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2022-2023

THE MAGAZINE OF DELAWARE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A woman with curly hair, wearing a red textured suit jacket and matching skirt, stands in a hallway with stone walls and columns. She is looking off to the side with a slight smile. The lighting is warm and focused on her.

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

EXCITEMENT IS BUILDING FOR PRESIDENT GATES
BLACK'S VISION FOR NEW COMMUNITY-CENTERED
CAMPUS IN DREXEL HILL

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THE MAGAZINE OF
DELAWARE COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

— Office of the President —

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— Institutional Advancement —

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COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION**

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DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Doug Ferguson, Ed.D.

— Marketing and Communications —
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING
& COMMUNICATIONS**

Daniel J. Kanak

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Jennifer Schu

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Steve Thomas, *Smash Design*

CONTRIBUTORS

Michelle Tooker

PHOTOGRAPHY

Catherine Hamby

Tony Hoffer

Jim McWilliams

PRINT PRODUCTION

Matthew Blair

— Correspondence —

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

901 South Media Line Road

Media, PA 19063-1094

email: pr@dccc.edu

PROFILES

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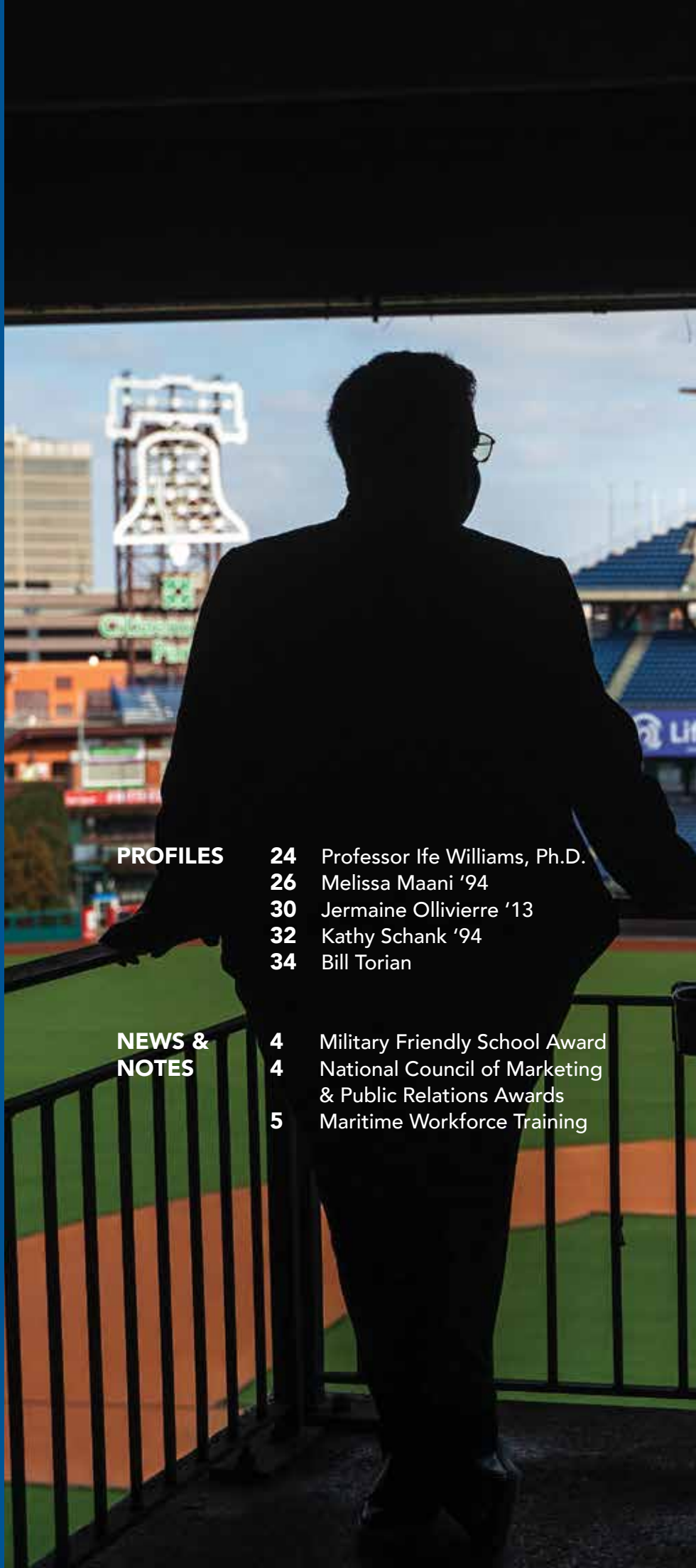
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Delaware County Community College is an equal opportunity institution.

Delaware County Community College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 3624 Market Street, 2nd Floor West, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

Phone: 267-284-5000 | Email: info@msche.org Spanish: espanolinfo@msche.org

COLLEGE EARNS 2022-2023 MILITARY FRIENDLY® SCHOOL GOLD DESIGNATION



For the first time, the College earned the gold designation when it was recognized as a 2022–2023 Military Friendly® School from Viqtory, publisher of *G.I. Jobs* magazine. Institutions recognized as Military Friendly® were evaluated using both public data sources and responses from a proprietary survey.

The College offers credit for military training and knowledge that applies to a course; career counseling; and day, evening, weekend and online classes. The College has staff skilled in helping veterans and their family members navigate the intricacies of U.S. government benefits and financial aid. In 2017, the College opened the Nazz Mariani Veterans Center at its Marple Campus through the generous donations of local businessperson Pam Mariani and the Wilbur C. and Betty Lea Henderson Foundation. The Center is equipped with computers, satellite cable, a Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) table, military flags and other amenities. It serves as a space for studying, socializing and veteran-focused programming. For more information about the College's student veteran programs, visit dcc.edu/veterans-services.

The 2022–2023 Military Friendly® Schools list was published in both the May and October 2022 issues of *G.I. Jobs* and was determined by combining the survey scores with the assessment of an institution's ability to meet thresholds for student retention, graduation, job placement, loan repayment, persistence and loan default rates for all students, especially student veterans. 💡

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS TEAM WINS AWARDS FOR THE COLLEGE

Delaware County Community College won three gold and two bronze awards at the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations District 1 Medallion Awards ceremony last October in Syracuse, N.Y. The awards included gold for the 2021–22 issue of *Ignite* magazine, the Change Starts Here self-mailer booklet, and the Welcome Back animation—a short video that welcomed students, faculty and staff back to campus in fall 2021 after the COVID pandemic.

The College also won bronze for the logo created for its new *Building Community* comprehensive fundraising campaign and for its Change Starts Here outdoor media which included bus, vehicle, and billboard advertisements. The advertising campaign highlights the College as a place for students to make a positive change in their lives through education and training. Daniel J. Kanak, the College's executive director of marketing and communications, credits his team for their award-winning efforts. 💡



PRESIDENT GATES BLACK AND GOV. WOLF TOUT TRAINING

In 2021, the College was selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration as a 2021–2022 Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education—one of only 27 such institutions nationwide. A year later, President Dr. L. Joy Gates Black joined Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf and many other officials for a tour of private shipbuilder Philly Shipyard, Inc. (PSI) to highlight manufacturing and maritime workforce training. One such initiative is a welder training program offered free to students by PSI and the College via the Collegiate Consortium for Workforce & Economic Development (CCWED), a partnership of the regional community colleges and Drexel University. Dr. Gates Black is chair of CCWED.

Standing in front of the PSI Training Academy at the Navy Yard Business Park, Governor Wolf thanked PSI and College officials for their strategic use of a \$1.1 million Pennsylvania Manufacturing Training-to-Career program grant the two organizations received in 2021 that enables them to train workers in high-demand occupations. PSI, the College and CCWED used the grant to develop an 80-hour training program in Flux-Cored Arc Welding leading to industry-recognized certification, and employment at PSI. 🌟



College President & CCWED Chair L. Joy Gates Black, Ed.D., Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf and PSI President/CEO Steinar Nerbøvik at PSI.

PSI President/CEO Steinar Nerbøvik and Dr. Gates Black look out at the shipyard from a PSI drydock.



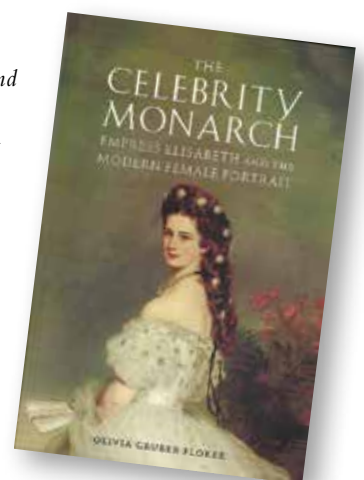
IN MEMORIAM

RICHARD D. DECOSMO, ED.D., PRESIDENT EMERITUS

Delaware County Community College mourns the passing of Richard D. DeCosmo, Ed.D., president emeritus of the College, who passed away on January 12, 2023. Dr. DeCosmo served as the College's second president from 1980 until his retirement in 2003. Under his leadership, the College became even more visible, accessible and comprehensive, as well as increasingly recognized for its contributions to Delaware County's economic development. Enrollment rose significantly, new skill-based degree and certificate programs were added, and there was an increased focus on the needs of non-traditional students. Among Dr. DeCosmo's accomplishments was the building of a 37,000-sq.ft. addition to the Marple Campus' Academic Building, including a Technology Wing. He also created a new technological infrastructure featuring greater efficiencies and enhancements to learning. Memorial contributions can be made to The Richard DeCosmo Presidential Scholarship Fund, which supports students demonstrating outstanding academic achievement. For more information, please contact the College's office of Institutional Advancement at 610-359-5131 or advance@dccc.edu. 🌟

FACULTY BOOKS

The trend-setting and tragic Empress Elisabeth of Austria (1837–1898), one of the world's first celebrity fashion icons, is the subject of *The Celebrity Monarch: Empress Elisabeth and the Modern Female Portrait* (University of Delaware Press, 2022), by Olivia Gruber Florek, Ph.D., associate professor of Art History. The book reveals how portraits of Elisabeth transformed monarchs from divinely appointed sovereigns to public personalities. 🌟





COMMUNITY- CENTERED

STATE-OF-THE-ART CAMPUS
COMING SOON TO DREXEL HILL



by ANTHONY
TWYMAN

Delaware County
Community
College has
embarked on an ambitious
multimillion dollar
construction project that
promises to change the lives
of thousands of residents.
After purchasing the former
Archbishop Prendergast
High School building
in Drexel Hill from the
Archdiocese of Philadelphia,
and after months of meetings
with residents, business leaders,
government and elected
officials, College President Dr.
L. Joy Gates Black is leading
an initiative to build a high-
tech, state-of-the-art ►



campus that will bring affordable, accessible education and training to area residents. The new campus will allow the College to consolidate the existing Upper Darby and Southeast Centers and represents the most ambitious capital project the College has undertaken in more than a decade. The College plans to pay for the new campus through government funding, financing and a comprehensive fundraising campaign.


“This is about positively changing the lives of our students and residents in the communities served by the College,” says Dr. Gates Black.

The College plans to transform the former high school by replacing obsolete buildings and renovating the main building, while ensuring the preservation of the school’s iconic façade and cupola. An important

part of the construction will include a new annex building that will house workforce and skilled trade training facilities for students interested in becoming electricians, plumbers, carpenters and working in advanced manufacturing.

Overall, the College plans to turn a seven-and-a-half-acre portion of the approximately 30-acre property into a new, full-service campus that will feature educational and training programs in high-priority occupations, such as early childhood education, health care, bio-medical technology, skilled trades and emerging career fields.

The new campus will include science labs, a cafeteria and a courtyard with outdoor seating.

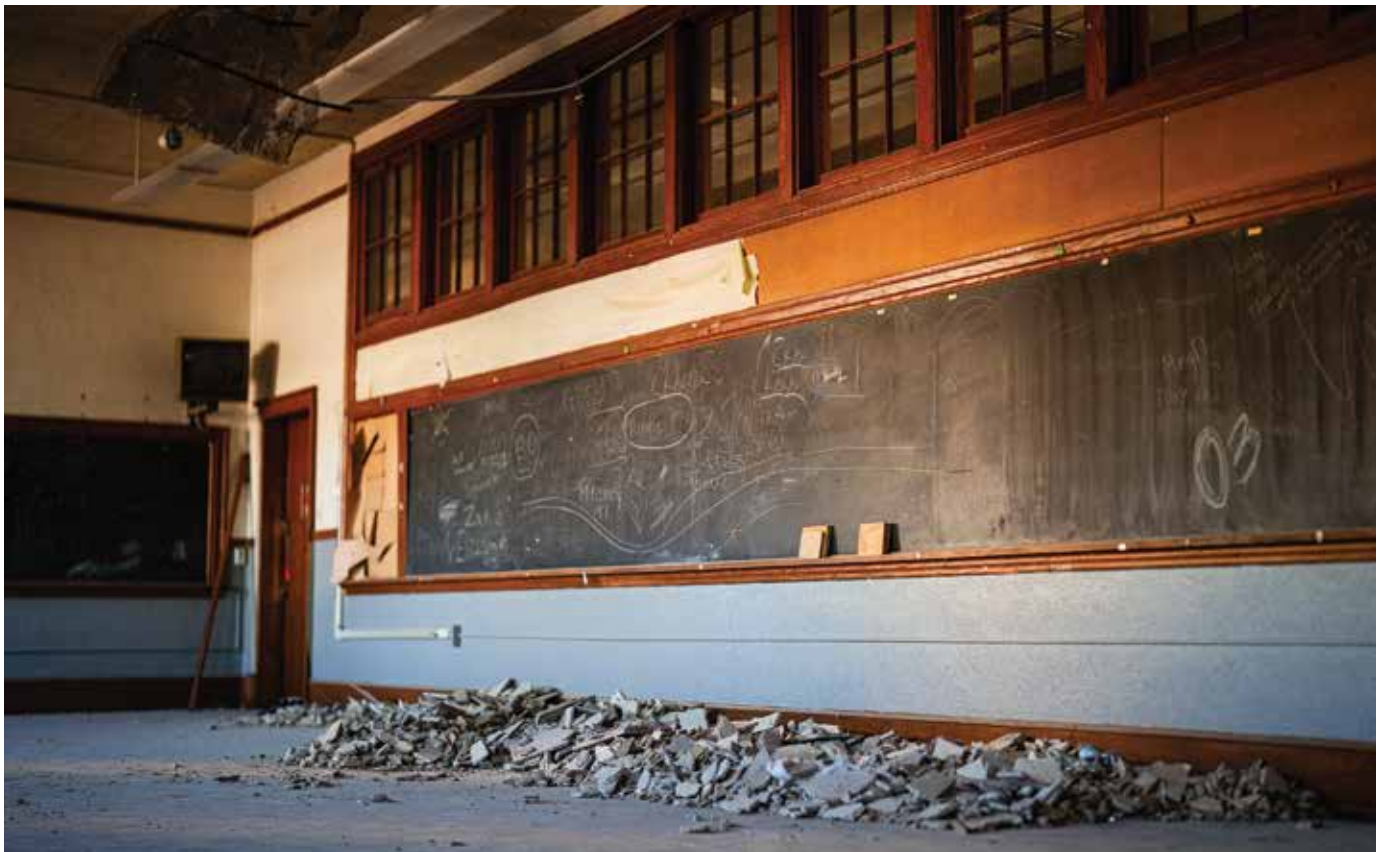
The project also will include an innovative Early Childhood Learning Center, operated by the YMCA of Eastern Delaware County, which will serve as both a learning laboratory for students in the College’s early childhood education program and a much-needed child care facility for students and residents. In addition, a Center for Workforce Development and Community Success will serve as a center of workforce training innovation leading to associate degrees and short-term certificates in occupations such as advanced manufacturing, electro-mechanical, machine tool and computer numeric control technologies. The Center for Workforce Development and Community Success will also provide community services and support, including a computer laboratory, meeting spaces and community education programs. 



By offering a variety of cutting-edge educational and training programs in an easily accessible location, the College will strengthen its mission of providing equitable access for years to come—and the building will be a seat of learning once more.

“This is about positively changing the lives of our students and residents in the communities served by the College.”

— DR. L. JOY GATES BLACK





Building Community campaign launched

by RACHEL
MCCAUSLAND and
ANTHONY TWYMAN

President Dr. L. Joy Gates Black believes Delaware County Community College's success hinges on meeting students where they are and providing the tools and assistance to help them get to where they want to be. The College's new *Building Community* campaign will do just that. It will provide funds for a myriad of non-brick-and-mortar services and programs, as well as for furnishings and fixtures at the new Southeast Campus in Drexel Hill.

Overseen by the College's Educational Foundation, the *Building Community* campaign seeks to raise \$7.5 million. While much of this funding will go toward supporting the new Southeast Campus, \$1 million will go toward developing new workforce training programs; \$1 million will go to creating and expanding equally important programs and services that studies have shown are critical to student engagement and success, including need- and merit-based scholarships; and \$500,000 will support expanded and new diversity, equity and inclusion programming.

For many years, the College's nonprofit



One of the key campaign priorities is student access and success, which aims to reduce and eliminate every barrier to an education.

“

Scholarships are so important. But they represent only one piece of the puzzle. Students can't study if they are hungry.”

— DR. L. JOY GATES BLACK





Introducing the *Building Community Campaign*

At Delaware County Community College, we live by the belief that community is everything, and that guides us in everything we do. Whether bound by where we live or where we feel affinities, having the support of a community is what makes us thrive. Delaware County Community College is home to a talented, diverse range of students guided by mentors who foster confidence and accessible programs that create equitable opportunities to all who seek academic achievement, career advancement or personal fulfillment. The College provides the building blocks to enrich the lives of our students so that they may go out into the world and meet the demands of a rapidly changing workforce and the needs of our dynamic community. With the support of donations through our *Building Community* campaign, we have the power to change the trajectory of students' outcomes, strengthen the heart of our community—its people—and build communities yet to come.

\$7.5
MILLION

Educational Foundation has financially supported various College programs and services, including the Student Resource Center, food pantry, the Nazz Mariani Veterans Center, research grants for faculty, emergency funding for students and approximately \$700,000 in student scholarships every academic year. But with the construction of the new Southeast Campus, the Foundation has boosted its efforts to help students eliminate every potential barrier to receiving a first-rate education.

“Our students have so many needs beyond scholarships,” says Educational Foundation Executive Director Rachel McCausland, who also is the College vice president for Institutional Advancement.

Dr. Gates Black adds, “Scholarships are so important. But they represent only one piece of the puzzle. Students can’t study if they are hungry.”

Donors to the *Building Community* campaign can help expand the services offered by the Student Resource Center to the College’s locations in Delaware and Chester Counties. Through the Resource Center, students receive

access to food, transportation, laptop computers, emergency financial assistance, textbook loans, mental health counseling, family and legal service providers and many other services that can help eliminate student insecurities and increase student success. A 2018 College survey found approximately 27 percent of the 1,000 students surveyed indicated they had experienced food insecurity, and 49 percent would utilize a food pantry if offered at the College.

Donors have many options to support the new Southeast Campus, including the Gates Black Center for Workforce Development and Community Success, an annex building that will be connected to the main building. The annex will be named in honor of Dr. Gates Black, who will retire as president on June 30, 2023. The Center will provide innovative workforce training leading to associate degrees and short-term certificates in high-priority occupations such as advanced manufacturing as well as electro-mechanical, machine tool and computer numeric control technologies. It also will provide a computer laboratory, meeting spaces, community education programs and a broad array of resources

CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES AT-A-GLANCE



**New Southeast
Campus
\$5 Million**

**Workforce
Development
\$1 Million**

**Student Access
& Success
\$1 Million**

**Diversity, Equity
and Inclusion
\$500,000**



that will be made available to the surrounding community. The College will proudly recognize all supporters of the Gates Black Center for Workforce Development and Community Success by displaying their names prominently within the annex building.

Potential donors also can give to ongoing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, which the College is seeking to expand to all of its locations, including its future Southeast Campus. One of the DEI initiatives slated to be jumpstarted soon is the Women's Empowerment Initiative, which, prior to COVID, was led by faculty and involved lunch meetings, guest speakers, mentoring and other ways to engage students interested

The new Southeast Campus will provide innovative workforce training leading to associate degrees and short-term certificates in high-priority occupations.

in empowering women to succeed. Due to a lack of funding and COVID, the Women's Empowerment Initiative has been on hiatus, but the *Building Community* campaign seeks to revive and reinvigorate this important initiative.

The campaign also will provide funding toward the already existing DEI student scholarship created by Dr. Gates Black, who has been a trailblazer in DEI efforts at the College. She appointed the College's first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and led the creation of the College's Center for Equity and Social Justice. The Center oversees "Dialogues for Diversity," a popular, periodic series of online discussions, free to the community, that allow people to have honest, frank, respectful discussions in a safe, virtual space about race, ethnicity, prejudice, discrimination, social privilege and other sometimes difficult to discuss issues. Previous "Dialogues for Diversity" topics have included "Discussing Race in Our Communities," with special guest *New York Times* bestselling author Austin Channing Brown. 🌟



The campaign will provide funding for furnishing classrooms, study and communal meeting spaces, science labs and much more.

Six years in the Life of the College

Dear Friends,

What does it mean for a college to transform? Educational transformation can be defined as the realignment of a college's structures and culture to create a student experience that results in dramatic and equitable increases in outcomes and educational value. When I first came to Delaware County Community College, I immediately recognized the need for equitable access for all students, and that realization is now becoming reality with the creation of the College's new Southeast Campus. But transformation is so much more than just bricks and mortar. It is meeting the students where they are, it is being part of the fabric of the communities we serve, it is empowering others to reach for and attain their educational and career goals. This is the transformational power of higher education, and this is our commitment to all who enter our doors.

As my presidency draws to a close, and as Dr. Marta Yera Cronin begins her service as president, I leave knowing that the College is in excellent and capable hands and that my legacy—and that of every president before me—will continue to grow, continue to spark, continue to ignite. We are the community's college, and we have created a strong foundation of equitable access that will provide for continued community growth, workforce development, and educational attainment for generations to come.

As I prepare for the next chapter of my life, I will forever be proud and grateful to have been part of the story of Delaware County Community College. And I leave knowing that the sparks that are lit within these walls ignite the flames of change that will make this world a better place for all.

Sincerely,



Dr. L. Joy Gates Black
President



Selected highlights

2017-18

- The Board of Trustees selects Dr. L. Joy Gates Black as the College's fourth president, the first female and first African American to lead the College.
- The Foundation for Delaware County elects Dr. Gates Black to its board.
- Dr. Gates Black provides testimony before the PA House Democratic Policy Committee on workforce training and the shortage of skilled labor to meet the needs of regional manufacturers.

2018-19

- The College develops new Diversity, Equity & Inclusion policy.
- The College hosts U.S. Speaker of the House and area congresswomen for a dialogue on education funding.

2019-20

- The Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the College reach an agreement for the purchase of the former Archbishop Prendergast High School in Drexel Hill to become a new campus location.
- A free shuttle service is established between the College's Delaware County locations.
- Through the generosity of Andrew and Sharon Kelleher, the College receives the largest private donation in its history.
- Dr. Gates Black is elected to the American Association of Community Colleges Board.
- The Center for Equity & Social Justice is established and the "Dialogues for Diversity" series launches.

2020-21

- The College is recognized nationally as a Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education.
- The College receives a \$1 million congressional award to support early childhood education at the new Southeast Campus.
- The College is selected to participate in the American Association of Colleges and Universities Institute on Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation Campus Centers.

2021-22

- The Middle States Commission for Higher Education accreditation is successfully reaffirmed.
- The \$7.5 million *Building Community* fundraising campaign is launched.
- Dr. Gates Black provides testimony to the PA House Appropriations Committee on behalf of the Pennsylvania community colleges.

2022-23

- The PA Department of Education approves funding to support the transformation of the former Archbishop Prendergast High School into the College's new state-of-the-art Southeast Campus.
- The groundbreaking ceremony for new Southeast Campus is scheduled.
- Dr. Gates Black is named to the American Council on Education Board as a designated institutional representative of the American Association of Community Colleges.

High school dual enrollment students make history

by ANTHONY TWYMAN

Lilly Kirchhofer initially enrolled in the College's Structured Pathway High School Dual Enrollment program to please her mother. "I'll just do it for my mom," she recalls thinking. Today, she is poised to graduate from West Chester University in just three years—and is one of 26 Coatesville Area Senior High School (CASH) graduates who made Delaware County Community College history last spring.

Kirchhofer and her 25 CASH classmates hold the distinct honor of being the largest number of students to have received associate degrees from one school at one time before receiving their high school diplomas in the College's 55-year history. And thanks to the generosity of the Coatesville Area School District, they earned their associate degrees in Liberal Arts completely tuition free.

To celebrate their achievement, the College hosted a special recognition ceremony in early June 2022 for the students and their families at the CASH auditorium. Interim Coatesville Area School District Superintendent Richard F. Dunlap Jr., Ed.D., Coatesville and College officials, as well as state legislators and their aides, joined College President Dr. L. Joy Gates Black, who presented each of the students with a medallion, specially made by the College, and a certificate of achievement in honor of their remarkable accomplishment.

In May 2022, many of the CASH students proudly participated in Delaware County Community College's graduation ceremony, held at West Chester University. The following month, they received their high school diplomas at CASH. "It was a lot of work, especially during my junior year under COVID quarantine, but it was well worth it," says Kirchhofer, now a sophomore at West Chester University majoring in Communication Sciences and Disorders and minoring in Autism Education.

At the urging of her mother, Kirchhofer took the test to enroll in the College's Structured Pathway High School Dual Enrollment program while a ninth grader. A year later, she started College-level classes while juggling regular high school work and participating in extracurricular activities. She says the experience taught her discipline, time management and—most importantly—that she could achieve academically despite being dyslexic. "I wanted to prove to myself that I could do this." The program also allowed her to enroll at West Chester University—where she received an \$8,000 scholarship—as a sophomore rather than as a freshman. "It helped shave off a whole year of school," she says, adding that although normally she would have started as a junior, she started as a sophomore because she added a minor in Autism Education.



RECORD BREAKERS: The College hosted a special recognition ceremony in early June 2022 for the students and their families.



In hindsight, Kirchhofer says that while the fact that the College’s Structured Pathway High School Dual Enrollment program was free was a big selling point, “more importantly, it offered me and my classmates lots of opportunities that many of us would not have had.”

Ten of the 26 CASH students reported receiving a total of more than \$200,000 in scholarships. Jaleah Bowman-Blanton, one of the ten and CASH’s first African American valedictorian, received a full scholarship to Cheyney University, where she is in her junior year, thanks to the college credits she received from Delaware County Community College. Bowman-Blanton, who is majoring in Business Administration, intends to become an FBI forensic accountant. “Taking high school and college courses simultaneously was hard, but I would not do anything differently. The experience put me ahead educationally and mentally,” she stated in a Cheyney University press release.

Kirchhofer is just as ambitious as her classmate Bowman-Blanton, who she speaks of with pride. After graduating from West Chester University, Kirchhofer plans to earn a master’s degree and become a licensed speech pathologist working with youth and possibly special needs children.


In the end, she is happy she listened to her mother. “This is a really good program,” she says of the College’s high school dual enrollment program. “It’s really important to upscale it and allow more people to experience it.”



College President Dr. L. Joy Gates Black (L) congratulates Jaleah Bowman-Blanton (R) and Lilly Kirchhofer (bottom).



Dual enrollment programs “essential” in post-pandemic era

Last year, U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, Ed.D., called dual enrollment programs “essential” in America’s effort to rebuild and recover in the wake of the pandemic. Cardona said policy makers and educators are beginning to lay a new foundation of college and career pathways. “Our challenge is to build on that foundation and bring together the component parts of our K-12, postsecondary, and workforce systems in a coherent manner with the goal of equipping every high school graduate with sufficient dual enrollment credits to provide momentum toward completing a postsecondary certificate or degree, a career plan for the future, a work-based learning experience, and an industry-sought credential.” 

Hands-on Training

STUDENT EARNS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CREDITS WHILE TRAINING FOR AN HVAC CAREER

“It was a no-brainer,” says Liam Kernan of Atglen of his decision to enroll in the College’s tuition-free High School Dual Enrollment training program in Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVAC&R). “It’s 99 percent hands on. It’s never boring.”

by ANTHONY TWYMAN

The 17-year-old Octorara High School senior originally registered for the program—which operates out of Chester County’s Pennocks Bridge Campus of its Technical College High School (TCHS)—to get out of classroom lectures, which he found rather boring. But he says it did not take a brainiac to quickly figure out the HVAC&R program was just right for him. “It blossomed into friendships and an overall great experience,” says Kernan, whose participation allows him to concurrently earn high school and college credits.

Kernan is one of many students in the HVAC&R Concurrent Dual Enrollment program at the TCHS, which also is home to the College’s Pennocks Bridge Center in West Grove. The three-year training program is free thanks to the Justamere

Foundation. Upon high school graduation, if students qualify, they can continue to attend the College free of charge thanks to the Kelleher Family Foundation, which pays tuition and other costs for qualified students interested in the skilled trades, advanced manufacturing and emergency response services.

The unique program was born of an acute national need to train the next generation of skilled tradespeople to replace retiring baby boomers. Students begin in the tenth grade and earn nine college credits toward a 24-credit HVAC&R certificate as they complete high school coursework taught by TCHS instructors vetted by the College. Students then can spend one year at the College to finish the remaining 15 credits and earn an HVAC&R certificate of competency, which they can use to go directly into full-time employment, or to continue at the College and earn an associate degree.

“Many of the trade careers are well-paying and in high demand, but there are few scholarships, and little has been done to promote them to high school students,” says Justamere Foundation president Lori Cushman. Neither Cushman nor Sharon Kelleher, who along with her husband Andrew, created the Kelleher Family Foundation—which supports the College’s Kelleher Connect Career Opportunity Fund—know of a training program like the HVAC&R Concurrent Dual Enrollment program.

Last year, Cushman and Kelleher visited the TCHS and spoke with students, administrators and instructors. “It was awesome to meet the actual students in their workshop,” says Kelleher. “This illustrates that a smooth transition from high school programs to community college takes some of the stress out of a student’s



unknown future,” Cushman adds.

“We both have a great desire to improve our community by supporting students financially in their quest to create a new career path, especially in the trades,” says Kelleher. “Students can now complete their HVAC&R education in a much shorter period of time. It was a perfect fit for Kelleher Connect since these students already knew HVAC&R and entered their college portion with a certain level of commitment to succeed.”

With only a few months left before he graduates high school, Kernan says he appreciates the help of the Justamere and Kelleher foundations. “A lot of people get scared of the

price of college,” says Kernan. “This just makes it a lot easier.” Kernan has already been accepted at the Williamson College of the Trades and has applied to other trade schools. But he says attending Delaware County Community College through the Kelleher Connect Career Opportunity Fund is very high on his list of options.

While traditional college is fine for many students, it is not for everyone, says Cushman, and that is why the HVAC&R Concurrent Dual Enrollment program is so important. “I’m not aware of other programs (like this) and that’s a shame as it seems to be working,” she says. “We should shout it from the rooftops.” 🙌

Chester Trades Education Program offers Chester residents free training

He sensed it was an opportunity of a lifetime—one he was not about to pass up. One evening in 2021, Darrin Richardson of Chester, Pennsylvania headed to the city’s Ruth L. Bennett Community Center to meet a friend. There, he happened upon a presentation by former Chester mayor John Linder, who was talking about a new program called the Chester Trades Education Project (CTEP).

by JENNIFER SCHU

It was time to address two serious challenges, Linder said—the lack of job opportunities available to Chester residents, where the unemployment rate was 18% in August 2020, and the unprecedented labor shortage in the skilled trades. By enrolling in the two-year CTEP program, students who were residents of the city of Chester would receive post-secondary education and training in carpentry and be introduced to career pathways in the construction industry.

“I raised my hand and said, ‘Is there any age limit?’” Richardson, 53, recalls. “And Professor Linder said, ‘No.’ I signed right up.”

CTEP is a unique collaboration that began when the Swarthmore Rotary reached out to Delaware County Community College, Riverside Futures Community Development Corporation—of which Linder is CEO—and the Chester Housing Authority to help play a role in helping families achieve long-term economic security by helping Chester students overcome both academic and socioeconomic barriers and set them for success.

“I do some home improvement work on my own and in my mother’s house, and I’d like to have my own business someday. For that I need to be certified,” says Richardson, who currently works long shifts in a Target distribution center while taking classes.

“Learn a trade, begin a career, or start their own business—or any combination of the three. That is how the students see it,” says Linder, who serves as a mentor, recruiter and instructor for the program. “We have a lot of people here in Chester who have considerable experience in construction, construction management or electrical trades, but they don’t have certifications. That’s where CTEP comes in.”

In September 2021, Richardson became a member of CTEP’s first cohort of students; in the fall of 2022, a second cohort launched. The students include four women. For students’ convenience, the first four classes are offered in Chester at the Ruth L. Bennett Homes. They cover orientation, basic technical skills, workplace safety and blueprint reading.

“Marple [Campus] may as well be Minnesota for Chester students—it takes that long to get here,” says Karen Kozachyn, vice president of Workforce & Economic Development at the College. “So, we bring the first classes to them. We meet students where they have need.” Those courses include instruction in blueprint reading, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliance and more.

All tuition for the students is paid for by the Kelleher Connect Career Opportunity Fund at the College, which is made possible through the generosity of Andrew and Sharon Kelleher.

After the first four classes, the students move on to the College’s Marple Campus and the Jerome S. Parker Advanced Technology Center, a 32,000-sq.-ft. building that prepares students for jobs in everything from the traditional trades to high-tech engineering technology programs. There, the lab work begins. In the carpentry lab, students learn carpentry fundamentals, framing and roofing, exterior and interior finishing, computer-aided design and drafting graphics and more.

“They will have industry credentials, they will be OSHA-certified and CPR-certified,” Kozachyn says. “For their last three credits in the program, CTEP students will be able to obtain real-world experience through internships with the Chester Housing Authority, working on buildings scheduled for rehabilitation.”

TOOLS FOR THE TRADES

While tuition is free to all CTEP students, there are additional uncovered expenses that become barriers to success. These include personal protective equipment, work clothes, transportation and—most important of all—tools. As part of its involvement with CTEP, the Rotary Club of Swarthmore raises funds to help cover the gap. “They really took care of us and provided us with tools, a nice tool bag and backpack embroidered with ‘CTEP,’ and everything,” Richardson says. “I call it the starter kit.”

Student Darrin Richardson (L) with adjunct instructor Chuck Markwardt.

David Carter, a student in the second CTEP cohort, first learned a little about carpentry in junior high school and retained what he learned. “I can do a lot of things—I paint well, and I just built a deck. Now, I have a chance to learn even more, get certified and have a career.”

He adds, “They are starting to do a lot of big things construction-wise in the city of Chester, and I’d like to be ready and be able to take advantage of those opportunities.”

Richardson says, “It’s a chance of a lifetime to get a skill that you can take with you—whether you

create your own business or seek employment with a company, you’re prepared. You have a trade under your belt, and it comes at no price to you—which is unheard of now because everything comes with a price.”

Earning a Certificate of Proficiency in Residential Carpentry and the opportunity to continue for an Associate in Applied Science degree in the Skilled Trades could help open many doors to CTEP graduates.

Says Kozachyn, “And the best part of all is that the students will be investing back into their own community with their skills—as skilled workers.”

Bringing history to LIFE

PROFESSOR USES
MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY
TO MAKE STORIES OF
SLAVE REVOLTS EVEN
MORE ENGAGING

Much is known about the inhumane, transatlantic African slave trade that saw thousands of souls abducted and forcibly relocated to America and South America over several centuries. Less is understood about the hundreds of slave uprisings emblematic of the indelible spirit of those captured and sold into servitude. Now, Ife Williams, Ph.D., a political science professor at Delaware County Community College, is doing her part to fill in that important aspect of world history.

In 2022, Dr. Williams received a \$40,000 faculty research fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), with the support of the Mellon Foundation, for her “Enhancement of Digital Map on African and African Diaspora Slave Revolts” project, which uses color-coded maps and provides information about nearly 400 slave revolts worldwide by Africans and African descendants against the transatlantic slave trade and slave owners.

“The purpose of this grant is to digitally enhance each marker with audio, video, animation and other forms of multimedia technology to bring interactive stories of revolts across the globe alive,” says Dr. Williams, one of 30 faculty members nationwide who received a 2022 Mellon/ACLS fellowship. “The content will be integrated into four courses at Delaware County Community College and shared with students, faculty and the public through online platforms, higher education institutions and academic conferences.”

Dr. Williams’ latest work adds to the beta version of her digital map, which has garnered more than 225,000 views since introduced on the African Heritage Studies Association’s website in 2021. Now, with the assistance of the ACLS fellowship, Dr. Williams has enlisted the help of the University of Pennsylvania’s Price Lab for Digital Humanities, and the help of friends and colleagues. Two art school students from South Africa are helping to create animation, and she enlisted the help of 12 friends from countries like Haiti, Barbados and Jamaica, to read

some of the history vignettes for the audio portions of the digital map. “My target audience is our students,” she says. “I want them to click on the different markers on the map and it really pop for them.”

The enhanced digital map will provide students with multimedia files that tell the stories of slave revolt leaders like Solitude, a 30-year-old, African woman who in 1802, while visibly pregnant, led natives of Guadeloupe, a group of French-controlled islands in the Caribbean, in an 18-day revolt against French soldiers. “Solitude was captured and sentenced to death after the birth of her unborn baby, as the child was the property of her owner,” Dr. Williams says. “She was executed the day after the birth of her child. The Guadeloupean revolt’s guiding principle was that they would ‘live free or die.’”

Dr. Williams found Solitude’s story so compelling that in May 2022 she traveled to Guadeloupe to visit a new museum of slavery, recently opened there, to add to her research. In August 2022, Dr. Williams traveled to Barbados, and the following December, she went to Brazil to further research the slave revolts that took place in that South American nation. It can be challenging finding information, she says, because slave owners did not want slave revolts publicized for fear more slaves would revolt.

Dr. Williams’ work on the digital map will conclude in October 2023, but she expects more will be accomplished by others who will add to her work. “It’s a lifelong project,” she says. 🌟

by ANTHONY
TWYMAN

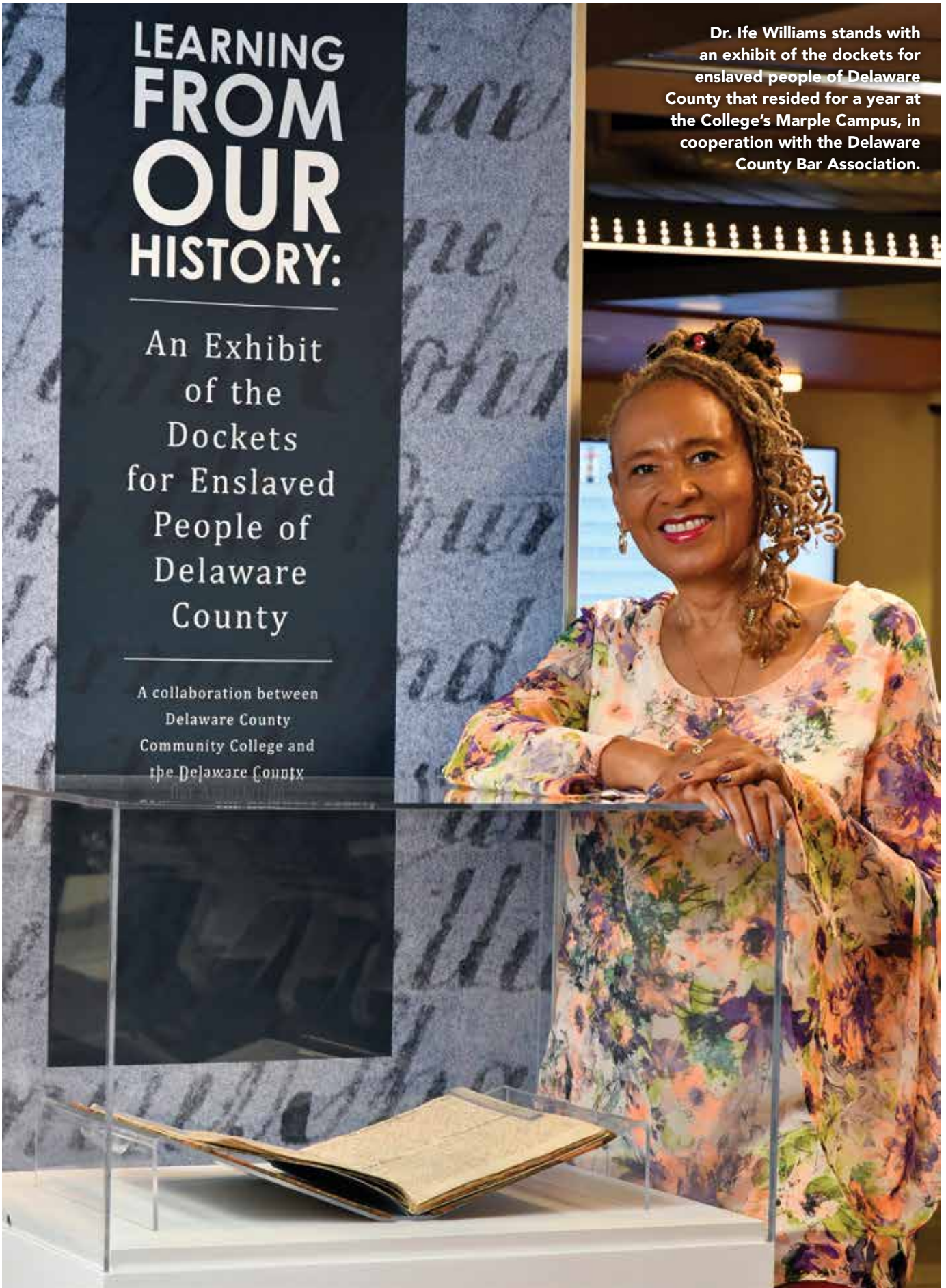
— View Dr. Williams’ slave revolts beta map at tinyurl.com/Revolt-Map. —

LEARNING FROM OUR HISTORY:

An Exhibit
of the
Dockets
for Enslaved
People of
Delaware
County

A collaboration between
Delaware County
Community College and
the Delaware County

Dr. Ife Williams stands with an exhibit of the docket for enslaved people of Delaware County that resided for a year at the College's Marple Campus, in cooperation with the Delaware County Bar Association.



A Career Home

When Melissa Maani '94 was a baseball-crazed seven-year-old, the Philadelphia Phillies won the World Series. Spotting a photo of a World Series ring in the 1981 Phillies yearbook, she cut it out as a keepsake. Twenty-eight years later, she was wearing the real deal. ►

Run

by JENNIFER
SCHU

MELISSA MAANI'S
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
EDUCATION HELPED
BOOST HER TO THE
BIG LEAGUES



As manager of graphic design for the 2008 World Champion and 2022 National League Champion Phillies, she creates everything from murals to banners, brochures, logos, directories, giveaways, signage and even the wallpaper at Citizens Bank Park.

It is a dream job for Maani, who began her Phillies career in 2000—and the culmination of an unlikely journey.

As a kid, “My favorite place was the county assistance office because I could wear my baseball uniform and slide on the floors,” says Maani, whose single parent encouraged her to aim high. Maani’s dream was a job in baseball. In the second grade, when she presented a report on “What I Want to Do When I Grow Up” to her class, “I was laughed at. But my mother—who was my hero—told me anything was possible.”

After graduating from high school, “I thought I couldn’t go to college because my grades were horrible and I felt an obligation to my family,” says Maani, who was eventually diagnosed with attention deficit disorder. Then, one day she made a call to Delaware County Community College. “A kind voice on

the other end said, ‘Come to our office.’ When I arrived, the staff helped me fill out financial aid paperwork that enabled me to enroll for free. They even paid for my books.”

Maani began classes at the College’s then-Collingdale Center because it was within walking distance of her home. “It was fantastic. I had found my people. The teachers were caring, embracing and enveloping. They instilled in me a confidence I’d never had. They said, ‘Sure, you can do anything. Of course, you’re smart.’ That first semester, I made Dean’s List.”

Maani took classes in drawing, art, computer science, speech, English, math and painting. She even played for the College’s women’s basketball team. “There were just five of us, and we had a blast.”

After graduating with an associate degree in 1994, Maani held a series of jobs, including as an optician’s trainee. When asked to design a newspaper advertisement for the business, she realized she had a knack for it. She enrolled at Rosemont College, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Graphic Design.

It’s a field of dreams for a lifelong baseball fan.





In 2000, while working at Aramark, a large food service, facilities and uniform services company—“I designed proposals and menus and typed the words ‘fresh fruit’ an awful lot”—she spotted a mysterious classified ad in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

“It said, ‘Do you like graphic design? Do you like sports?’ with just a PO box number as an address.” She sent a résumé and cover letter and, to her surprise, received a call from the Philadelphia Phillies organization. Excited about her dream opportunity, she arrived at the stadium three hours early. During her interview, she was asked to put together a newsletter right there on the spot.

“A few weeks later, they called and said, ‘You are the newest member of the Phillies!’”

During Maani’s 23 years with the organization, there have been countless special moments. To commemorate Pope Francis’ 2015 visit to Philadelphia, she pitched the idea of designing a special Phillies rookie card featuring him. Visiting the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown

for Phillies pitcher Roy Halliday’s induction in 2019, she was thrilled to spot her card on display.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she assisted in creating the “COVID Cutouts” of actual Phillies fans which populated the stadium’s seats and helped raise over \$320,000 for Phillies charities.

Today, Maani, a recipient of the College’s 2015 Alumni Professional Achievement Award who served on the College’s Foundation Board, says that Delaware County Community College served as the foundation for her success. “My professors made themselves available. They wanted me to succeed. I wasn’t just a number. I would have earned my master’s degree there if I could have.

“Always bet on yourself. Show up for yourself. Do your best and see what happens. Stay humble.” 💡

Designing the large concourse boards like the ones pictured behind her is just one part of Maani’s job.

“**Always bet on yourself. Show up for yourself. Do your best and see what happens. Stay humble.”**

— MELISSA MAANI

A close-up, expressive painting of a man's face. The style is highly textured and gestural, using a palette of light blue, white, and black. The man has a beard and mustache, and his eyes are closed or looking downwards. The background is a mix of light blue and white, suggesting a sky or a bright, airy environment. The overall mood is one of intense emotion and artistic expression.

FROM
ADVERSITY,
HE CREATES
ART



As an artist, the work of Jermaine Ollivierre '13 identifies with the misunderstood, denied, rejected and abandoned—those who, through adversity, found solutions. For him, it's a case of art imitating life.

by JENNIFER SCHU

“In the environment in which I grew up, there were few options,” says the West Philadelphia native, who graduated from Delaware County Community College with an Associate in Fine Arts. “After high school, I explored all types of jobs, but nothing truly fit. Hovering in the background was art; regardless of how hard or fast I tried to run from it, it’s been with me. I thought, ‘I need to go back to school.’”

In 2011, while living in Upper Darby and working as a mechanic for U-Haul, he enrolled at the College. In his first course in drawing with adjunct instructor Lisa Learner-Wagner, his natural abilities quickly drew the notice of his teacher and classmates.

“I thought, ‘I like this.’ I was getting the attention and acknowledgment I had been searching for—which signified to me that art was where I was supposed to be. That one class encouraged me to take a 3D design course and then courses in painting, drawing and sculpture.”

At the College, with the help of scholarships, Ollivierre found a community to support and encourage him as he continued to grow as an artist. The Associate in Fine Arts (AFA) in Studio Art program prepares students for transfer into a range of visual and digital art programs offered at four-year universities.

His professors quickly noticed his drive. “Jermaine is a rare student who comes along once in a lifetime,” says Jaime Treadwell, MFA, associate professor of Art and Design and program coordinator of Foundations & Studio Art at the College. “His work ethic and perseverance exceed that of any student from past to present in all of my 18 years of teaching at the College.”

Once Ollivierre found his passion, “I worked in the studio from six in the morning until 10 at night—until they kicked me out,” he laughs. “My work ethic provided opportunities to share what I was exploring with the custodians and security at DCCC.”

He also loved the fact that he was in class with students of different ages and backgrounds. “I learned Chinese from one student and Spanish from another. I learned to communicate with people from diverse cultures and found the connective tissue between those groups. It was transformative.”

After receiving his AFA in 2013—and winning several prestigious College art awards—Ollivierre went on to study painting and sculpture at Temple University’s Tyler School of Art. He attended classes while working a third shift full-time job—a grueling schedule that involved an hour commute each way—until a grant from Temple allowed him to focus solely on his studies.

While at Temple, where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, Ollivierre continued to consult with Treadwell, his mentor. Ollivierre was accepted to the Sculpture MFA program at Virginia Commonwealth University—the top-ranked Sculpture graduate program in the country, according to Treadwell—and is on track to earn his MFA in 2024.

“I use my lived experience as the artistic medium,” Ollivierre says. “I intentionally draw from autobiographical experiences for my source material.”

He exhibits his work regularly in galleries and other locations around Philadelphia, including the Mural Arts Gallery, the Asian Arts Initiative, Philadelphia’s Art in City Hall, the Da Vinci Art Alliance and more. His self-portrait—which earned him his first award in an art show—is still on exhibit in the College’s Academic Building. In 2019, he earned second place in the College’s 215 | 610 CONTEMPORARY Juried Exhibition.

“At Delaware County Community College, you know the faculty are invested in you. They are always available. They care. That’s what is so special,” he says. “It was a lot of nurturing, assistance and good intentions—and it all helped me get to where I am today.” ✨

KATHY SCHANK'S LIFE-CHANGING CAREER OF SERVICE

by MICHELLE
TOOKER

In her 17 years of teaching at Delaware County Community College, recent retiree Kathy Schank '94 brought many unique perspectives to her classroom: professional experience in the social work field, an enjoyment of cross-departmental collaboration and—perhaps most importantly—she had once sat where her students sat.

When Schank's youngest child entered kindergarten, she enrolled as a nontraditionally aged student at the College. She knew it was time to pursue the dream she had had since she was 18 years old: become a social worker.

The welcoming, supportive atmosphere Schank encountered put her at ease and allowed her to commit to her education. She graduated in 1994 with an associate degree in Liberal Arts.

"I am a very proud Delaware County Community College graduate," she says. "My experience at the College launched my successful academic journey. The supportive faculty I encountered inspired me to be curious, questioning and excited about the lifelong process of learning."

Schank transferred to Rosemont College and earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology and then to Bryn Mawr College's Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research. After graduating in 1998 with a master's degree in Social Service, Schank joined Family & Community Service of Delaware County, a nonprofit that strives to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable. She worked there for seven years and enjoyed providing services to grandparent-headed households in a program called Second-Time Around Parents.

In 2005, Schank decided to enter private practice. At the same time, she saw a job posting for an adjunct position at the College. She had previously taught a graduate-level course at Widener University and enjoyed it. She knew teaching would complement her private practice work.

So began Schank's nearly two decades of inspiring and

influencing Delaware County Community College students. She retired in June 2022 as an assistant professor of Social Work and as the Social Work program coordinator. In 2014, she became the first person to have won both The Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award, a coveted regional award, and the College's Gould Award for outstanding teaching, in the same year.

"I felt fortunate to return to the College as a professor," she says. "My goal was to join with students on their educational journeys and to support them as they worked to achieve success."

Kathy Austin '13, assistant director of Admissions at the College, and her son Wayne G. Austin II '14, were both students of Schank's.

"Kathy Schank displayed so much compassion and love for the field of human services that it was infectious," says Kathy Austin, who went on to earn a bachelor's degree in human services.

"Her ability to teach to different learning styles was amazing and she treated everyone with a high level of respect and compassion. She continues to be a support to her students that graduated and remains an excellent resource, mentor and friend."

"Coming out of high school and into college there's a lot of anxiety about what your professors are going to be like. Kathy Schank eased that anxiety and made the learning experience fun," adds Wayne Austin. "She is very effective at teaching all the material and information and is also very personable. She is one of the major reasons I felt the drive to pursue and continue social work as my career." Austin graduated from the College in 2014 and went on to earn a master's degree in Social Work from Cabrini University.

Schank was also instrumental in creating the Associate in Arts in Social Work at the College and ensuring the degree seamlessly transfers to bachelor's in Social Work programs.

In addition to educating students, Schank assisted those facing food insecurities. As an advisor of the Social Work Club, she helped create a food emergency resource bank, which now has a permanent home as the food pantry inside the Student Resource Center. The pantry provides food, toiletries, school supplies and gently worn professional attire and is vital to ensuring student success.

Student equity is essential to Schank, and she hopes the College "remains student-centered and focused on student success and social justice. Community college academic programs are important for social justice, which has everything to do with equity."

In retirement, Schank spends quality time with her three granddaughters, her "grandgirls," as she calls them. She also frequents local historical sites with her husband and plans to travel in the future. ✨



From
Student
to
Professor



Q & A

BILL TORIAN RETIRES FROM EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION BOARD AFTER NEARLY 30 YEARS

by **RACHEL McCAUSLAND**
*executive director, Delaware County
Community College Educational Foundation
and vice president of Institutional Advancement*

Bill Torian with student scholarship recipients at an Educational Foundation dinner.



BILL TORIAN: I joined the Foundation Board just short of 30 years ago, when [Dr. Richard] DeCosmo was president of the College. I've served as chair of the board, as well as chair of the Finance and Honors & Awards Committees, and have been members of all of them as well as of the Marketing Committee. (Editor's note: The Educational Foundation's Honors & Awards Committee is responsible for assisting staff and providing insight on the review of applications for various honors and awards, including scholarships.)

It is our most important job [as a Foundation] to raise funding for students who are not able to meet their financial obligations, to give them a boost up, so that their future is not rendered stagnant by not moving forward with their education.

RACHEL MCCAUSLAND: After joining the Foundation Board, how did you come to teach at the College, and what did you like about it?

BT: When [then vice president of Institutional Advancement] Kathy Breslin found out I'd earned a master's degree, she said, "Oh, good, now you can teach here!" I'd been on the Foundation Board for years by that time. [As for what I enjoyed], you don't have enough time for me to answer that! But I will say this: sharing education, sharing knowledge and sharing the ability to look beyond what is in front of you is key.

I taught advertising, marketing and management in the business department for 10 years. Over the years, I taught at the Downingtown, Exton, Sharon Hill and Marple locations. In fact, when they first opened the Sharon Hill location, [then president] Dr. Jerry Parker came to me and said, "Hey Bill, we're going to open this new campus. And I want you to teach there." I declined, saying, "Jerry, it will take me 45 minutes to get there. Why?" and he said, "Bill, 40 percent of the students [at this campus] will be Black students. And I want them to [have] you as a role model." And with that I said, "Oh, ok Jerry. Of course, I'll do it." And I went. So, that's how I started teaching there.

RM: What would your fellow Board members or former students be surprised to learn about you?

BT: Many things in my background usually surprise people. For example, I was in Bio-Warfare in the U.S. Army. After getting out of the service I did a little over six years of tobacco research with a major tobacco company.

RM: You had quite an interesting career path, from the Army, to banking, to, eventually, teaching. How did all of your prior experience inform your work at the College, both as a teacher and as a Board member?

BT: Between the Army, research and banking, [all of that experience] gave me a perspective. In teaching, it's important to remember that our students are the most important thing. Some folks might say that teaching is just a job. And you know what—not really. Because

it's more than just a job. You are changing young folks' lives. And you're making them more valuable to themselves, to their employers, to their families. There's a lot more involved than just teaching a course. If you don't understand or believe that, you don't really need to be here. That's the bottom line.

RM: Were there any life lessons you tried to impart to your students beyond their coursework?

BT: The key thing [as a student] is self-development. And your job through self-development is to make yourself more valuable to your employer. And when you do that, you make more money. And it comes down to personal selling. Being able to sell yourself and have confidence in yourself.

RM: What has been the most rewarding part of your many years at the College?

BT: Being able to give back. My mother used to say to me, "Bill, much is going to be given to you. But just remember, much is owed." That's sort of been my life lesson.

"It is our most important job [as a Foundation] to raise funding for students who are not able to meet their financial obligations, to give them a boost up."

— BILL TORIAN

RM: What will you miss the most about your time on the Board?

BT: I'll miss so much—mostly, the regular interaction with other folks who care as much about the school as I do. The only thing that I will not miss is the early morning meetings!

RM: You have an incredible legacy here, Bill, after almost three decades.

BT: I don't look at it in those terms. I was just doing my job and trying to do it well. That's what it was all about for me. I don't join boards to enhance my résumé. I joined because I believed in the mission, and I felt I could bring something to the table. Anybody that doesn't think like that, or act like that, shouldn't be on the Board. [Looking ahead], I would love to see the continued growth and success of the College so that we can continue to see exponential growth in our students. It blew my mind when I first learned that our students outperform the rising college juniors who go through the first two years of a four-year program. When I learned that, I went, whoa. I love it! In the end, it's been a good ride. And a lucky one. ✨

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A woman with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a black jacket over a floral top, stands smiling in front of a wall of stacked baseballs. She is leaning her right hand on a wooden railing. The background is a large stack of white baseballs with red stitching, arranged in neat rows.

A Career Home Run

Melissa Maani's community college education helped boost her to the big leagues.

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