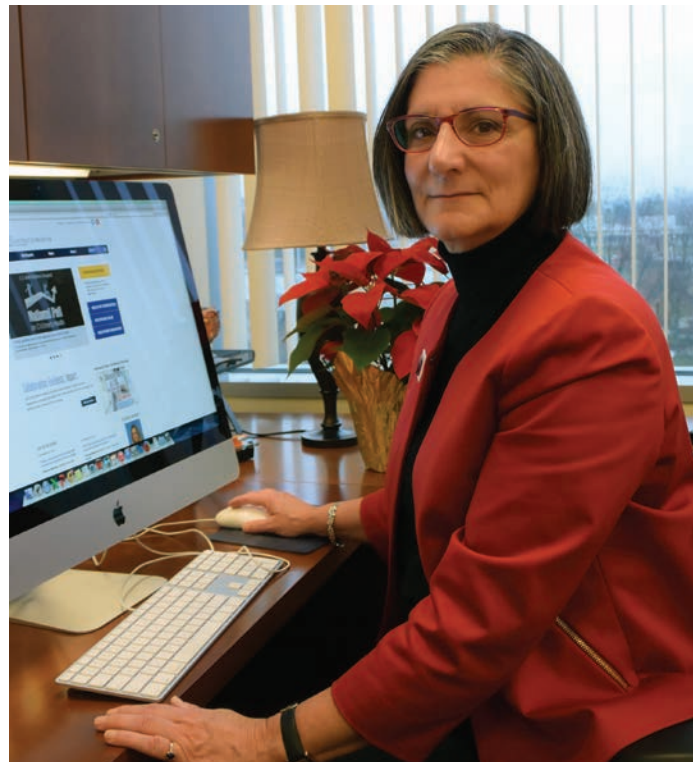
Paula and I live just blocks from each other. We connect periodically, sharing a deep attachment to HCC and the solid foundation it provided for launching our respective successful careers.

In another amazing coincidence, I recently discovered that I also live near the son of Sue Panitch, a member of the HCC Foundation board and wife of Dr. Vic Panitch, whom I knew through my first post-HCC job at Shriner's Hospital. Most important of my alumni

connections, however, have been those with my former classmates, some of whom remain my closest friends.

Making the most of your HCC experience can forge bonds that are lasting, meaningful, and sometimes surprising!


*Gail A. Campanella, MBA
Managing Director, University of Michigan Institute for Healthcare Policy & Innovation*



HCC Album



Among the many frequent visitors to the HCC campus is this red-tailed hawk, which can often be seen soaring over the playing fields or perched in trees around Tannery Brook, the small stream that runs along the east side of the Campus Center and Kittredge Center. Sometimes, it sits on the black, chain-link fence in the HCC Courtyard between the two buildings, scanning the ground for prey.

One fall day, the hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) spent an entire school day in a tree by the footbridge over the brook in front of the Kittredge Center, no doubt guarding its dinner, a dead rabbit in the grass down by the water's edge. 

2015 SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMS

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- Criminal Justice Academy
- Youth Fencing
- Glossy Girl World of STEM
- Graphic Design Using Photoshop
- Baseball, Basketball, and Soccer Clinics
- Wilderness Survival
- Lego Robotics
- Minecraft Construction (Beginner & Advanced)
- Programming for Android Phones
- Video Game Design (Beginner & Advanced)



QUESTIONS? Call Community Education at (413) 552-2123 or (413) 552-2500 for help.

For a complete listing of programs visit www.hcc.edu/summer

Alumni Connection

Holyoke Community College Alumni Office
303 Homestead Avenue
Holyoke, MA 01040

www.hcc.edu



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SPRING 2015 EVENTS

Thursday-Saturday, April 23-25

The Glass Menagerie

7:30 p.m., with 2 p.m. matinee on April 25, Leslie Phillips Theater

The HCC Theater Department presents the Tennessee Williams' classic about a faded Southern belle, her mentally fragile daughter, and her son, who desperately longs to escape their small, rundown, St. Louis apartment. Directed by Tom Geha.



Friday, April 24

The Glass Menagerie - ASL interpreted performance

7:30 p.m. with 6 p.m. Silent Pizza in KC302

Wednesday, May 6, 11 a.m.

Silent Pizza

11 a.m.

ASL/ Deaf Studies students, students who are Deaf, Interpreters/Captionists and members of the Deaf Community are welcome. Bring your own beverage. Email csmalley@hcc.edu or dgeoffroy@hcc.edu to register.

Sunday, May 3

5th Annual Cougar 5K Run/Walk Challenge

10 a.m. start, registration 8-9:30 a.m., Bartley Center for Athletics and Recreation

The 3.1-mile run/walk/roll around the HCC is for all levels and

ages; \$30 before May 2; \$35 on race day. To benefit student scholarships and classroom equipment. Register online at www.hcc.edu/crawl.

Wednesday, May 6, 2015

Alumni Nursing Supper

5 - 7 p.m., PeoplesBank Conference Room (KC 301-303)

Free to all HCC nursing alumni, current nursing students, and retirees. Enjoy good food and conversation. Make your reservation today by calling 413.552.2253 or emailing alumni@hcc.edu. Seating is limited.

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

38th Annual Distinguished Alumni Award Dinner

6-8:30 p.m., The Log Cabin, 500 Easthampton Road, Holyoke

2015 Distinguished Alumni awardees: Henry Monaghan, '53, Harlan Stone Fiske Professor of Constitutional Law at Columbia University Law School, State Representative Aaron Vega, '90, and Attorney Gina Barry, '93, of Bacon & Wilson in Springfield, MA. This benefit event is open to the public and raises scholarship funds for Holyoke Community College students. To receive an invitation or to register, call 413.552.2253.

The above is a partial list of events.