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The Mohawk Valley Community College Alumni Newsletter

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The Mohawk Valley Community College Alumni Newsletter is published twice each year for alumni and the MVCC community. It is a partnership between the MVCC Alumni Association, MVCC Foundation, and the college.

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Questions about Mohawk Valley Community College, its services and its programs should be directed to the MVCC Office of Admissions at 315.792.5400. Comments or questions about this publication can be directed to MVCC Marketing and Communications at 315.792.5330.

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A Message from the President

MVCC's alumni are everywhere. I am often reminded of the breadth of the college's reach when people in the community approach me to say, "I got my start at MVCC."

The pride associated with such statements is exhilarating. Community college is probably the most democratic institution that exists today. It's often said that community colleges are "all things to all people," but I like to think that community colleges are "different things to different people." We have the power and obligation to change lives for all kinds of people, and the success of our graduates is proof that we are doing our job.

Our alumni are doing amazing things – right here in the Mohawk Valley and all over the world. Their accomplishments are impressive. Some are starting their own businesses and creating opportunities for Central New York, and others are leaders at Fortune 500 companies. MVCC graduates go on to great things and continually make us proud.

Many of these stories wouldn't be possible without the generous contributions of our alumni, who make it possible for MVCC and the MVCC Foundation to offer the financial support that is so essential to college students today. In just the last year, your contributions have given 285 students the chance at a high-quality MVCC college education.

Creating student opportunity through scholarships is a major component of Challenge and Opportunity, MVCC's first comprehensive major gifts campaign. Together, we will ensure that students and their families can afford college. Our students are our community's lifeblood, and we will help them get the education that makes them proud to say, "I got my start at MVCC."

Randall J. VanWagoner, Ph.D.
President



Mandia '85 proud to support MVCC in Challenge and Opportunity campaign

In February, Mohawk Valley Community College announced its goal of \$7 million for the “Challenge and Opportunity” campaign, the first comprehensive major gifts campaign in the college's history. The first large gift to the campaign, a donation of \$250,000 over five years, came from Stephen Mandia '85, CEO of Mandia International Trading Corporation.

Mandia graduated from MVCC in 1985 with an associate in applied science in Retail Business Management. He went on to earn his bachelor's degree in 1987 from Bentley College in Waltham, Mass. He founded East Coast Olive Oil in 1991 as an importer of olive oil for the food service industry, but quickly expanded into other sectors. The company changed its name to Sovena USA Inc. as it continued to grow. Under Mandia's leadership and employing local people, Sovena became the country's largest importer of olive oil.

The New Hartford resident remains an advocate for MVCC. His gift will support the campaign's largest priority — scholarships — by helping endow the Presidential Scholarships, which provide free tuition to Oneida County students graduating near the top of their high school classes. The College has dedicated its Learning Center to Mandia, renaming it to honor his family's commitment to learning.

“I am proud to support MVCC because I strongly believe in the incredible potential of our students,” says Mandia. “This college has transformed tens of thousands of students' lives and every part of the local work force. I am excited about the new momentum MVCC and our partners are creating with the Challenge and Opportunity campaign.”

The campaign targets investments in four priority areas: **Creating Student Opportunity:** With a focus on endowed scholarships, this is the campaign's largest priority and accounts for about half the \$7 million campaign goal.

Breaking Barriers: MVCC will create opportunities for people who never thought they could go to college.

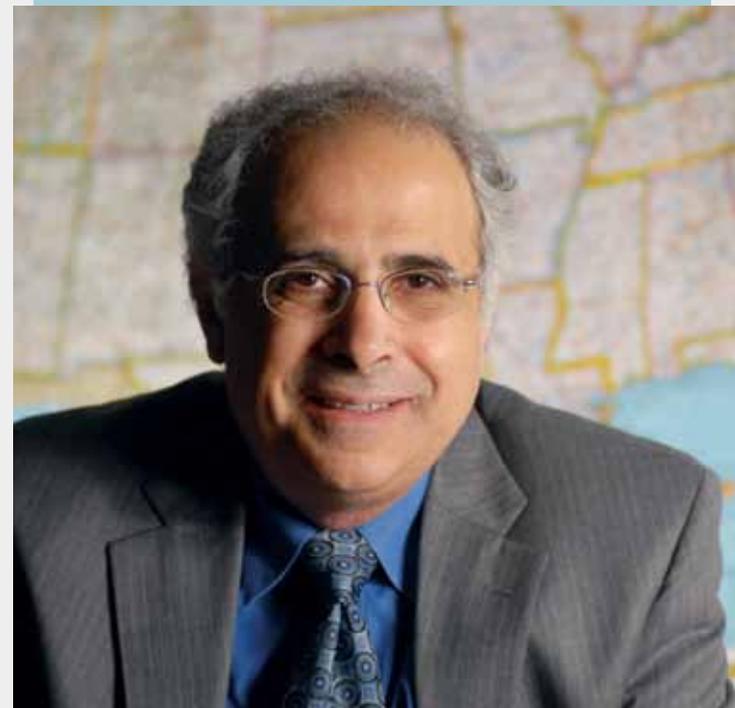
Revitalizing Our Economy: MVCC will expand its services and programs for entrepreneurship and create an education center in the Cornhill neighborhood of Utica.

Educational Excellence Fund: MVCC will launch new degree and certificate programs in high-demand fields and keep the latest technology in MVCC classrooms.

“This campaign isn't about bricks and mortar or plugging budget gaps,” says MVCC President Randall J. VanWagoner, Ph.D. “It's about working with campaign volunteers and donors to push educational frontiers. Together, we will build a community of learners who will be the economic leaders of tomorrow.”

For more information about the campaign, call Frank DuRoss, executive director of institutional advancement, at 315.792.5526.

Futurist and pollster Zogby volunteers to lead Challenge and Opportunity campaign



As it kicked off the Challenge and Opportunity major gifts campaign in February, Mohawk Valley Community College announced that John Zogby, chairman and chief insights officer of IBOPE Zogby International Inc., will serve as volunteer chair. Under Zogby's active leadership, the MVCC is closing in on the \$2 million mark on the way to its \$7 million goal.

“College is no longer a luxury, it is a must. And not just for those just getting out of secondary school. A community college offers a link to a better future for parents and students, returning and retraining workers, the entrepreneurs, and the just plain curious,” says Zogby. Challenge and Opportunity is significant, says Zogby, because “MVCC has always been and will continue to be right there understanding the new needs of a wide variety of individuals as well as the community as a whole. I am honored to be leading this bridge to the future.”

To learn more visit www.mvcc.edu/campaign.

Jorgensen Athletic Center: boon to students and tribute to a true Hawk

The new Robert R. Jorgensen Athletic and Events Center on MVCC's Utica Campus is shaping up to be a fitting tribute to a man who inspired thousands of athletes and alumni during his 31 years at the college--and a spectacular facility for students and the community.

Jorgensen is considered the original architect of athletic excellence at MVCC, setting the Hawks on a path that has led to 22 national community-college team championships ... and counting. Jorgensen is well known for his dedication to Hawks teams' success, as well as to individual student athletes and colleagues.

"He was more than an educator, coach, and athletic director," says Gary Broadhurst, MVCC's Director of Athletics, who credits Jorgensen as his inspiration for his own success. "He was a mentor to so many of us."

Michael Briggs '63 was a driving force behind the Jorgensen Center project. His involvement in the project is a testament to the relationships built and fostered at MVCC throughout the years. When Briggs found himself in a position to make a sizable donation to MVCC, he hadn't thought about how the college would spend it. He knew some of the funds were used for the

Briggs Scholarship, a scoreboard, and a new Steinway for the Theatre, but he felt it could do more.

"One day I was thinking about how the sports programs at MVCC had grown over the years, largely through the efforts of Coach Jorgensen, and I suggested his name be placed on the old Gym or some other appropriate place," Briggs says. A conversation with former head of Institutional Advancement Fritz Barns helped guide his decision. Barns had helped Briggs re-establish his relationship with Jorgensen after many years and suggested naming the new athletic center after the influential coach.

"After much discussion, I pledged the balance of my donation to the new facility, and the plan for the Jorgensen Athletic Center became a reality," says Briggs. "It seemed like an appropriate way to honor him."

Built around the existing 21,700-square-foot Gymnasium Building, the Jorgensen Center adds a 40,000-square foot field house/practice facility and 6,500-square foot fitness center. The center features an indoor jogging track and indoor courts that can be used for basketball, tennis, and volleyball. The college broke ground for the center on June 18, 2010, and opened the

center for classes this fall. A public opening ceremony will be announced in September.

Jorgensen joined MVCC in 1960 and became Physical Education Department Head and Director of Athletics in 1963. Under his direction, MVCC's intercollegiate athletic program grew from five sports for men only into a total sports program of 21, nine of which were for women only. Today MVCC has 11 men's and 11 women's teams, making MVCC one of the most diverse athletic programs on the community college landscape.

Promoted to full professor in September 1969, Jorgensen also coached cross country (1960), soccer (1961-70), baseball (1961-65), and golf (1965-88). Jorgensen presided over a major expansion of the college's physical education and athletic facilities, including the addition of a swimming pool, new classrooms, fitness center and locker rooms. Outdoor areas were expanded and improved for baseball, softball, track and field, tennis, and soccer. Jorgensen retired from MVCC in 1991.

In the fall of 1996, Jorgensen was among the first class of inductees into the MVCC Hall of Fame. When it opens, the center that bears his name will promote the lasting legacy of MVCC student athletes' success.



MVCC alumnus Mike Briggs '63, left; Jorgensen; President Randall VanWagoner, Ph.D., County Executive Tony Picente Jr. '84, and past Board of Trustees Chair William Calli break ground on the Jorgensen Center. An artist's rendering is shown in the background.



For ExxonMobil President Cramer '69, success started at MVCC

For 2011 MVCC Alumnus of Merit Hal R. Cramer '69, receiving his associate degree from Mohawk Valley Community College is what made his success story possible.

"It's my MVCC education that gave me the important start to my adult life," Cramer said at the Spring 2011 MVCC Engineering Breakfast and Celebration of Student & Alumni Success, held the day of Spring Commencement. "MVCC not only provided me with a sound curriculum, it taught me how to learn."

Cramer, President of ExxonMobil's Downstream Fuels Marketing division, grew up in Utica, graduated from Utica Free Academy, and worked at Utica Sporting Goods before choosing to begin his higher education at MVCC.

"Working at Utica Sporting Goods was my first bridge toward business," Cramer said. "In the winter I had to sell ski equipment, and I'd never been on a pair of skis. But I came to know more about that skiing equipment than the people out on the ski hill."

Cramer says he didn't know much about engineering, either, until he met a civil engineer for the City of Utica who told him that "engineering is really cool stuff."

"It's so true," Cramer said. "Math, science and technology are the forces behind your iPhones, cell phones, and iPads. All of this technology was developed by American engineers." Inspired, he studied engineering at MVCC.

From MVCC Cramer went on to receive a bachelor's degree from Syracuse University, and a master's degree from SUNY Albany. He was hired by Mobil in 1973, and has held a wide range of management assignments with Mobil operating divisions in the United States and abroad. Prior to Mobil's merger with Exxon, Cramer was executive vice president and chief financial officer of Mobil Oil.

The MVCC Alumnus of Merit Award is presented annually by the MVCC Alumni Association to a nominee who has contributed to the improvement of the community, helped the college, and otherwise demonstrated professional leadership that symbolizes MVCC's mission of student success and community involvement. Cramer helps direct corporate philanthropy at ExxonMobil to promote women and minorities in engineering and educational opportunity in developing countries. He has also been a supporter of the MVCC Foundation for several years. While visiting MVCC this spring he announced that ExxonMobil would direct philanthropic dollars to the Challenge and Opportunity major gifts campaign and made a personal donation as well.

In the 42 years that have passed since Cramer was last on the MVCC campus, much has changed in terms of buildings and landscaping, but he says the college has stayed committed to its fundamental purpose.

"It was a smaller campus then, but it had the same goals," he said. "To prepare us for new challenges and ventures."

Cramer remembers the Utica campus consisting of the Academic Building, Student Union and the Gym. He remembers the college's baseball team hitting home runs where the IT Building now stands. He remembers having to stand in line at the Gym to sign up for courses.

He also remembers sitting in the Utica Memorial Auditorium in his cap and gown, waiting to receive his diploma. He revisited this memory with more than 3,000 people at MVCC's Spring Commencement, where he addressed the Aud crowd as Commencement speaker after being recognized for his place among MVCC's Alumni of Merit.

He shared this memory with graduates at the Spring 2011 Commencement, after receiving the Alumnus of Merit Award. "It seems like yesterday I was sitting here in this very auditorium," he said. "It's ironic, when I graduated from MVCC, I'd never been on a plane, but this strong college education allowed me to have a successful global career. It all started right here at MVCC."

Share your success!

Do you have a success story to share? To be considered for a future Alumni Association newsletter, e-mail your story to Marie Kohl, coordinator of alumni relations and annual giving, at mkohl@mvcc.edu. Your stories and Class Notes will appear in future newsletters.

Please include your name, graduation year, and your major, as well as some information about what you've been up to lately. Also remember to keep your contact information up to date so you can stay connected with other alumni and with MVCC.

Student Spotlight: Heather Ryerson '11

For Heather Ryerson '11, Mohawk Valley Community College meant a second look--and a second chance at graduating from college.

Ryerson, a New Hartford native who graduated in May with an associate's degree in illustration, is not one to let obstacles stand in the way of her goals. This was evident as she pursued and accomplished her degree and career dreams in spite of personal obstacles and challenges.

As a first-time college student in 2003, the talented art student was diagnosed with macular degeneration, a progressive disease of the retina that can lead to blindness, forcing her to withdraw from school.

"My center vision got kind of cloudy and distorted, and it was like there was a drop of murky water in the middle of my vision," she says. "Being an artist and losing your vision is very disheartening. There were times I felt like giving up, but luckily I'm very stubborn."

It took over a year of treatments at a retinal specialist, but Ryerson eventually was able to see again – just in a new way.

"The areas around the subject are distortions and missing parts, so I have to quickly focus on it in multiple places," she says. "I had to learn to cope with the changes, and get into the habit of looking at things differently. It's become automatic" and fundamentally changed how she approaches art.

Ryerson returned to MVCC in Fall 2008, but took only one illustration class. "At that point, with my sight, I wasn't sure if I'd be able to make the cut professionally in art," she says. She credits her professors with encouraging her to return full-time, which she did in the 2009-10 school year.

"Actually, re-learning how to observe ended up being a benefit," she says. "Now, when I look at something I want to draw, I see so much more. I think it's really pushed my art to the next level."

Her commitment to education was evident in how she engaged in student life at MVCC, culminating in her election and exemplary service as student member of the Board of Trustees in 2010-11. Hard work and talent are also abundant in Ryerson's portfolio, which has shown in New York City and been acclaimed by art faculty at Syracuse University, her transfer institution. At SU, Ryerson will pursue a BFA in illustration. "From what I've heard from the SU faculty, the students they get from MVCC are the best," she says.

Ryerson says that her experience at MVCC has prepared her.

"There is no way I'd be going to SU right now if hadn't gone to MV first," she says. "MVCC gave me the chance to prove how well I can do in college, and it gave me confidence as well. I'm really grateful I went to MVCC."



Heather Ryerson '11 has been a student leader, an exemplary student, and a rising artist whose work has been shown in New York City. Samples from her portfolio are shown here.

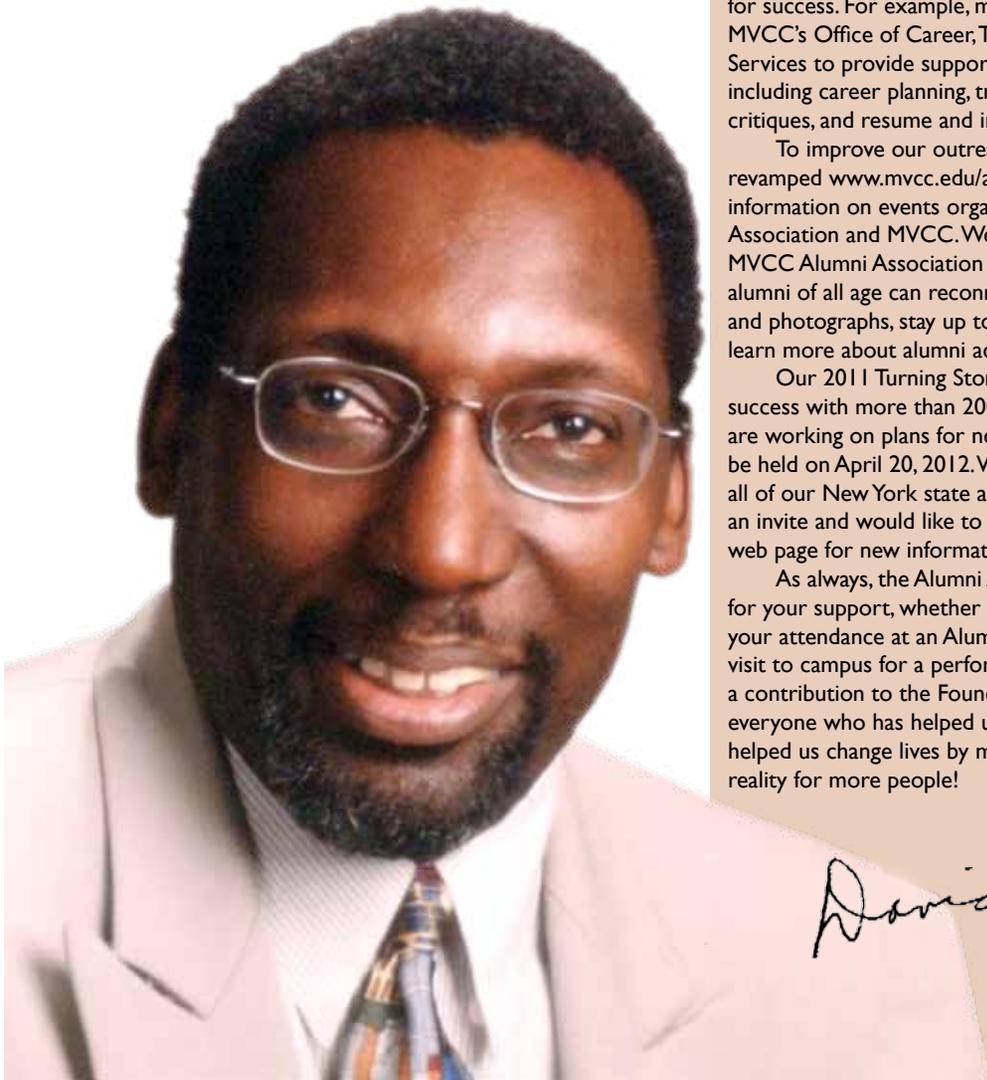


Reconnect and reminisce at Alumni Reception

Mark your calendars! The third annual MVCC Alumni Reception will take place April 20, 2012, at Turning Stone Casino and Resort in Verona. Invitations will be sent to all of our New York state alumni. If you would like to attend, keep an eye on www.mvcc.edu/alumni or follow "MVCC Alumni Association" on Facebook for the latest.

More than 200 people attended the spring 2011 event, a substantial increase over the first year's attendance of 125. The reception is a way to bring together alumni so that former classmates and friends can reconnect and reminisce. For more information contact Marie Kohl, coordinator of alumni relations and annual giving, at 315.792.5340 or mkohl@mvcc.edu.

Want to volunteer to help students or learn more about what the Alumni Association has to offer? E-mail mkohl@mvcc.edu or call 315.792.5340



Greetings from the Alumni Association

Congratulations to our newest alumni, the MVCC Class of 2011! We are proud to welcome you to our family of more than 40,000 alumni. As you begin the next chapter of your life, please remember to stay in touch with us and share your milestones. As a college, we measure our success by the success of our graduates, and we take pride in their many accomplishments.

Also be sure to utilize the services available to MVCC alumni. As president of the MVCC Alumni Association, I, along with the rest of the board members, have donated numerous hours to the college to try to maintain contact with our alumni, and to insure that we are providing various tools for success. For example, many of us partner with MVCC's Office of Career, Transfer and Job Placement Services to provide support for alumni and students, including career planning, transfer information, resume critiques, and resume and interview skills workshops.

To improve our outreach efforts, we have revamped www.mvcc.edu/alumni where we post information on events organized by the Alumni Association and MVCC. We also invite you to the MVCC Alumni Association page on Facebook, where alumni of all ages can reconnect and share memories and photographs, stay up to date on college news, and learn more about alumni activities.

Our 2011 Turning Stone event was once again a success with more than 200 alumni in attendance. We are working on plans for next year's event, which will be held on April 20, 2012. We will send invitations to all of our New York state alumni; if you don't receive an invite and would like to attend, keep an eye on the web page for new information.

As always, the Alumni Association is grateful for your support, whether it be in the form of your attendance at an Alumni Association event, a visit to campus for a performance or lecture, or a contribution to the Foundation. I am grateful to everyone who has helped us in the past year. You have helped us change lives by making MVCC education a reality for more people!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Mathis '70". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Mathis '70, President
MVCC Alumni Association



Thank you for answering the call!

On behalf of the entire MVCC student body, the MVCC Foundation and Alumni Association extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone who donated to MVCC's annual fund this year. An important component to the annual fund is the phonathon, a biannual fundraiser for the college. Your donations to the phonathon have an important impact on what we do. They enable us to raise money for the college's most pressing needs, and to enhance the quality education that we have provided for more than 65 years.

Another benefit of the phonathon is working with students. We hire between 30 and 50 students each semester to make these calls. For many of these students, it is their first "real" job. We take the time to work with them, preparing them and training them to become a reliable and hard-working member of the work force.

We are grateful to everyone who has donated in the past. We will begin our next phonathon this fall.

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Breaking News:

'An Evening with Maya Angelou' at MVCC

Celebrated poet, novelist and educator Dr. Maya Angelou will speak at Mohawk Valley Community College, Oct. 12 at 7 p.m. Her presentation will be the first Cultural Series event held in the Robert R. Jorgensen Athletic and Events Center. Tickets go on sale Sept. 12 at 9 a.m.

Angelou has been called a global renaissance woman for her myriad talents and influence. In addition to her writing, Angelou is known for her work as a dramatist, actress, filmmaker, historian and civil rights activist.

Tickets are \$25 for faculty, staff and alumni; \$40 for the public; and free for MVCC students. For more information, visit www.mvcc.edu/culture today.



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