



Foundation

2024 YEAR-END SUMMARY & ALUMNI NEWS



STAYING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

INSPIRING FUTURES

*BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS
AND PATHWAYS*

REACHING GREATER HEIGHTS

**MOHAWK VALLEY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**







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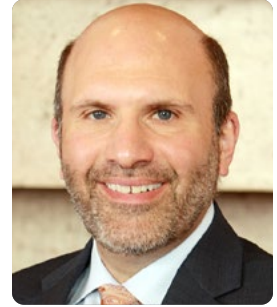


YEAR IN REVIEW

Dear Fellow Alumni and Donors,

As an MVCC alumnus from the class of 1982, and someone who has proudly served as a long-time Foundation Board member, I've had the opportunity to see firsthand the incredible impact our alma mater has on students. One of the initiatives that's particularly close to my heart is the College-Community-Connection (C3). Through C3, students facing difficult personal circumstances have a place to find stability, allowing them to stay focused on their education and their future.

This is why my company, Scalzo, Zogby & Wittig, Inc., has sponsored C3 for five years. By doing so, we are ensuring that students can continue pursuing their degrees, no matter what challenges they may face in their personal lives. We believe in the power of education to transform lives, and we want to make sure that all students have the opportunity to reach their goals.



MVCC plays a vital role in preparing the next generation of leaders and contributors in our community. By supporting students through initiatives like C3, we're not only helping them succeed individually, but we're also contributing to the success and future growth of the entire community.

I hope you'll join me in supporting the programs that make a difference in the lives of our students and the future of MVCC.

Sincerely,

Steve Zogby '82
President, MVCC Foundation Board
Alumnus of Merit, 2001

Greetings from the MVCC Foundation!

As we reflect on another year of growth and success, I want to highlight one of the most impactful ways our community continues to support students: through scholarships. These vital funds open doors for students who may otherwise find higher education beyond their reach. Thanks to your generosity, we've made incredible strides in helping students pursue their dreams.

In the 2023-24 academic year alone, we awarded \$459,635 in scholarships through 411 individual awards, supporting 208 students. This represents a 14% increase in scholarship funding, a 10.7% increase in the number of awards, and an 11.2% rise in the number of students served. Behind these numbers are the lives of students whose academic paths have been transformed by your contributions.




I'm excited to share that 10 new scholarships were established this year, bringing the total number of scholarships available to 139. Over the last three years, 19 new scholarship funds have been created — a testament to the unwavering support of our alumni and donors.

Thank you for continuing to invest in the future of our students. Your generosity is not only a commitment to their success but also to the long-term vitality of our institution. Together, we transform lives through learning.

Warmest regards,

Deanna Ferro-Aurience '00
Executive Director of MVCC Foundation



2024 ALUMNUS OF MERIT WINNER:

Marianne Buttenschon '81

A career-long educator and lifelong learner, MVCC Dean Emerita Dr. Marianne Buttenschon '81 has always held a deep passion for learning.

Her commitment to education and community engagement was especially influenced by her father, the late William B. Goodman, a dedicated public servant and U.S. History teacher at Whitesboro Middle School. Her passion is evident in her advocacy for education, especially for community colleges like MVCC.

“My academic journey started at MVCC as a criminal justice major,” Buttenschon says. “I went from student intern to academic dean.” Buttenschon, recently re-elected to a fourth term on the New York State Assembly representing the 119th District, is the 2024 recipient of the MVCC Alumni of Merit Award, an annual honor that recognizes alumni who have contributed to the improvement of our community, helped the College, and demonstrated professional leadership reflecting MVCC’s mission of student success and community involvement.

Before her work in the Assembly, Buttenschon dedicated nearly 30 years to MVCC. She started in 1990 as an adjunct instructor, advancing through various roles until her appointment as an Academic Dean, a position she held until 2018. Throughout her MVCC career, Buttenschon created

new learning opportunities intentionally designed to prepare students for the workforce through innovative partnerships and programs. Her achievements include establishing the fire and police academies, expanding nationally accredited cybersecurity programs, and creating professional development initiatives.

“There are endless opportunities a community college like MVCC can provide — the staff, the faculty, the support you receive are incomparable,” she says. “As an Assembly member, I often need experts to weigh in on important issues, and that expertise is just a phone call away with the innovative thinking at a community college.”

Buttenschon graduated from MVCC in 1981 with an associate degree in Criminal Justice. She went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in Public Justice from SUNY Institute of Technology, a master’s degree in Public Policy from Binghamton University, and a Doctorate of Education in Organizational Leadership from Northeastern University. In addition to her educational career, Buttenschon and her husband, Don, have operated the Buttenschon Christmas Tree Farm in the Town of Marcy for over 30 years.

Buttenschon was inducted into the MVCC Hall of Fame in November 2024 during a ceremony at MVCC’s Utica Campus. To learn more about her, read her full bio on page 9.



MVCC Expands Recognition of Outstanding Alumni with Two New Awards

In 2024, MVCC expanded its recognition of outstanding alumni with the introduction of two new awards — the Distinguished Alumni Award and the Young Alumni Award. These annual honors complement the College’s long-standing Alumni of Merit Award, which has celebrated graduates for their professional achievements and community contributions for over 50 years. MVCC hopes these new awards will inspire current students and graduates alike, showcasing the wide-ranging paths to success that begin at the College.



2024 Distinguished Alumni Award - Howard Potter '10

Howard Potter '10 received MVCC's 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award, which recognizes alumni who have made significant contributions to their industry while demonstrating a commitment to MVCC's values throughout their life and career. For over 20 years, Potter and his wife, Amanda, have been operating A&P Master Images in Utica, offering services in graphic design, screen printing, embroidery, sublimation, vinyl graphics, and promotional items. Dedicated to the local community, Potter provides internships to area students and recently donated 50 winter hats and 50 pairs of gloves to MVCC's College-Community-Connection Office. Potter's achievements have earned him numerous accolades, including the 2023 United Way's 100 Heroes Award; the 2020 Best of the Best Award for local print shop, apparel, and sign company; the 2019 New York State Senate Empire Award; and the 2016 Genesis 40 Under 40 Award. Potter serves on the advisory board for Wearables magazine, and A&P's work has been published in 50 national industry magazines. The company also has won seven national industry awards, including the "Top Shop" award and the New York State U.S. Small Business Award.

2024 Young Alumni Award - Julius Blackshear Jr. '15

Julius Blackshear Jr. '15 received MVCC's 2024 Young Alumni Award, which recognizes alumni who graduated within the last 10 years, have emerged as early leaders in their careers and communities, and who embody MVCC's values. Blackshear holds an associate degree in Computer Aided Drafting from MVCC and currently works as a drafting technician for National Grid. He is also the owner of Visionary Vending, a regional vending machine business he launched in 2020 with the support of MVCC's thINCubator. Before joining National Grid and becoming an entrepreneur, Blackshear spent four years as a senior engineering technician with the New York State Department of Transportation and spent several years working with children in grades 4-7 at Thea Bowman House. Blackshear, who attended Thea Bowman House as a child, now serves on its Board of Directors.



Dr. Kyle Angelicola-Richardson '10, Sports Medicine

Orthopedic Surgeon, Rome Health

Dr. Kyle Angelicola-Richardson '10 recently joined Rome Health as an Orthopedic Surgeon, and his path to success started right here at MVCC.

Richardson first chose to attend MVCC because he was looking to save money and have a good academic experience. "I was happy to find out it was even more than I expected," says the 2010 graduate of the Liberal Arts & Sciences: Sports Medicine degree program. "I was very impressed with the sciences there. I had great experiences in Anatomy & Physiology and Chemistry, which prepared me well for the next four years of college and medical school."



After graduating from MVCC, Richardson went on to earn his bachelor's degree at St. John's University in Queens and his Doctor of Medicine at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse. He is now an Orthopedic Surgeon at Rome Health, specializing in orthopedic and hand surgery.

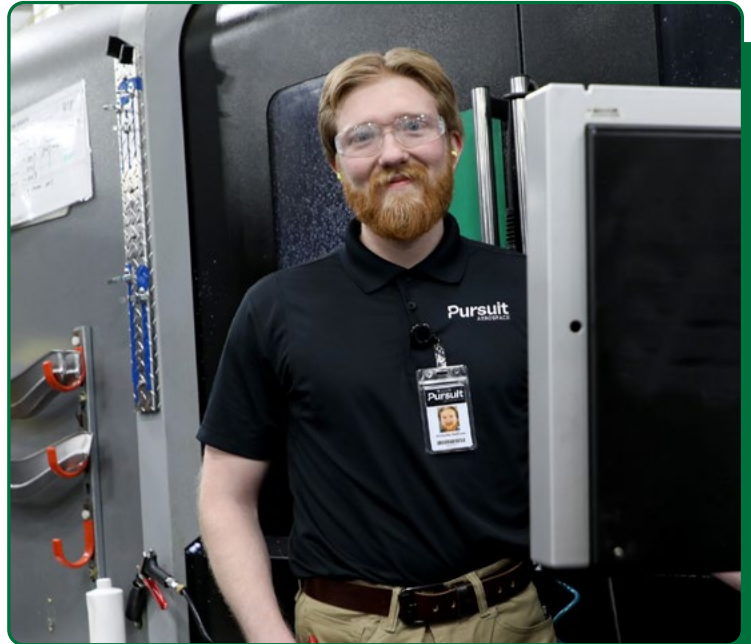
While at MVCC, Richardson was captain of the Baseball Team and was named NJCAA Student-Athlete of the Year in 2010. He also was a member of the Phi Theta Kappa honor society. He says he is still grateful for the support and mentorship he received as a student. "All the people I met at MVCC have this open-door policy and really have a different attitude toward students than many other places. They understand where we're coming from and understand how to take care of us in a different way," he says. "When I moved on to St. John's University, I wanted to pass on what I experienced in mentorship at MVCC. Now I spend a lot of time helping people figure out the path to reach their goals, whether that's medicine or something else that they're really passionate about."

Nick Gelfuso '21, Engineering Science

Engineer, Pursuit Aerospace

Nick Gelfuso, a 2021 graduate of our Engineering Science program, is now an engineer at Pursuit Aerospace.

After graduating from MVCC, Gelfuso transferred to Clarkson University, which he says was a smooth and seamless process. "MVCC has a wonderful relationship with Clarkson, and all my credits transferred quickly and easily." While MVCC's engineering program was challenging and "a tremendous achievement" to complete, Gelfuso says he learned many valuable skills that gave him a head start in his career. "MVCC offers great programs with excellent teachers who give you the resources to build a foundation for success."



Nazzy DeLoach '20, Business Administration

Entrepreneur, Owner of Dreamer Studios in Utica

Nazzy DeLoach is a 2020 graduate of MVCC's Business Administration program and the visionary artist and entrepreneur behind Dreamer Studios, a recording studio and creative hub for musicians in Utica.

DeLoach first started college in 2016 but was unsure about his path. "I didn't really know what I wanted to do, so I traveled," he says. "I learned a lot about music and met a lot of really cool people who helped me figure out how to do what I love. So I ended up going back to school at MVCC, where I had a lot of amazing people in my corner."

After graduating, DeLoach sought guidance from his Entrepreneurship Instructor, Ryan Miller, Director of MVCC's thINCubator, which supports small businesses and startups. "He really helped me on my whole journey. It's been a dream of mine since high school to have a space for all creatives to be able to express themselves with someone who understands them. And I finally got to make my dreams come true with Dreamer Studios."





Jenny Woods '22, Human Services

Behavior Specialist, ICAN

During the pandemic, Jenny Woods was offered an opportunity by her employer to take part in an apprenticeship program at MVCC — a blend of on-the-job training and related instruction, which overlapped with MVCC's Human Services AAS degree program curriculum.

"MVCC did such a great job of supporting me that I ended up turning it into a Human Services degree," says Woods, now a Behavior Specialist with ICAN who works within the Utica City School District. "It has always been my passion to support others through challenges. Reaching this goal would not be possible without my MVCC degree and the support of Professor Dina Radeljas, who helped me decide on the best path to take for the goals I had set."

Adam Turnbull '20, Business Administration

Insurance Agent, Turnbull Insurance Service

Adam Turnbull, a 2020 graduate of our Business Administration degree program, is now an insurance agent at his family's business. Turnbull Insurance Service, on French Road in New Hartford, has been in operation for over 150 years, and Adam is part of the fifth generation of Turnbulls to work for the agency.

Turnbull says MVCC prepared him well to join the family business. "MVCC helped me get connected to the community while learning more about the business world."



Eryn A. Balch '97, Liberal Arts

**Vice President of Sales & Marketing,
Mandia International Trading Corp.**

In April of this past year, Eryn (Butters) Balch '97 joined MVCC's Student Leadership Academy to discuss the five pillars of leadership.

Balch is now Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Mandia International Trading Corp., a local importer of bulk edible oils. Her career began at PAR Technology and Sovena USA, where she held roles in events, sales, marketing, and operations. In 2012, she became the first executive vice president of the North American Olive Oil Association, handling administration, promotions, regulations, and trade. After traveling globally, she returned to the Mohawk Valley as Managing Director of Business Operations at The Kelberman Center, a cause close to her heart. For the past five years, Balch has been back in the olive oil industry, navigating the challenges brought on by the pandemic and global conflicts.



Balch, a lifelong resident of the Mohawk Valley, is a graduate of Rome Free Academy. After earning her MVCC degree, she earned a bachelor's degree in public relations and journalism from Utica College and her MBA from Syracuse University.

Amanda Tarbania '22, Criminal Justice

U.S. Air Force Security Forces

Amanda Tarbania, a 2022 graduate of our Criminal Justice program, is now a member of the U.S. Air Force Security Forces.

Tarbania says that deciding to go to college in 2020 was a life-changing experience. "MVCC gave me the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge about becoming a police officer. I learned self-discipline, optimism, and the real meaning of being ambitious. From college courses to corrections and becoming a police officer, I continue to use everything MVCC has taught me," she says. "Today I am a part of the United States Air Force Security Forces, and I wouldn't have been able to do it without MVCC!"





Four esteemed individuals were selected for induction in MVCC's Hall of Fame Class of 2024.

The Hall of Fame recognizes those who have embraced the community, modeled the way, inspired confidence, and encouraged excellence at MVCC. Selections are also chosen based on business or professional achievements, leadership support and involvement at MVCC, significant contributions to MVCC athletics, and any other appropriate qualifications.



For bios of all Hall of Fame members, visit halloffame.mvcc.edu



Dr. Jennifer Boulanger

Professor and Dean Emerita
Dr. Jennifer Boulanger began her career at MVCC in 1987 as interim instructor of English. The following year, she transitioned to the College's Learning Center, working for five years as the full-time Writing Tutor and, later, as Learning Center Coordinator. These roles in

the Learning Center afforded her the opportunity to work with a richly diverse student population. As she discovered an affinity for working with refugee students, Boulanger expanded her teaching repertoire to include a variety of ESL classes.

After working for a time at a neighboring community college, Boulanger returned to MVCC in 2007 as Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. In this role, she oversaw the Dual Credit Program and was instrumental in achieving its accreditation through the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships. She also supervised key programs supporting student success and college readiness, including STEP, CSTEP, and Upward Bound.

In 2009, Boulanger was promoted to Dean of the Center for Language and Learning Design. Among her responsibilities

was oversight of the College Learning Center, Honors Program, developmental education, English as a Second Language, world languages, childhood and adolescent education programs, sign language interpretation, and College Seminar (now known as College Foundations). Her dedication to excellence in teaching was manifested in the support she provided the faculty in her Center, always striving to share empowering and encouraging feedback, whether in writing or in day-to-day interchange. An advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, Boulanger volunteered for the Safe Space Committee and was among the first team of in-house trainers. She also wrote portions of several grants, including the successful Title III grant that enabled the transformation of the Learning Center to the current-day Mandia Family Learning Commons.

A champion for the Utica's refugee community, Boulanger was appointed to the Board of Directors of The Center in 2009, having served as President, Vice President, and Secretary. She currently chairs The Center's Community Development Committee. Additionally, Boulanger is Vice President of the Board of Whitney's Legacy, a foundation dedicated to supporting and empowering women and addressing the needs of the underserved.

A gifted writer, Boulanger has authored essays on a range of topics. Her work has been featured in *Chalkbeat*, *The New York Daily News*, *Syracuse.com*, and the *Daily Sentinel*. Her forthcoming book, *A Song for Olaf*, will be published in 2025.



Dr. Marianne Buttenschon

Dean Emerita Dr. Marianne Buttenschon has dedicated her life to public service, education, and community development. She began her career as an adjunct faculty member at MVCC in 1990 and progressed to Assistant Professor by 2000. Buttenschon's leadership skills quickly emerged, leading to her

appointment as Head of the Department of Social Sciences and Criminal Justice in 2004. From 2009 to 2016, she served as Dean of the Center for Social Sciences, Business, and Information Sciences, followed by her role as Dean of the Institute of Emergency Preparedness and Public Service from 2016 until 2018.

In addition to her administrative career, Buttenschon and her husband, Don, have operated the Buttenschon Christmas Tree Farm in Marcy for over 35 years. She also served as Whitestown Court Clerk from 1983 to 2018.

Buttenschon was elected to the New York State Assembly in 2018, representing the 119th District, which includes Utica, Rome, Whitestown, Marcy, Deerfield, and Floyd. In her role as Assemblywoman, she serves on several key committees, including the Education, Higher Education, Veterans, Economic Development, and Agriculture committees, and she is Chair of the Agriculture and Exports Committee. Additionally, Buttenschon is a member of the Asian-Pacific Task Force, Legislative Women's Caucus, Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force, Task Force on Women's Issues, American-Irish Legislators Society, and the New York Conference of Italian-American Legislators. She also was selected as the Assembly's representative on the Interoperable and Emergency Communications Board by Carl Heastie, Speaker of the New York State Assembly.

A lifelong resident of the Mohawk Valley, Buttenschon has tirelessly advocated for her constituents and the importance of education, particularly community colleges like MVCC. Her 28 years at MVCC, combined with her public service, have positioned her as a strong and genuine leader, known for putting the needs of her community above party politics. A steadfast supporter of police, fire, and emergency services, she consistently shows appreciation for their sacrifices.



Dennis Rahn

Administrator Emeritus Dennis B. Rahn retired in 2011 after more than 20 impactful years at MVCC, serving as both Director of Student Activities and Director of Student Engagement and Outreach. Since his retirement, Rahn has continued to serve the College as an adjunct professor, achieving 40+ years of

service to MVCC. A key figure in the development of student engagement at MVCC, Rahn was instrumental in helping the College recognize the importance of out-of-classroom opportunities for student growth. His leadership in this area helped lay the foundation for MVCC's vibrant student engagement culture and student government structure that exists today.

In his career, Rahn played a role in how the mandatory student activity fee would be managed and structured. His work around the funding of intercollegiate athletics, student clubs, and eventually part of the College's Cultural Committee, through this fee, ensured their proper support. Additionally, the work that Dennis did in helping to develop a vibrant student engagement and government helped to seed some of the most important elements of our campus today.

Rahn's contributions extended beyond administration. He is a dedicated adjunct professor and part of the team that developed the first grant to serve adult students through Adult Student Services. His influence on the campus is far-reaching, touching everything from student government to cultural events and co-curricular transcripts, as well as a branch of the College's shared governance system.

In recognition of his professional contributions, Rahn received the 1997 MVCC Excellence in Professional Service Award and the 1998 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service. His work helped to foster collaboration across all divisions of the College, and his commitment to student development continues to shape MVCC's culture.



Penny Trojan

Professor Penny Trojan retired after a distinguished 45-year career as a full-time faculty member and adjunct instructor in MVCC's Physical Education and Athletics Department. Throughout her extensive tenure, Trojan taught a wide variety of service activity courses on both MVCC's

Utica and Rome campuses, including basketball and tennis classes for Physical Education majors, while also playing a key role in developing the Coaching Certification classes and a Coaching Manual alongside a co-author.

Trojan coached basketball for 13 years (prior to MVCC's participation in the NJCAA), achieving a .534 winning percentage. Her team secured a championship in the 1975-76 season and a runner-up finish in 1976-77 within the WJCSO conference. Additionally, she served as head

coach for the Women's Tennis program for 25 years — 13 of which were pre-NJCAA — leading her teams through both the WJCSO and NJCAA Region III conferences, achieving numerous accolades.

Beyond coaching, Trojan contributed to the College in various administrative roles, serving as Senate Secretary, providing student advisement at the Rome campus, and acting as a Commencement Marshall. Her dedication to teaching earned Trojan the MVCC Excellence in Teaching Award in 1996 and the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in 1997. She was also recognized with the NJCAA Region III Service Award.

Trojan's involvement extended well beyond the College, with notable contributions to the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (Section III) and the Utica Board of Officials for Girls Sports, as well as officiating for high school and college basketball, softball, and volleyball. She also held leadership roles, including President of the Utica Board of Officials and President of New York State Officials for Girls/Women's Basketball.





PARTNER MODOVOLO SEES PROJECT TAKE FLIGHT

MVCC’s thINCubator is excited to announce some big news from one of its incubated companies — Modovolo.

Modovolo is a Mohawk Valley startup that is re-imagining what a drone can be with its Modovolo Lift, a modular, limitlessly configurable drone platform. Using a truly unique design, the Lift can be optimized for long flight times or payload weights to create the right drone for the right mission.

thINCubator has been a partner of Modovolo for over two years as it developed its technology, the prototype of which was just unveiled to the public this summer. Since then, Modovolo has closed its first round of funding and demoed a drone with a successful test flight in front of partners and investors.

Most recently, thINC and Modovolo applied for and secured a manufacturing grant from FuzeHub to provide funding for their first manufacturing cell right here in the Mohawk Valley.

You can learn more about Modovolo at modovolo.com



ANNUAL FUND RAISES OVER \$59,000

The 2023-24 MVCC Annual Fund campaign raised \$59,864 from alumni donors! In the last fiscal year, the generosity of our donors has helped the Foundation:

Establish **10** new scholarships to benefit MVCC students



Award **411** individual scholarships to



students, totaling **\$459,635** in support

Assist **4** students in completing their degree through the MVCC Completion Scholarship, amounting to

\$3,145



Assist **44** students through the College-Community-Connection (C3) Fund, totaling

\$26,394.21



Assist **18** students through the Emergency Relief Loan program, amounting to

\$22,611.75



MVCC RAISES **\$133,771** THROUGH MV GIVES FOR PROPOSED DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM

In September, the MVCC Foundation participated in the Community Foundation's third annual Mohawk Valley Gives campaign, raising \$133,771 from 159 donors for the College's proposed Dental Hygiene program. MVCC was the third-highest earner of the campaign's 323 participating non-profit organizations and the only organization in the top three that did not receive a six- or seven-figure gift.

This successful campaign, which was generously matched 2:1 by the UpMobility Foundation (up to \$66,000), has helped close the funding gap for the proposed Dental Hygiene program, which includes plans to build a clinic on the garden level of MVCC's Rome Campus. Additionally, all dollars raised for the clinic will be matched 1:1 by the State University of New York (SUNY).

MVCC's proposed Dental Hygiene program will equip students with the knowledge and hands-on experience needed to become skilled dental hygienists, prepared to enhance oral health in our community. It will be the only program of its kind between Albany and Rochester and will also offer free dental care to the community.

Additional funders and supporters of the proposed program include the Fifth District Dental Society, the New York State Dental Foundation, the Rome Community Foundation, and the City of Rome. The clinic is expected to open in the fall of 2026.





Foundation Awards Nearly \$460,000 in Scholarships at Dinner Sponsored by Strategic Financial Services



STRATEGIC

On May 9, the MVCC Foundation honored scholarship recipients at the 2024 Scholarship Awards Dinner and Ceremony, sponsored by Strategic Financial Services. The event recognizes the achievements of scholarship recipients and the generosity of the many donors who make these scholarships possible. The MVCC Foundation offers 139 scholarships in a variety of disciplines; every scholarship fund was created for a personal reason, standing as an enduring legacy of MVCC alumni, faculty, staff, students, loved ones, and local organizations. Between the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 semesters, 411 scholarships were awarded to 208 individual students totaling \$459,635. This is an increase of 14% over last year! Thank you to event sponsor Strategic Financial Services, whose support of this important event ensures the Foundation can further focus its funding on helping each and every student pay for their college education.

HERE ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF SOME OF OUR NEWEST SCHOLARSHIPS:

Elaine M. Falvo Healthcare Scholarship

This scholarship was established by Elaine M. Falvo to support students pursuing a career in healthcare. It will be given annually to an MVCC student who has attained high academic achievement, demonstrated a strong work ethic, and is committed to community involvement/service. Elaine M. Falvo has served on the MVCC Board of Trustees since her appointment in 1988, having been consecutively appointed by three governors. She has served as chair twice, from 1993-96 and 2010-13, and was vice chair from 1991-92. Prior to retirement, Falvo served as the chief financial officer and treasurer of H.J. Brandeles Corp. of Utica, a mechanical contractor.

Through knowledge gained while employed there, Falvo was a leader in the building of three major facilities at MVCC. She has been a member of several other local boards, including New Hartford Board of Education and the board of Faxon Hospital, from which she has been able to further MVCC's mission of helping students succeed, especially in the area's growing career fields. During her 35+ years as a trustee, Falvo has received several awards, including the Donald M. Mawhinney, Jr., Trustee Leadership Award, the Marvin A. Rapp Award for Distinguished Trustee Service, a Distinguished Service Award from the Association of Community College Trustees, and a 25-Year Leadership Award from the MVCC Board of Trustees.

Pathways to Success Scholarship

Endowed by the Fiori-Blanchfield family, the Pathway to Success Scholarship was created by William Blanchfield, Ph.D., and Joan Fiori Blanchfield, Ph.D., who love learning and teaching. The couple believes a college education has the power to open doors for those who have the opportunity to complete. This bi-annual award will be given to one incoming or returning student who is enrolled full- or part-time in any degree seeking program.



MVCC Retiree Legacy Scholarship

The MVCC Retiree Legacy Scholarship was established and endowed through the generosity of MVCC Retirees. For at least eight decades, the legacy and impact of MVCC Faculty & Staff have supported, educated, and inspired thousands of students, creating an alumni network of over 55,000 individuals. In alignment with MVCC’s vision of transforming lives through learning, this full-tuition scholarship was created to eliminate financial barriers to education. It is awarded annually to a deserving MVCC returning adult student who meets the eligibility criteria and exemplifies dedication and academic excellence. Through this scholarship, MVCC Retirees continue to support the College mission and the success of its students.

support students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher who have demonstrated a commitment to community involvement and/or service. Preference will be given to a graduate of Notre Dame Junior Senior High School.

Tuthill Scholarship in Nursing

The Tuthill Scholarship in Nursing was established in April 2024 by William and Karin Tuthill. The Tuthills were inspired to establish this scholarship when Karin was cared for by a licensed practical nurse with the intention and drive to return to college to obtain her RN. This scholarship is for returning adult students majoring in the Nursing program who have a passion for the field and who demonstrate a caring heart.

Reverend William S. Baker Memorial Scholarship

The Reverend William S. Baker was raised and educated in Rome, N.Y., and was a graduate of Rome Free Academy and St. Bernard’s Seminary in Rochester, N.Y. In 1955, Father Baker was ordained a Catholic Priest at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Syracuse, N.Y., and for 50 years, he dedicated his life to serving numerous parish communities. This scholarship was established in his memory and will

We would like to thank these wonderful donors for choosing MVCC as the recipient of their philanthropy.

MVCC Celebrates 5-Year Naming Sponsorship from Scalzo, Zogby & Wittig, Inc.

In March 2024, MVCC announced a five-year naming sponsorship from Scalzo, Zogby & Wittig, Inc., for its College-Community-Connection (C3) program. College-Community-Connection, sponsored by Scalzo, Zogby & Wittig, Inc., partners with local agencies to assist students facing barriers outside the classroom so they can focus on completing their academic goals.

C3 was used by 731 Individual students in Fall of 2023 and 802 individual students in the Spring of 2024. On average, each individual student visited C3 for services approximately 10 times in the Fall of 2023 and 9 times in the Spring of 2024. The program has provided more than 36,000 pounds of food through the campus food pantry during 2023-24. Additionally, in Spring 2024, C3 gave out 476 bus passes to 135 students.

The persistence rates for students utilizing C3 are much higher than the average student. The completion rate for C3 students is 97% overall and 93% for Spring 2024.

The C3 program was developed in 2016, and services have included support with food insecurity, housing, and other basic needs; child and elder care; transportation and bus passes; counseling and legal services; school supplies; and healthcare. The four most-used services include the food pantry, bus passes, financial resources, and technology resources.



MVCC Holds Community Convening Focused on AI

On Oct. 2, 2024, MVCC held its second annual Community Convening. This year's topic —*Embracing Artificial Intelligence to Promote Human Flourishing*— was explored in an engaging presentation by MVCC President Dr. Randall J. VanWagoner and guest speaker Todd McLees, Co-Founder of HumanSkills.AI, a company that helps people build the skills to work alongside artificial intelligence.

AI is essential for businesses and communities to stay competitive and innovative. It can transform operations by streamlining processes, increasing efficiency, and driving growth. For businesses, AI can save time and resources and boost productivity. For communities, it can foster sustainable development, advancing the workforce, improving education, and enhancing services that strengthen regional vibrancy.

MVCC — a hub for education, training, and collaboration — is a key player in supporting AI adoption, helping businesses understand and apply it effectively through partnerships, workshops, and tailored programs designed to equip the workforce with future-ready skills.

McLees said much of the work being done to help integrate AI into the workforce starts with critical thinking at places like MVCC: “The issue is not going to be access for people to the technology itself. It’s going to be access to high quality training and that type of training can be delivered through partners like Mohawk Valley Community College.”



QUOTES FROM EVENT SPONSORS

“MVCC provides local companies with the education and continuing education necessary to understand how to use AI as a tool for success rather than seeing it only as a looming threat to our local economy.”

Ryan Miller,
Director,
MVCC’s thINCubator

“MVCC is positioned to be the ‘go-to’ resource for AI information. It’s coming fast. MVCC is committed to demystifying what it is, how to use it, and how it can help elevate your learning experience.”

Dave Casullo,
CEO,
Daneli Partners

“MVCC plays a critical role in providing accessible, high-impact education that can be swiftly applied by students to meet the demands of regional employers. MVCC’s commitment to empowering individuals not only enhances their earning potential but also elevates the overall quality of life throughout our region.”

Tim Giarusso,
President /CEO,

38th Annual Golf Tournament Raises \$18,000

The MVCC Foundation held its 38th Annual Golf Tournament on June 14 at Valley View Golf and Country Club. This fun-filled community event raised \$18,000 for MVCC's Areas of Greatest Need, a fund designed to maintain MVCC's impact in the face of swiftly evolving societal, technological, and academic needs. Congratulations to this year's Corporate Cup Champion, Beebe Construction!

And as always, thank you to our sponsors and donors.



2024 MVCC Golf Tournament Sponsors:

Gold



Silver



Mike Briggs '63

Friends of Coach Jorgensen

Bronze



Tee and Green



MVCC Holds Final Ted Moore Run/Walk

The MVCC Foundation, along with the family of late MVCC Mathematics Professor Ted Moore, held the 27th and final Ted Moore Run/Walk on April 25, 2024. The beloved run/walk was created in memory of Theodore “Ted” Moore after he was tragically killed by a drunk driver in December 1996. In addition to raising funds for an MVCC scholarship in Moore’s name, the event was co-sponsored by Oneida County STOP-DWI and raised awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving.

As a result of everyone’s hard work over the last 27 years, the Theodore “Ted” Moore Memorial Scholarship fund has grown to over \$217,000. This allows the Foundation to leave \$200,000 in the endowment, while the additional \$17,000 will be made available for awarding scholarships. Since the funds are invested, the available balance will continue to gain interest, covering scholarship awards for the foreseeable future. With the approval of the Moore family, the scholarship award has increased for the upcoming year from \$500 to up to four scholarships at \$1,500 each year. The scholarship may be used for tuition.

In lieu of the annual run/walk, the Foundation will honor Moore’s memory and raise awareness about the dangers of drinking and driving by sending out an annual email that highlights scholarship recipients and serves as a reminder of Ted’s story and its impact on the community.

Thank you all who have supported this event year after year!



Presidential and Exceptional Scholars, Honors Students

In October, the MVCC Foundation held a brunch to celebrate this year's Francis A. Wilcox Presidential and Exceptional Scholars and students in the MVCC Honors Program. In addition to recognizing students' accomplishments, the event provided scholarship recipients an opportunity to share a meal with donors Kevin, Sue, and Marilyn Keehle — members of the family who made their scholarships possible. Attendees also heard from MVCC President Dr. Randall J. VanWagoner and Foundation Executive Director Deanna Ferro-Aurience '00, MVCC alumna and former Presidential Scholar, who spoke about their experiences, offered advice, and highlighted some of the new scholarship recipients.



Presidential and Exceptional scholars are students who have placed in the top 10% of their high school class. MVCC Honors students apply for the program after graduating high school in the top 10% and meeting other requirements. The full-tuition Presidential and Exceptional Student Scholarships are named for Francis A. Wilcox, an electrical engineer and decorated U.S. veteran who named the MVCC Foundation in his will when he died in 2011.



Week of Giving Raises Over \$24,000 for Scholarships

MVCC's Week of Giving this past April raised more than \$24,000 from 150 donors to support new and existing scholarships at the College. We are proud to share that our donors included alumni who spanned 33 different class years and 13 states — thanks to all who supported our cause!

Scholarships are a critical piece of the educational puzzle for MVCC's students. Among New York State's 29 two-year colleges, MVCC serves the second-lowest income student population, and scholarships provide an essential pathway to education for those who are unable to afford college. By helping cover tuition, books, and fees, they empower students to pursue their career aspirations without the burden of overwhelming financial strain. These scholarships are not just investments in individuals but in the future of our entire community.



President VanWagoner Named *Northeast Region CEO* by Association of Community College Trustees



Mohawk Valley Community College is proud to announce that President Dr. Randall J. VanWagoner has been named the recipient of the 2024 Association of Community College Trustees’ (ACCT) Northeast Regional Chief Executive Officer Award. The regional award was presented at the 55th annual ACCT Leadership Congress on Oct. 25 in Seattle.

The ACCT Chief Executive Officer Award recognizes the exceptional contributions of community college CEOs, who work to meet the needs of their communities while advancing the community college mission. “Countless unheralded heroes work tirelessly at ACCT’s member colleges,” said ACCT President and CEO Jee Hang Lee. “We are proud to shine a spotlight on some of the nation’s most outstanding public servants and professionals through our regional awards program.”

VanWagoner’s leadership at MVCC is marked by his unwavering commitment to educational excellence and innovation. He has guided the College through significant transformations with a strategic approach that embraces change and enhances educational quality.

Emeriti Luncheon and Coffee Break

Each year, the MVCC Foundation holds two events inviting emeriti and retirees back to campus. The Emeriti and Retiree Coffee Break and the Emeriti Luncheon both provide an opportunity to reconnect with former colleagues and find out what is new at the College. The Emeriti Luncheon was held in June, and the Emeriti and Retiree Coffee Break was held on the first day of the Fall semester in August. We are grateful to our emeriti and retirees for their continued support and interest in MVCC.



UCFC Game / Suite

MVCC Foundation Board members, alumni, and donors gathered on March 3 in the AIS Suite at the Adirondack Bank Center to enjoy an exciting afternoon of soccer as the Utica City Football Club (UCFC) took on the Baltimore Blast. Attendees visited and snacked while the UCFC scored eight unanswered goals before defeating the Blast 10-2.

Thanks to Chuck Green and AIS for sponsoring this new event!





1970s

Lester Stephens '73, Civil

Engineering Technology, retired from the position of Deputy Superintendent of the Herkimer County Highway Department.

Randy Laboda '76, Criminal Justice,

has 30 years of law enforcement experience with the Dallas, Texas, Police Department. Laboda is currently employed as an Assistant State Attorney for the State of Florida, serving in the 18th Judicial District.

1980s

Russell Ritzel '83, Criminal Justice,

retired in 2018 after a long career in law enforcement. He writes: "I began my law enforcement journey in 1993 as a New York State Corrections Officer. In 2002, I pursued my dream and became a New York State conservation police officer, also known as a game warden, in Oneida County. I had some great teachers at MVCC in 1982 and 1983. One of the most influential teachers I ever had was retired Judge Barry Donalty. In 2018 I retired, and I've been enjoying life. MVCC made a great impact on my journey and I'm very appreciative of being an alumnus from a great school."

Maureen S. Taylor '89, Human

Services, graduated from SUNY Poly and received a bachelor's degree in Sociology in 1997. She has also participated in the Corporation for National Service Program called AmeriCorps for one year, and AmeriCorps VISTA, for two years. Taylor's most recent accomplishment was working as a Supportive/Care Manager for 22 years for a local non-profit organization.

1990s

Christine Marcucci Ashburn '91, Liberal Arts & Sciences, Humanities & Social Sciences,

writes: "MVCC was one of the best choices I made. Attending allowed an opportunity for me to refocus my life and propel me forward. It was a great experience on all levels — even providing me with a lifetime of friendships that I cherish 35 years later."

Dr. Mark Montgomery '98, Human

Services, serves as Vice President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging and Chief Diversity Officer at SUNY Polytechnic Institute. After graduating from MVCC, he went on to earn his bachelor's degree in psychology from SUNY IT, his master's

in education from the University of New England with a specialization in academic motivation, and his Ph.D. in education from Walden University.

2000s

Joseph Ruggiero '05, Criminal

Justice, is a retired Utica Police Sergeant and Command Sergeant Major in the United State Army.

Cassandra Para '07, General Studies,

currently serves as Assistant Director of Campus Recreation at SUNY Oswego.

Curtis Arena '08, General Studies,

has a new role, serving as Assistant Dean of Student Support & Retention Strategies at Guilford College in Greensboro, N.C.

David Leigh '09, General Studies,

who came to MVCC as an international student from England, is now head of operations at a finance brokerage in the United Kingdom. He writes: "I came to MVCC back in 2007 until 2009 and played on the soccer team both years. I left MVCC with many memories and a lot of life skills, living away in a different country. MVCC still holds a dear place in my heart as it was the place where my higher education was at its peak before I got into the world of 9-5 work."



Jennah Nitti '19; Psychology,

is now a case manager at the Veterans Outreach Center. After graduating from MVCC, Nitti earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University at Albany and is now completing her Master of Social Work at Utica University. "MVCC helped me get where I am now by providing me with the first steps of my college education. It was a great experience for me."

2010s

Melisa Bahtiri '14, Liberal Arts & Sciences: Mathematics & Science: Individual Studies, obtained her master's in business administration and works at Morgan Stanley.

Kevin Sherman '15, Liberal Arts & Sciences: International Studies, serves as a cybersecurity consultant/defense contractor at Booz Allen Hamilton.

Ryan Griffith '17, General Studies serves as a Union Carpenter for Murnane Building Contractors.

Marharyta Pliazhuk '18, Computer Science, obtained a Master of Engineering in Electrical Engineering in May of 2024 from the Pennsylvania State University.

Angela Fistick '19, Business Management, earned her Bachelor of Science in Business from Bellevue University in July 2024 and began a new position as a Financial Aid Counselor at Utica University.

Zachary Benjamin '19, Airframe and Powerplant Technician, secured his first position at PSA Airlines in March 2020. During the pandemic, he was able to hold his job and obtain his engine run/taxi certification soon after his employment. He also performed as a lead AMT when needed. Benjamin obtained three years of jet experience in Charlotte, N.C., then was offered a part-time position in Albany, N.Y., in April 2023. Shortly after, he transferred to Buffalo, N.Y., for a full-time opportunity. He writes: "To anyone currently enrolled

in the program that may read this ... the return on investment in the program MVCC offers is second to none. Enjoy the time spent in/out of class but take it seriously. Show up on time, do your work and get those FAA certifications as soon as possible, as seniority is huge in this industry if you go commercial."

Joseph Gendron '20, Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, is a licensed drone pilot and works for MVCC's Center for Corporate and Community Education teaching for the drone program at the Oneonta Job Corps Association.



Send us your news!

Have news? Tell us what you are up to here:
www.mvcc.edu/alumni-update

MVCC Foundation Redesigns Website

MVCC Foundation's website has a new, sleek look! Take a minute to check it out yourself by visiting:
mvccfoundation.org



INVEST IN TOMORROW WITH A GIFT TO THE MVCC FOUNDATION!

About the MVCC Foundation

The MVCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that relies on the generosity of its alumni and donors to provide support and opportunities to the College and its students. Every dollar raised can make a difference, and there are many ways you can give to have a positive impact on our students and community:

How to Give:

Online: mvccfoundation.org

By Mail: Checks should be made payable to the MVCC Foundation and mailed to:

MVCC Foundation, Inc.
1101 Sherman Drive
Utica, New York 13501

By Phone: 315-792-5555

Monday-Friday
8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.



Establish a Named Scholarship

With a minimum contribution of \$10,000, an annual scholarship can be established. Pledge commitments may be paid over time.

Underwrite a Program or Event

Whether it's a program, special event, or Golf Tournament, there are a number of opportunities to highlight your business or organization and support MVCC in creative ways.

Honor a Loved One

Celebrate a special occasion or remember a loved one with a gift to the MVCC Foundation.

Gifts In-Kind

Gifts in-kind are donations where, instead of providing monetary contributions, individuals or organizations donate goods or services directly. In the past, MVCC has received in-kind donations such as airplanes, office furnishings, and equipment.

Matching Gifts

You may be able to double or even triple the impact of your gift if you or your spouse's employer participates in a Corporate Matching Gifts program. Simply contact your human resources department to learn more.

Consider Gift Planning

One of the most powerful ways to make a difference in the lives of students for years to come is through a gift in your will. See information on next page.

Planned Giving is for everyone. Help advance the future of MVCC.

For more information, please contact Deanna Ferro-Aurience, Executive Director of Institutional Advancement and the MVCC Foundation, Inc., at **315-731-5797** or **dferro-aurience@mvcc.edu**.

Many MVCC supporters choose to leave a donation in their wills and trusts as an important way to have long-term impact without any upfront cost during their lifetime. Legacy giving isn't only for the wealthy — gifts of any size are deeply appreciated and have ranged from \$300 to \$3 million.

Gift planning with the MVCC Foundation allows you to help students while also meeting your financial and personal planning objectives. It allows you to make gifts beyond what you thought would be possible while connecting deeply and forever with your college and community. You can benefit the next generation of students with flexibility to adjust your plans if your circumstances change by naming the MVCC Foundation, Inc., as a beneficiary of your:

Will / Living Trust

A bequest is a gift to the MVCC Foundation that is not payable until death. A simple designation in your will or trust costs nothing during your lifetime and provides the peace of mind that your gift can be modified should your circumstances change.

Donor-Advised Fund

You can make a gift from your donor-advised fund to support the MVCC Foundation, Inc.

Retirement Plan Assets

Retirement plans such as an IRA, 401(k), or 403(b) can be subject to double taxation including ordinary income tax and estate tax. Retirement plan assets left to the MVCC Foundation may reduce the size of your estate and subsequent tax liability for your heirs.

Life Insurance Policy

The MVCC Foundation can be named as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, which can be modified at any time should your circumstances change.

Charitable Remainder Trust

A charitable remainder trust is an irrevocable trust that generates an income stream for you, your family, or other designated beneficiary for a fixed length of time, or for a lifetime, and will name the MVCC Foundation as the remainder beneficiary.

Cash

Cash is the easiest way to make a gift to the MVCC Foundation and provides the maximum tax deduction. The MVCC Foundation accepts cash, check, credit card, and wired funds.

Stock and Appreciated Securities

Giving appreciated securities can be more tax efficient than giving cash. When making a gift of securities to the MVCC Foundation directly, you will receive an income tax deduction for the full market value and may avoid paying any capital gains tax.

The information provided does not constitute tax or legal advice.

A consultation with your estate planning attorney and/or financial planner will help you determine the best vehicle for you and your family.



MEET THE MVCC FOUNDATION AND ALUMNI STAFF



Deanna L. Ferro-Aurience
Executive Director of Institutional Advancement and the MVCC Foundation

Deanna Ferro-Aurience has been an integral part of the MVCC Office of Institutional Advancement since 2006.

She began as an Events Coordinator, was later promoted to Director of Development, and now serves as Executive Director, a role she has held since January 2022. With over 18 years of experience, she is responsible for the strategic development and implementation of all fundraising and advancement programs at the College. Ferro-Aurience collaborates closely with College leadership to foster campus-wide development initiatives and brings valuable insights that help her engage effectively with donors and alumni. She also oversees grant management for initiatives such as MVCC's thINCubator, further contributing to the College's growth and community impact. Ferro-Aurience holds an associate degree in Media & Marketing Management from MVCC, a bachelor's degree in Communication and Advertising Management from Marist College, and a master's degree in Communication from Ithaca College.

dferro-aurience@mvcc.edu
315-792-5555



Courtney Metacarpa
Development & Events Assistant

Courtney Metacarpa joined MVCC's Office of Institutional Advancement in October 2024. As Development & Events Assistant, she assists in planning and executing events that engage the College community, alumni, donors,

and students to support MVCC's development and fundraising goals. Before joining the Institutional Advancement team, Metacarpa served as the Community and Business Development Coordinator for GPO Federal Credit Union. She holds a bachelor's degree in Business Management with a concentration in Marketing from Utica University.

cmetacarpa@mvcc.edu
315-792-5340



Courtney Taurisano-Sprague
Director of Development

Courtney Taurisano-Sprague has been a member of the Institutional Advancement team since 2016, initially serving as Development Assistant before being promoted to Director of Development in 2022. Taurisano-Sprague oversees

several campaigns and events for the Foundation, including MVCC's Week of Giving, Faculty/Staff Campaign, Alumni Annual Fund, and Year-End Giving. She also plans and assists with several college-wide initiatives, including MVCC's Community Convening, Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Alumni Annual Awards Ceremony, and the Foundation Golf Tournament. She holds a master's degree in Business Communication from Jones International University and a bachelor's degree in Public Relations from Syracuse University.

ctaurisano-sprague@mvcc.edu
315-792-5345



Angela Marken
Assistant to the Office of Institutional Advancement

Angela Marken joined the Institutional Advancement Office in February 2022 as the Assistant to the Office of Institutional Advancement. Marken has a strong background in higher education;

previous roles include Registrar at Pratt Munson College of Art and Design, Executive Assistant at UC Irvine, and Adjunct Art Instructor at MVCC. She oversees the entire scholarship process for the MVCC Foundation, from application submission to committee review and award disbursement. She also manages the Foundation's financial records, maintains confidential donor records, processes accounts payable and receivable, assists students with Emergency Relief Loan requests, and prepares correspondence for the MVCC Foundation Board of Directors. Marken holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Painting from Laguna College of Art and Design, bachelor's degrees in Business Administration and Visual Arts from SUNY Potsdam, and an associate degree in Fine Arts from MVCC.

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315-792-5555



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**AND THE WOMEN'S TEAM
SHINED AS THE RUNNER-UP!**

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