

COMMUNITY

THE MAGAZINE OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Volume 11, Issue 2



Metropolitan Community College:

Celebrating 50 Years of Timeless
Stories and Unforgettable Moments

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Editor's note

The articles featured in this magazine are being published in their original form, as they appeared in the year they were written in the College's newsletters. I hope you enjoy looking back on the College's last 50 years and learning more about its rich history.

Volume 11, Issue 2

Community is a quarterly publication of Metropolitan Community College. Contact the editor at **531-MCC-2726** or **efrazier@mccneb.edu**.

Metropolitan Community College affirms a policy of equal education, employment opportunities and nondiscrimination in providing services to the public. We are committed to ensuring our websites and facilities are accessible and usable to everyone. To read our full policy statement, visit **mccneb.edu/Nondiscrimination**.



METROPOLITAN
Community College

Credits

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WELCOME TO THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION OF *COMMUNITY MAGAZINE*.

It has been my privilege to work at Metropolitan Community College for a good portion of its history. MCC started in 1974 as a fledgling occupational school at a makeshift location in an industrial park and has now grown to be a comprehensive, multicampus community college — the second-largest post secondary education institution in Nebraska.

The state legislature had high hopes when it created the six community colleges as we know them today. They were designed to be unique institutions, unlike any other college or university. They were intended to provide easy, affordable access to all who wanted to attend. As workforce training engines, they were expected to grow and flex as business needs changed. As academic institutions, they were to provide rigorous education that could transfer to any four-year school around. As centers of cultural life, they were expected to offer recreational, personal enrichment, basic education and career training for lifelong learners of all ages.

That's a lot to ask of one institution. It's no wonder our jingle in the 1970s was "Doing it all for You!"

Now, that jingle holds up pretty well, but I think I'd change one thing to make it more applicable today. I'd say MCC is doing it all WITH you.

Over a million students and employees have walked through the College's doors in our first 50 years. Each and every one of them has taught us something we didn't know before. The same goes for our business partners, who shared the tips and tools of their trades to enhance the curriculum. Likewise, countless friends and alumni have contributed in their unique ways to make MCC the higher education institution it is today.

As you glance through these pages, and read stories from each of our five decades, one theme will ring clear: MCC is about people. It is about people helping other people be the best they can be.

Thanks to you all — students, faculty, staff, retirees, partners, neighbors, ambassadors — for being part of our history.



Randy Schmailzl
MCC president



METROGRAM

Metrograd

Fronzell Pankey didn't want to hang up his cooking utensils when he left a 25-year stint in the Air Force a couple of years ago. In fact, even while he was still in his military job as food service superintendent, Pankey was planning to sign up at a community college like Metro for "credentials and certification."

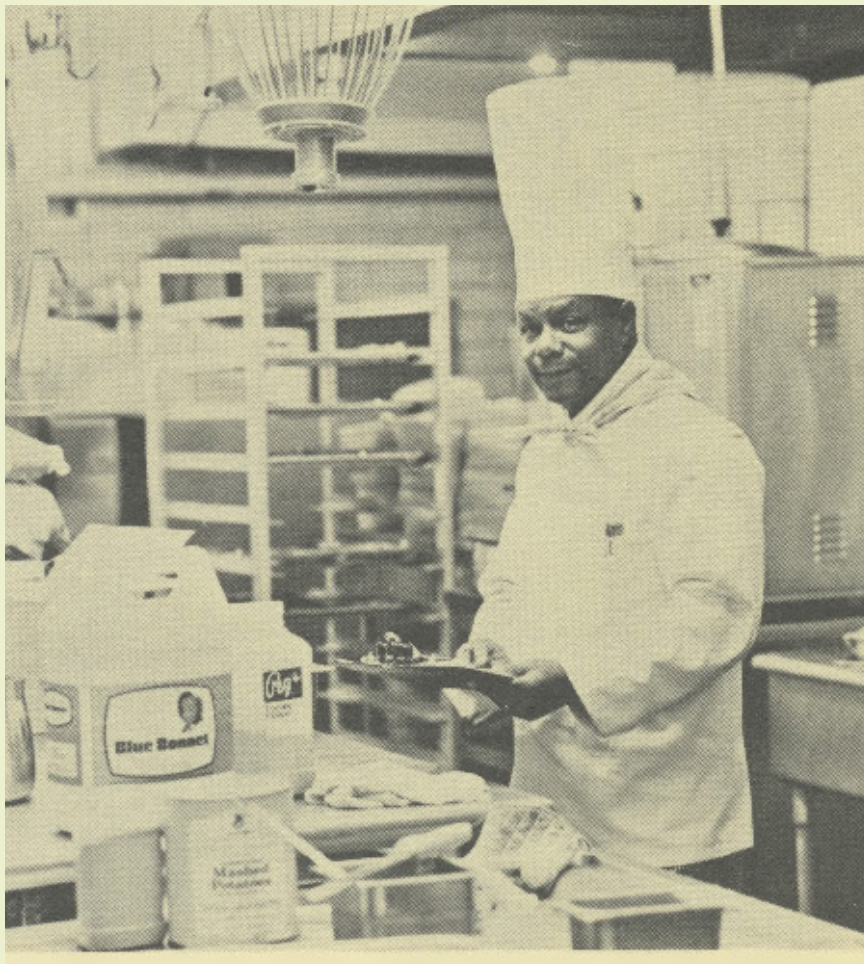
That's just what he did. Pankey graduated this past summer from the College's relatively new Hotel- Restaurant Management program (a two-year Associate Degree course) and is now executive chef at Omaha's St. Joseph's Hospital, soon to be situated in the sprawling new complex at 30th and California Streets.

Though the demands of moving the hospital across town are great, Pankey is excited about the new location and a new feeding procedure

that his staff of 15 will put to use there. Called "Ready Foods," the process he says, involves blast freezing a total of 63 entrees on plates. When ready for use, the entrees are heated in microwave ovens and ready to serve in moments. St. Joseph's will be the second hospital in Omaha to put the new process to use.

Pankey's professional life has centered around the kitchen for about 25 years. He began as a dishwasher in the Air Force, worked up to cook, and retired as food service superintendent. Many of his years in the Air Force were spent with the military hospital, background that is today especially pertinent.

At age 40, Pankey decided to sign up for college. "I'd been out of school for about 26 years - but the school was pleasant. I gained confidence - and the instructors bent over backwards to help. I had a ball!"



Pankey feels very strongly about the need to provide the kind of preparation Metro is providing in the Hotel- Restaurant program. "Omaha really needs to have people experienced in food service. Look at all the restaurants. Metro is the salvation of the cooking profession. You see, people don't have time to train people on the job anymore."

Pankey may return to Metro to take an evening class or two, but he also is considering getting his bachelor's degree at UNO.

Meanwhile, Executive Chef Pankey busily manages his staff, readies a new hospital food service set-up, and finds time to "talk up Metro to everyone" he meets.

Metrogram
Vol. 3, No. 5
Dec. 1977



METROGRAD

It's almost a classic story. Hometown high school art teacher decides to make a career switch. The goodbyes are said to students and fellow teachers... and probably the inevitable joke about going back to school is told. There is even a fortune teller who predicts career success for the 26-year-old, down to the event that sends him on his way.

It's been four years since Metro Photography graduate Tim Donahue packed his family up and moved to Hollywood to inch his way into a film career.

He began by answering phones for \$100 a week at a special effects studio.

This fall Donahue was nominated for an Emmy award for his special effects on the 1982 ABC television movie *Inside the Third Reich*. Although he didn't win, the nomination is a turning point in his career that should bring him into prominence as a leading special effects innovator in the film industry.

Whew! How did he get from here to there? Talent, effort and technical knowledge certainly lead the list of Donahue's credentials.

But the special effects artist gives credit to Metro, where he "learned a lot. (Metro Cinema Instructor) Gary Downing inspired me to really put my efforts into motion pictures."

Also, acknowledging what he really wanted to do with his life served to focus his energies: "I've wanted to make movies all of my life, but it wasn't until I was 26 that I even thought seriously about doing it," Donahue said in an interview with the Sun Newspapers' Chris Olson.

Donahue's work for *Inside the Third Reich* included the recreation of the Reich Chancellery through special effects. In the film, actors appear to move through the magnificent structure that Donahue's eye and hand have recreated from 1941 vintage black and white stills.

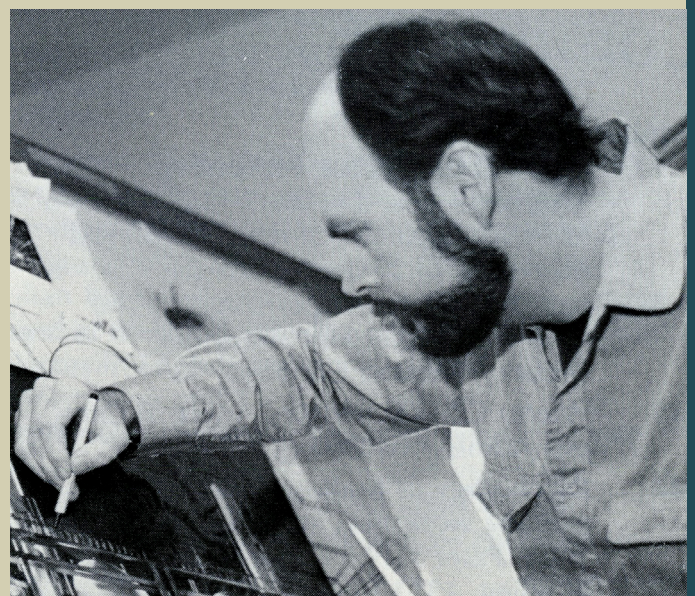
His work may also be seen in *Outland*, a Sean Connery film for which Donahue's employer, Introvision Systems, Inc., received an Academy Award nomination in 1981. (Introvision declined the nomination because it didn't want to make public its special effects techniques used in *Outland*. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences requires that recipients publish their work in full detail as a condition of the award.)

Donahue also lists his special effects in *Project UFO*, *Infinite Horizons* and *Shape of Things to Come*.

What is the "Shape of Things to Come" for this Metrograd? Donahue hopes for more opportunities to do special effects for major motion picture studios. Special effects technicians, Donahue says, "are a growing part of the film industry."

The same could be said of Donahue himself!

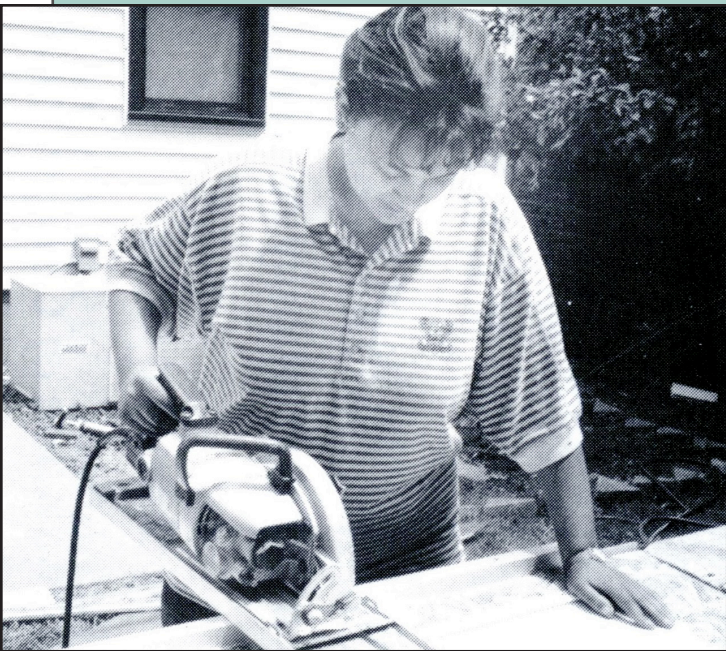
Metrogram
Vol. 8, No. 1
Oct. 1982



Emmy nominee Donahue found Metro "inspiring."

METROgram

Women Study Non-Traditional Trades at OHA Students Complete Step-up Program



Most did not plan to work in a non-traditional field—in fact it was the farthest from their minds. However, it became an opportunity too good to pass up. That was the consensus of the six women who completed Metropolitan Community College's Introduction to Building Trades courses at the Omaha Housing Authority's Gateway Training Center May 26.

Wanting change and more challenge, they enrolled in the pre-apprenticeship training called the Step-up Program and they liked it.

The students completing Phase 1 of Step-up are Omaha Housing Authority residents: Jacqueline Edwards, Starlotte Godbolt, Khadijah Ladd, Patrulia Nanez, Anika Patterson and Caina Whitters.

"All six are very enthusiastic. They made an honest effort to make the program work for them," Bob Stock, director of General Services at Gateway, said. "They have proven their ability to learn."

Phase 1 consisted of six months of classroom training, Monday through Thursday, building an 18 by 22-foot house and studying basic educational courses to raise grade levels above 12th grade. They were paid a \$50 per week stipend.

Recruited when OHA's Resident Relations Department made routine visits to families in the Omaha Housing Authority developments, the six are the first to complete the Building Trades courses at Gateway. Sixteen started the program.

On June 1, the women began Phase 2, hands-on training that continues through December with OHA journey men carpenters, electricians and plumbers. They work a 40-hour week and are paid a stipend of \$200 per week. This experience will help the women decide which craft to pursue in an apprenticeship through local unions after their training is complete.

Khadijah Ladd, who plans to become an electrician, feels good about being part of the program. She stated, "A lot of women and minorities don't get a chance to learn these skills. Completing this training shows how equal we really are." Ladd, single and a graduate of Burke High School, said, "The training showed me if I can do this manual labor, I can do anything."

Anika Patterson credits her success in the program to the instructors, R. George Myhlhousen and Tom Rose.

"They were very thorough and we learned a lot. If I had the materials and money, I could build my own house now. I'm impressed with the program." Born in Omaha and a graduate of Central High School, Patterson, also an aspiring electrician, is the mother of a 6-year-old daughter and 10-month-old twin sons. The former cosmetologist used to admire women who dressed nice and worked in offices. She said, "When I first heard about this program, I thought I don't want to do that kind of work, that is something a man would do." Now she is convinced that being a woman in the building trades field isn't a disadvantage. She has found that people respect her just as much, maybe more than before. With a smile, she said, "I can always wear dresses after work."

From the start, the program sounded interesting to Caina Whitters who always wanted to know how to make a window and install a drain.

“The men treat us as equals and we work just as hard as they do.”

Whiters was born in Wichita and then moved to Omaha in 1978. She is the mother of four children, ages ranging from 2 to 7. Originally, she planned to be a licensed practical nurse, enrolled an LPN program but didn't like it. When she heard about Step-up at Gateway, she said she was confused about a career choice and had very little confidence. That has all changed, “Now, I'm trying to see how far I can go,” she said.

She believes completing the program will open up doors for her (no unintended). Whiters said, “There aren't many jobs out there that pay well. This experience is building a foundation for me. I have something to look forward to when I finish. I will end up with a job where I can support my children, build a home and buy a car.”

Prospects for employment in the building and trades industry look good to the young women. Starting salaries for electricians, carpenters and plumbers range from \$10 to \$18 per hour.

The six said they were proud when a building and trades class from Northeast Community College visited Gateway. The class, all men, was very impressed with the women's well-constructed house.

Hoping to become an electrician or a building inspector, Starlotte Godbolt, likes the program because it is preparing her for something different than the usual jobs for women. “I understand a lot about houses now, if something goes wrong at home I can fix it. I no longer have to call someone else,” she said.

Before enrolling in Step-up, Godbolt really didn't know what she wanted to do. She had tried computer programming and considered banking school. When she heard about the program at Gateway, she thought it would be a good challenge.

Godbolt is currently part of a crew who is building sidewalks and installing playground equipment at Hilltop Playground at 31st and Grant. “Most of the things I'm doing now, we didn't do in the first six months,” Godbolt said. “But my trainer is good about explaining new projects.”

Jacqueline Edwards, a Benson High School graduate, recognized a good opportunity and said, “yes” when the Step-up Program was presented to her. This is her first trying a non-traditional field for women. She said she doesn't mind manual labor and likes the thought of a carpenter's pay in the future.

When her friends first heard about what she was studying, they laughed, but when they saw the pictures of the house her class built, they were impressed. That gave her confidence in her abilities and courage to keep on studying. She said, “Someday I'm going to build my own house for myself and my children. (Edwards is the mother of two boys, age 3 and 8, and a 1-year-old girl.)

Patrulia Nanea hadn't worked in a non-traditional field with manual labor before either. She now says, she likes it, “It is fun.” And, it is not as hard as she thought it would be.

Nanea graduated from high school in New Mexico and is the mother of two boys, age 2 and 3. Working with an eye on a carpenter's apprenticeship, Nanea said, “I have developed good math skills. The training has helped me become more independent and it showed me what is out in the real world—people who work hard.”

She doesn't mind the fact that there are not many women in the field. “The men treat us as equals and we work just as hard as they do,” Nanea said.

Metrogram
Vol. 19, No. 2
Summer 1994





METRO gram

Metro Kicks off 30th Anniversary Celebration

Metro has gone retro.

Earlier this year, the College purchased a 1974 Volkswagen Beetle, which it repainted and decorated with 70s-style colors and graphics.

The project is one of several special activities planned this year to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the College's opening on Sept. 30, 1974.

When it first arrived at the Fort Omaha campus, the nearly mint-condition Beetle was red.

To make it more eye-catching, students in the automotive class Structural Repair II, taught by Mike Aube, sanded and repainted the car, giving it a purple body, bright blue hood and orange and lime green fenders. Heidi Mihelich, graphic designer, and Hillary Fast, graphic design intern, with the Marketing and Public Relations Department, then decorated the car with "groovy" 70s-style graphics that incorporated the theme "Alter Your Future."

The MPR department also created tie-dye t-shirts bearing the words "Metro Community College est. 1974 " for volunteers to wear while driving the Beetle and walking beside it in parades.

The Beetle made its debut at the Cinco de Mayo parade in South Omaha on May 8, where it was seen by thousands of spectators. Many more people will have a chance to see it in parades and community events taking place in towns throughout Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties this summer and fall.

In addition to the Beetle, other promotional pieces created to celebrate the College's 30th anniversary, include a photographic display of people and events that shaped the College and a



video that traces the history of Metro from 1974 to the present.

The MPR department also created a 30th anniversary Metro logo that will appear in advertisements, College publications and commemorative items.

Metro employees will celebrate the College's 30th Anniversary at a picnic planned for 3 to 7 p.m. on Sunday, September 26, at the Fort Omaha Campus Parade Grounds. Students from the Institute for the Culinary Arts will prepare food for the event, and employees will have the opportunity to participate in a talent show.

Other public events taking place at Metro's Fort Omaha Campus this summer include a Family Reunion Picnic from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on July 17 as part of Omaha's 150th birthday celebration, the annual Intertribal Powwow on Saturday, Sept. 25, and a possible balloon launch on the Parade Grounds during the River City Roundup in September.

The official 30th anniversary celebration runs through June 30, 2005.

Metrogram
Vol. 29, No. 3
Spring 2004

YOU'RE INVITED TO

Metropolitan Community College's

50th
Anniversary
Gala

AN EVENING CELEBRATING OUR PAST AND
INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE.

MARCH 9, 2024

For more information, contact the MCC Foundation at
foundation@mccneb.edu or 531-MCC-2346.



Visit onecau.se/mcc50 to
RSVP, donate or participate in
the silent auction.



Switching majors

brings success, happiness

After 20 years in the United States Air Force, Demetria Geraldts retired after being based at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, Nebraska.

During her time in the Air Force, Geraldts worked in health and human services. She decided to continue her education in that area and enrolled at Metropolitan Community College.

"I wanted to expand my knowledge," she says.

After some time in Health and Human Services classes, Geraldts started to have a change of heart. After seeing her love of fashion and clothing, an instructor gave her the guidance she was looking for.

"In Health and Human Services, an instructor approached me and said 'You should be in the fashion program.' That was an important turning point. I realized it was time for me to do what I loved," she explains.

Geraldts had always been interested in clothing, fashion and sewing. Her grandmother was an avid quilter, her aunt was a dressmaker. In the Air Force, she tailored her own military uniform. She also made clothes for her dolls and her daughter's Halloween costumes.

Geraldts made the switch to the College's Fashion Design program.

"What I'm learning is there are different elements and careers in fashion design," she says. "It's a really, really good program. You're not just learning how to design clothes."

Since making the switch, Geraldts has had great success in the program. Last summer, she entered her ready-to-wear and streetwear collection to Omaha Fashion Week in the emerging designer category.



to fashion student

"I went from sketches on a tablet to literally on the runway," says Geraldts. "Just to see it all play out was crazy."

Her collection was chosen to show in the finale where she was awarded the Emerging Designer Award. She was even given a \$500 prize from SAC Federal Credit Union.

Geraldts has put her prize money to good use. She used part of the winnings to start a scholarship for MCC's Fashion Design program that helps students get the supplies they need.

"What I saw was that a lot of students weren't able to get supplies until well into the quarter. I wanted to offer that support," explains Geraldts.

The other portion of the prize money is going toward a trip to New York City where Geraldts will look into getting one of her garments produced in a larger quantity.

"One of my dresses—I call it the 'everybody dress' because it looks good on everybody—garnered some interest. I did some research and found a manufacturer that is willing to do a short run to see how they'll do on the market," Geraldts says.

It's been a whirlwind year of success for Geraldts and she is so thankful for the opportunities MCC has brought to her.

"My education opens doors," she says. "At 52 years old, I was on a track that made sense for me or that I was supposed to be on. One day, I decided that I wanted to do what I wanted to do. My education put me on a path that I know for sure that's where I'm supposed to be."

Caring instructors and MCC Veterans Services have been great support during Geraldts' educational journey at the College.



Photos courtesy of omahafashionweek.com

"Every instructor who has stayed after class and spent time with me, I can't say 'thank you' enough to those folks," she states. "The Veterans Services office has been a great support. It's been a wealth of resources with great guidance."

Making the switch was a big decision that turned out to be the best thing, Geraldts says, and others shouldn't be afraid to do the same.

*Community
Vol. 5, Issue 4
Winter 2017*

"People have to remember their dream," she says. "I don't think it's ever too late."



HOLDING COURT

Already dubbed “*the Betty White of Sarpy County*” by her business law instructor, 86-year-old Beth Ragland is on the way to becoming its next Perry Mason.

Beth Ragland earned her Associate of Applied Science in General Studies with a concentration in pre-law classes from Metropolitan Community College in May 2022, but she has been holding court since she arrived on campus in fall of 2019 after transferring from another local college.

Ragland was part of a 2022 MCC graduating class of more than 1,500 at spring commencement. She strutted the stage at Baxter Arena with a gold sash worn over her graduation gown to signify the 4.0 grade-point average she carried all the way through her studies. The lifelong learner walked directly into an internship offer with the Sarpy County Attorney’s Office.

Her end goal is to practice elder law.

“I want to practice elder law because there are so many elderly people who are mistreated,” Ragland said. “I like the variety of things I’ve learned and want to use the education I’m getting to help someone who doesn’t have it.”

Helping others has always been a part of Ragland’s daily operations. The requirement to go to her graduation party, which was attended by more than 200 family members and friends, was to bring a can of food for a local food pantry she has volunteered with for years.

“We filled my Cadillac with food donations and also had more than \$1,000 in cash donations,” Ragland said. “I was more excited about that than graduating.”

Ragland has also volunteered with several community organizations over the years. She and her late husband, Ken, who passed from cancer in 2014, were also politically active in Sarpy County and throughout the state. But during her studies, everything she was involved in took a back seat to school.

"I thought, if I am going to put my time into it, I might as well go full blast, and that's what I did. I gave up all my social clubs. I gave up everything. I was very active in the arts council, the women's group, the Republican Party and volunteering, but I had to give it up because school was more important to me," Ragland said.

It was from Ragland's involvement in politics with Ken that her love of the law ensued. Long before pursuing a degree, she served as a layperson appointed by the governor in the judicial nomination process at the Sarpy County Courthouse. About 10 years ago, through that process, she became acquainted with District Court Judge Stefanie Martinez, who serves Nebraska's 2nd Judicial District covering Cass, Otoe and Sarpy counties. It evolved into a friendship when they realized they shared a birthday on Valentine's Day.

"We started celebrating our birthdays together. [Beth] loves to throw a good party, so she would always include me," Martinez said. "She refers to me as her sister, and she is probably one of the closest things I have to family in town. We spend holidays and special events together. She's close to my four kids, and I knew her husband Ken and went through that loss with her."

Ragland said she was able to attend college utilizing her late husband's military veteran

benefits. In working through his loss in grief counseling, she met Michael Hennessy, now her fiancé, who lost two previous spouses, also to cancer. She credits Hennessy with helping to keep her focused on her goals.

"I have a fiancé who was a teacher at one time. He's a pusher. He made darn sure we didn't go out and socialize before I had my assignments done," Ragland said. "I didn't need a lot of pushing. I'm an ambitious person, but that little push really helped me."

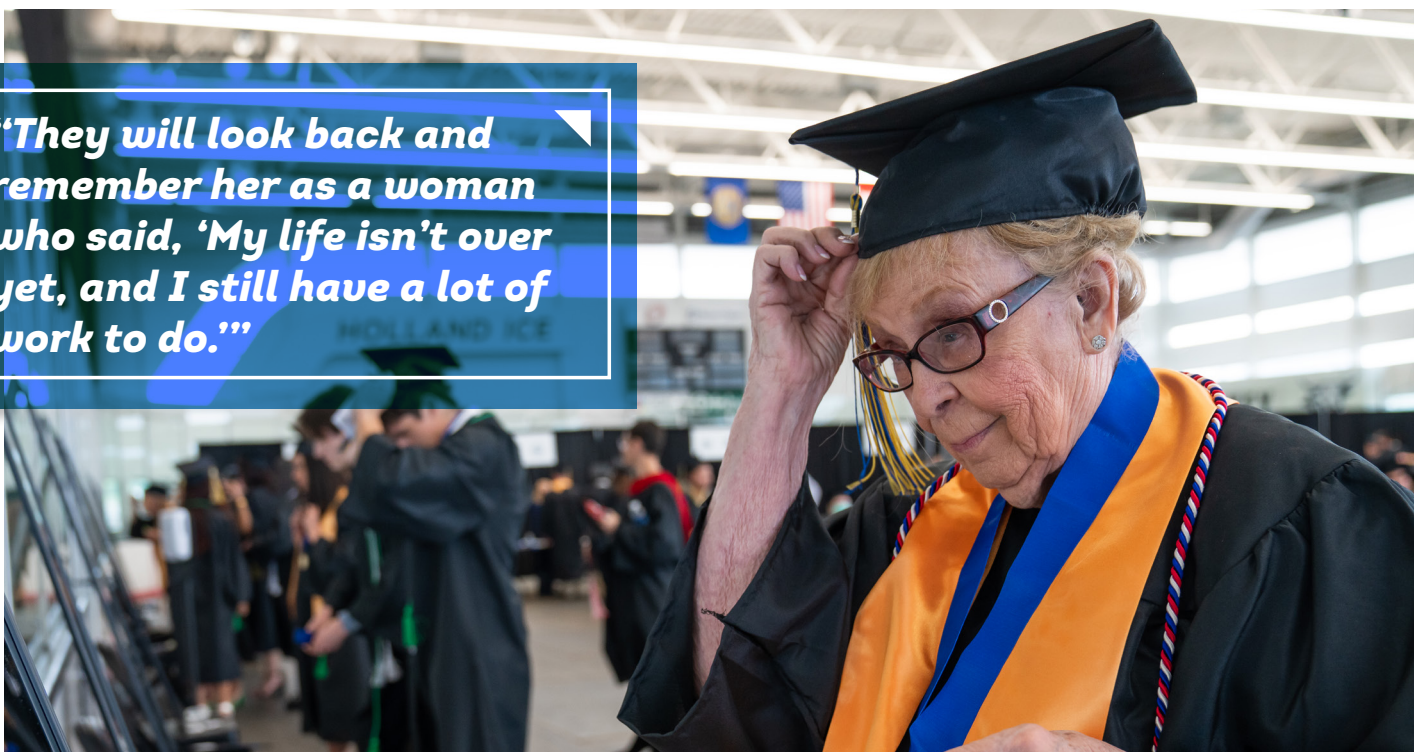
Court is in session

To complete some of her assignments and finals requirements in her pre-law classes at MCC, Ragland observed court cases. Martinez gave her a seat at the bench in her courtroom to complete her coursework, as well as helped her determine which classes would be most relevant for continuing on to a degree in law after finishing her associate degree at MCC.

"I do a lot of criminal and domestic cases, so I would invite her to come to court and join me when I had a trial, and she would sit up at the bench with me. Beth really enjoyed it. She sat with me too many times to count on all different types of cases, and she diligently took notes. Then we would debrief, and she would ask questions about what happened or how I handled things," Martinez said.

At the beginning of those proceedings, Martinez would introduce Ragland to the attorneys with the prosecution and defense. In one such introduction, Martinez said a divorce attorney made a "flippant comment" about Ragland still going to school at her age.

"They will look back and remember her as a woman who said, 'My life isn't over yet, and I still have a lot of work to do.'"



Ragland's response had the same effect as a gavel making firm contact with oak.

"She just shut him down — he had no response to her, and that guy always has a response. It was really funny," Martinez said.

During her observance of courtroom trials, Ragland could not react outwardly or interact with the participants. But she could dish in the classroom about moments that caused her to raise her eyebrows in the halls of justice, such as a lawyer being unprepared for court, or a damaging piece of testimony being uncovered during a trial.

Carol Cleaver, an MCC business law instructor, said Ragland was a joy to have in class. Besides the straight-A average she carried and her notorious classroom commentary, the treats she often baked for her classmates also elevated her among her peers. Her cat named Baby Girl (first name) Baby Person (last name) also became a frequent point of reference in classroom discussions, Cleaver said.

"She had a lot of different life experiences that just had the class rolling. At first [the other students] didn't know how to take her, but as they got to know her, they just loved coming to class to see what she was going to say next," said Cleaver, who graduated from MCC at 49 and has been a practicing attorney since 2006. "What I think was amazing about her is they will look back and remember her as a woman who said, 'My life isn't over yet, and I still have a lot of work to do.'"

The caring touch at MCC

Ragland first started her educational pursuit in 2017 at another institution, but she transferred to MCC in 2019. She also paused taking classes during the beginning of the pandemic before resuming her studies in the 2021 fall quarter.

"I wasn't sure how it was all going to pan out, so I just took time off due to COVID-19. The minute I found out everything was going to be okay, I went right back to it," Ragland said.

She credits the instructors and classroom setting she experienced at MCC in making it feel like the right place for her to be. Cleaver, with whom she took six classes, and her criminology professor, Brenda Smith, were particularly impactful, Ragland said. She also enjoyed meeting other students, including international students from Afghanistan and Russia.

"I didn't enjoy [the other college] as much. I learned there, but [MCC] is much more one

on one. I got most of my smarts from [MCC]," Ragland said. "The instructors are very caring about their students and went into great depth, and if you ever had a question, they were right there to answer them in class, online — wherever."

Smith said Ragland provides inspiration to anyone who believes the opportunity to pursue new career goals has passed.

"Beth is a fantastic person and student," she said. "I hope that I have that much drive and determination when I am 86 years old."

Like the divorce attorney, everyone who comes into Ragland's orbit on her journey of achievement soon understands she's not filling time — she's maximizing it. While determining the next step she'll take toward going to law school, Ragland has continued taking classes at MCC. She enrolled in tort law and general biology classes during the summer quarter.

No signs of slowing down are on the horizon.

"After my husband died, I just figured, 'Hey, I'm not going to just sit around and grieve for the rest of my life. You can't bring him back, so you might as well move on,'" Ragland said. "I think that if people want to keep a bright and sharp mind, they should continue educating themselves. I don't care if it's at a college or what, I think you should take courses to learn how to cope with life the way it is because it's not easy like it used to be. It's very complicated sometimes."

Her nudge to anyone who is considering going back to school but is finding reasons not to:

"Give yourself permission and go for it. Or else you'll be 86 years old and going back to school," Ragland said with a laugh.

Community
Vol. 10, Issue 1
Fall 2022





We want to hear from you

What's going on?

Tell us!

We know you're out there, but we don't know how you're doing.

Share what's going on in your life with your classmates and friends.

Make sure FANs has your correct email or home address so we can stay in touch.

Send us your updates at fans@mccneb.edu.

1970s

1974

The Nebraska Legislature consolidates eight technical community college areas into six. Metropolitan Technical Community College opens its doors in the summer of 1974 to serve the people in Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties. Marm H. Harris is the first president. The first campus, a former warehouse at 132nd and I streets, hosts 903 students and 46 programs during the inaugural fall quarter.

1975

Fort Omaha, an abandoned military base, becomes the College's first permanent campus. Plans are made to develop another campus in the South Omaha Industrial Park on the site of a former packing plant. In September, the College holds its first graduation.

1977

MCC pioneers a special solar energy training program. The project provides window-type solar heating for 12 low-income homes in Omaha. The College plans to add a third permanent campus near Elkhorn. This campus will replace the rented facility at 132nd and I streets.

1978

The new South Campus officially opens at 2909 Babe Gomez Ave., with the Mahoney Building and the Industrial Training Center. Noncredit classes are offered in 32 community centers.

1979

MCC is granted full accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The College awards full tuition scholarships to graduating high school seniors.

1980s

1980

Dr. J. Richard Gilliland becomes president of MCC. The College adds telephone registration to reduce the need for in-person registration. MCC is selected to supplement training for General Motors. MCC opens the Elkhorn Valley Campus at 204th Street and West Dodge Road. The state awards a grant to provide free English lessons to Indochinese refugees.

1981

The Office of Personnel Development is established to tailor staff development with the needs of the individual and the College. MCC adds an administrative internship program that allows instructors to leave the classroom for administrative experience.

1982

MCC begins its first "College for Kids" programming, designed to provide special opportunities to children in the summer. Despite high unemployment rates statewide and nationally, MCC graduates enjoy a 94% employment rate. MCC employees plan the College's future in Master Planning sessions.

1983

MCC hosts Health Fair of the Midlands. MCC is granted 10-year accreditation by the North Central Association. Credit class schedules are mailed to 209,000 households in the four-county area. Starlet Gilbert becomes the 5,000th person to earn her GED at MCC.

1984

Gov. Bob Kerrey signs a law allowing MCC to offer academic transfer for a baccalaureate degree. MCC offers credit classes at Offutt Air Force Base and opens a learning center at the Omaha Correctional Center. Building 10, a new \$4 million classroom facility, opens at the Fort Omaha Campus.

1985

MCC launches College for Life-Long Learners, a noncredit program for students 55 years and older. Learning centers are now open at all three campuses to provide students special assistance.

1986

Weekend College opens to accommodate nontraditional students. The College's offer to recruit and train a telemarketing pool for an information center helps to lure Greyhound Lines, Inc., to Omaha. The Fremont Area Center opens in the Eastville Shopping Center.

1987

MCC receives the largest grant in its history, \$2.4 million from the U.S. Department of Education. The grant helps to upgrade and expand many student services and programs.

1988

Fall quarter enrollment is 6,630 students. MCC launches a program to train nuclear power industry workers who monitor and control radioactivity levels.

1989

Distance learning classes begin at the South Omaha and Elkhorn Valley campuses. MCC participates in reconstruction efforts in war-torn Afghanistan. More than 350 people attend an MCC-sponsored public forum on "Gangs, Drugs and Youth Violence."

1990s

1990

US WEST Business Resources, Inc., and the Communications Workers of America award MCC a major training contract to provide career assessments and training to employees in a 14-state region. This is the largest geographic area in which the College has conducted a training project. MCC, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, area businesses and Omaha Public Schools combine resources to establish the Omaha Job Clearinghouse. This school-to-career program helps high school graduates, who are not planning to go to college, choose careers. MCC recycles more than 10 tons of paper.

1991

MCC hosts the Nebraska State Recycling conference. The Time Option program debuts, allowing students to start their college education at home through television.

1992

MCC participates in a joint venture with the Nebraska Indian Community College. The Legislature changes the College's name from Metropolitan Technical Community College to Metropolitan Community College.

1993

The MCC Sarpy County Center opens in Brentwood Crossing Market Center in La Vista. Folkfest at the Fort, a folk music festival, draws 1,000 people to the campus. Credit enrollment now totals 23,623 students, making MCC the third-largest college in Nebraska.

1994

MCC participates in a joint venture to bring employment training to Belize. A political science class uses interactive video to link MCC students with a class in Sweden. Ross Boyle, a leading expert on economic development, keynotes Master Planning.

1995

The first Great Teachers Workshop allows faculty to share teaching techniques. The Marconi Telecommunications Fair at the Fort Omaha Campus showcases developments in communications technology. The Center for Business and Industry changes its name to Workforce Development Institute and relocates from downtown at the Peter Kiewit Center to the Fort Omaha Campus.

1996

Workforce Development hosts international business seminars for companies with ambitions to expand into the global market. Community members help MCC outline goals in the Master Planning sessions. An economic development survey shows MCC has an indirect economic impact of \$152 million in its four-county service area.

1997

Construction begins on a new educational center/library facility to be built with the City of La Vista. The Department of Correctional Services contracts with MCC to deliver educational services throughout the prison system. A plan is announced to buy part of the former Omaha Stockyards to expand the South Omaha Campus.

1998

Six MCC students are honored as members of the first Nebraska All-State Academic Team. Students register for credit classes through the internet. UNO and MCC sign computer technology transfer agreements. MCC receives the \$1 million Omaha Award, funded by the Suzanne and Walter Scott Foundation, to set up career network centers.

1999

Microsoft's Working Connections program awards a \$245,000 grant to educate and train information technology workers. More than one-third of degrees and certificates awarded at commencement are in information technology. The new MCC Sarpy Center opens in La Vista.

2000s

2000

Opportunities/Jobs/Careers (formerly Omaha Job Clearinghouse) partners with area educators and businesses to offer the "X" files, a program to build employment skills in high school students. The Ninth Annual Powwow draws many to the Fort Omaha Campus to celebrate Native American dance and culture.

2001

Jerry Moskus becomes the third president at MCC. Workforce Development receives the Edgerton Award of Commitment for providing quality service. The College buys 3.5 acres of land near the Fort Omaha Campus for possible expansion and a new entrance.

2002

A public perception survey shows MCC meets educational needs, tuition is affordable and tax dollars are managed wisely. MCC hosts an employer's forum on the immigrant work environment. The Passport To Transfer program helps students interested in transferring to a four-year institution. MCC and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln offer a new degree in culinary research that blends food science and culinary arts.

2003

The College adopts the Master Plan to guide future growth. The new automotive technology program targets high school students. The National Science Foundation awards \$288,748 to fund a new scholarship program for e-commerce students. MCC hosts its first Veterans Day ceremony. Credit enrollment totals 26,653 students.

2004

Community College Week ranks MCC 23rd nationally among two- and four-year colleges in conferring computer degrees. An economic impact study shows how MCC benefits taxpayers, students and the community. The J. Paul Getty Trust awards a \$45,000 grant to help preserve its historic Fort Omaha Campus. MCC offers more than 100 associate degrees and certificate programs.

2005

Jo Ann C. McDowell is named the fourth MCC president.

2006

The MCC Bellevue Center opens at two sites – Bellevue West High School and 2820 Arboretum Drive. A former OPPD service site is purchased for the new Applied Technology Center.

2007

The South Omaha Campus Connector building is completed, connecting the existing building and creating a campus core. The Applied Technology Center opens, consolidating five of the College's trades programs and providing ample training and lab space for these programs' unique needs. The Fremont Area Center opens at a permanent location at 9th and N. Broad streets. Renovations are completed at Elkhorn Valley Campus, updating and streamlining the Commons and Student Services areas.

2008

The 2007-08 academic year finishes with a record-high enrollment of 49,696 students. Renovations begin at the South Omaha Campus Mahoney building to increase and update space for health and sciences programs.

2009

Randy Schmailzl is named MCC president on Aug. 25. The Institute for the Culinary Arts and Alumni Conference Center and a new Fort Omaha Campus entrance off Sorensen Parkway open.



2010s

2010

MCC establishes the MCC Student Textbook Scholarship.

2011

MCC adopts the slogan: Start here. Go anywhere.

2012

MCC South Express opens at 24th and Vinton streets, offering credit classes, individual instruction and a computer center for the benefit of residents of South Omaha.

2013

MCC receives another 10 years of accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. MCC offers a new Health Care Information and Administration program online.

2014

The MCC Pass to Class program surpasses 1 million bus rides. The College's students and community members collaborate on a 3,300-square-foot public art mural on the South Omaha Campus. The College's Fire Science Technology program receives National Fire Academy recognition for excellence in education.

2015

MCC purchases land in Sarpy County, the fastest-growing county in Nebraska, positioning the College for future growth. A newly constructed gazebo hints of the past on the Fort Omaha Campus. Built of brick, the structure becomes an instant gathering spot for students, neighbors and friends.

2016

MCC Workforce Education headquarters at MCC at the Mastercraft. Once a bustling furniture factory in north downtown Omaha, the Mastercraft building is reimaged as office and community space. MCC Workforce Education is among more than 60 startups, nonprofit organizations, creatives and other entrepreneurial businesses with headquarters here.

2017

Construction is completed on four new facilities on the Fort Omaha Campus — the Center for Advanced and Emerging Technology, Career and Academic Skills Center, the Construction Education Center and Central Utilities Plant. The MCC noncredit upholstery program finds a home at MCC at Makerspace, a community workroom in Omaha's New North Makerhood, just north of 11th and Nicholas streets. Arts, crafts and trades are celebrated here. MCC North Express makes up more than 9,000 square feet in the Highlander Accelerator Building. The learning center's offerings are designed as stepping stones toward college or a career. The College expands its services in Washington County to include programs at the Washington County Historical Museum and the Blair Public Library and Technology Center, giving the public access to a digital makerspace and continuing education classes.

2018

Dr. Natalie Hahn donates dozens of African art pieces to be displayed at the Career and Academic Skills Center. MCC partners with Cyberworld Institute to offer more than 60 information technology and cybersecurity courses.

2019

The College announces plans to build a new Automotive Training Center on South Omaha Campus. Kickstart Online Institute gives high school students the opportunity to complete general education credits that can be used at MCC or other post secondary institutions.

2020s

2020

The Center for Advanced Manufacturing opens on the South Omaha Campus. MCC continues to serve students and the community during the COVID-19 pandemic with online classes and virtual activities.

2021

MCC offers dual enrollment to all Nebraska high school students at no cost through the 2024-25 academic year. The Automotive Training Center opens on the South Omaha Campus. MCC launches the Veterinary Assistant prep program.

2022

MCC students build seven tiny homes now located at the Cottages by Siena Francis, a 50-unit tiny home development available to those who have experienced chronic homelessness and have a disability. MCC IT Express — Ashton opens in the historic Ashton Building within Millwork Commons.

2023

MCC at Yates Illuminates begins operations, bringing together a coalition of community organizations based in Omaha's diverse Gifford Park neighborhood. It is home to the College's Freight Farm, an indoor vertical growing center. MCC Digital Express opens in the renovated Building 10 on Fort Omaha Campus. MCC launches the first mobile device repair certification program in post secondary education.

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