

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

INSIGHTS

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS | SPRING 2017

ANXIETY

INSOMNIA

SLEEP APNEA

RESTLESS
LEG SYNDROME

DEPRESSION

A Wake Up Call
for the Sleep Deprived



From left: Alumni Association board members Suzanne Thompson, Richard Beall, Lori Thomas, and Carol Leahy joined College Senior Vice President Sanjay Rai and Vice President/Provosts Margaret Latimer (Germantown) and Kimberly Kelley (Rockville) at a county delegation meeting to support state funding for a new Takoma Park/Silver Spring science facility.

Have you seen the new tagline on College materials? "Make Your Move." It's a way of encouraging students to take charge of their educational direction, and to take advantage of all the College has to offer them. The Alumni Association made our own move this spring, to offices in MC's new Central Services Building. Along with files and supplies came a sculpture by lifelong learner Sarah Silberman; a photo album presented to Dean Wayne Van Der Weele on his retirement from the Rockville Campus; and a ceremonial groundbreaking shovel used by Dean Irvin Schick, Bliss '47, when aging Bliss Electrical School buildings were replaced in the 1970s.

That shovel is needed again. Science facilities on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus are at the end of their practical use. At 38 and 56 years old, Science North and Science South no longer offer the state-of-the-art labs and classrooms that students had in high school. (Look no further than the just-renovated Science Center West at Rockville to see the benefit of an update.) We're grateful to our state and county leaders

who support a new math and science center for students making their move into 21st century scientific careers. If you happen to speak with them, please offer your own thanks for their help, and encourage them to continue funding design and construction of a new building. I'm grateful to Dr. Pete Hartsock '66 and others who've spoken up for that in local meetings.

Buildings change in an institution that's reached its 70th anniversary. But we're also observing the 40th anniversary of another MC mainstay, Summer Dinner Theatre—which sparked the careers of singer Tori Amos '83, Broadway actor Brad Oscar '81, and human-rights champion Alyson Palmer '80. In June, Alyson brings home her band, BETTY, to celebrate those anniversaries, as well as their 30th year performing together. If any tickets remain at this printing, use your alumni discount to help us rock Takoma's Cultural Arts Center!

Since last fall, we've co-hosted three athletic reunions—Knights football in December, all athletes at a basketball

doubleheader in February, and a rain-sprinkled but determined gathering of baseball teams in April. We're grateful to Coaches Phil Martin, Tarlouh Gasque, and Dan Rascher for helping us bring the players back to the campuses, and to our past president, Socrates Koutsouts '56, for his tireless support of fellow athletes.

In this issue we feature several people who have made their move beyond MC—to places ranging from Harvard Business School, where Gilles Mepossi Noutcha '07 and Ivan Salas Orono '08 pursued graduate studies, to Sri Lanka, where Manjula Dissanayake '03 founded an educational nonprofit. I'm proud of the diversity of career options available to today's MC alumni. I hope you'll join me, as you're able, in supporting scholarship opportunities for tomorrow's students too.

Lori A. Thomas '99
Montgomery College
Alumni Association President

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION President Lori A. Thomas '99 Vice President Jane C. Smith '76 Secretary Yogeeta Purohit '00 Treasurer Matthew B. Morgan '04 Immediate Past President Richard E. Beall '71 Board of Governors Mahlon G. "Lon" Anderson '70, Liz Brandenburg '08, Carole O. Carlson '94, Gabe Derosier '01, Tookie Gentilcore '94, Dr. Susan M. Hendricks '87, Fatou A. Jallow '14, Michael W. Jones '85, Blanca P. Kling '92, Joyce M. Knight '91, Nichole C. Land '10, Carol W. Leahy '74, Monique I. Martinez-Depaz '15, A. Georgina Oladokun '97, Bryan N. Phukan '05, Anita Neal Powell '79, Bobbi Price '80, Alexander G. "Sasha" Stone '14, Suzanne M. Thompson '82, Judith Vaughan-Prather '69, Dr. Lucy U. Vitaliti '77 Executive Director Greg Enloe

The Montgomery College Alumni Association welcomes former students interested in helping to coordinate events and activities for alumni, organize fundraising efforts, give input on distribution of Alumni Association scholarship funds, and determine benefits of Alumni Association membership. Opportunities to organize activities and events for alumni chapters, by area of study, are also available. Montgomery College Alumni Office, 9221 Corporate Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850 Email alumni@montgomerycollege.edu Online montgomerycollege.edu/alumni Facebook facebook.com/mcalumniassociation

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Insights is published twice a year for alumni and friends by Montgomery College's Office of Communications.

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Montgomery College is an academic institution committed to promoting equal opportunity and fostering diversity among its student body, faculty, and staff.

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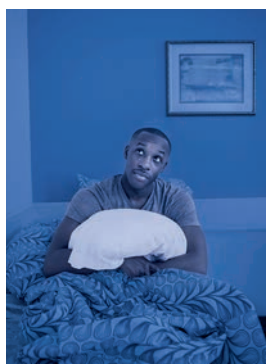
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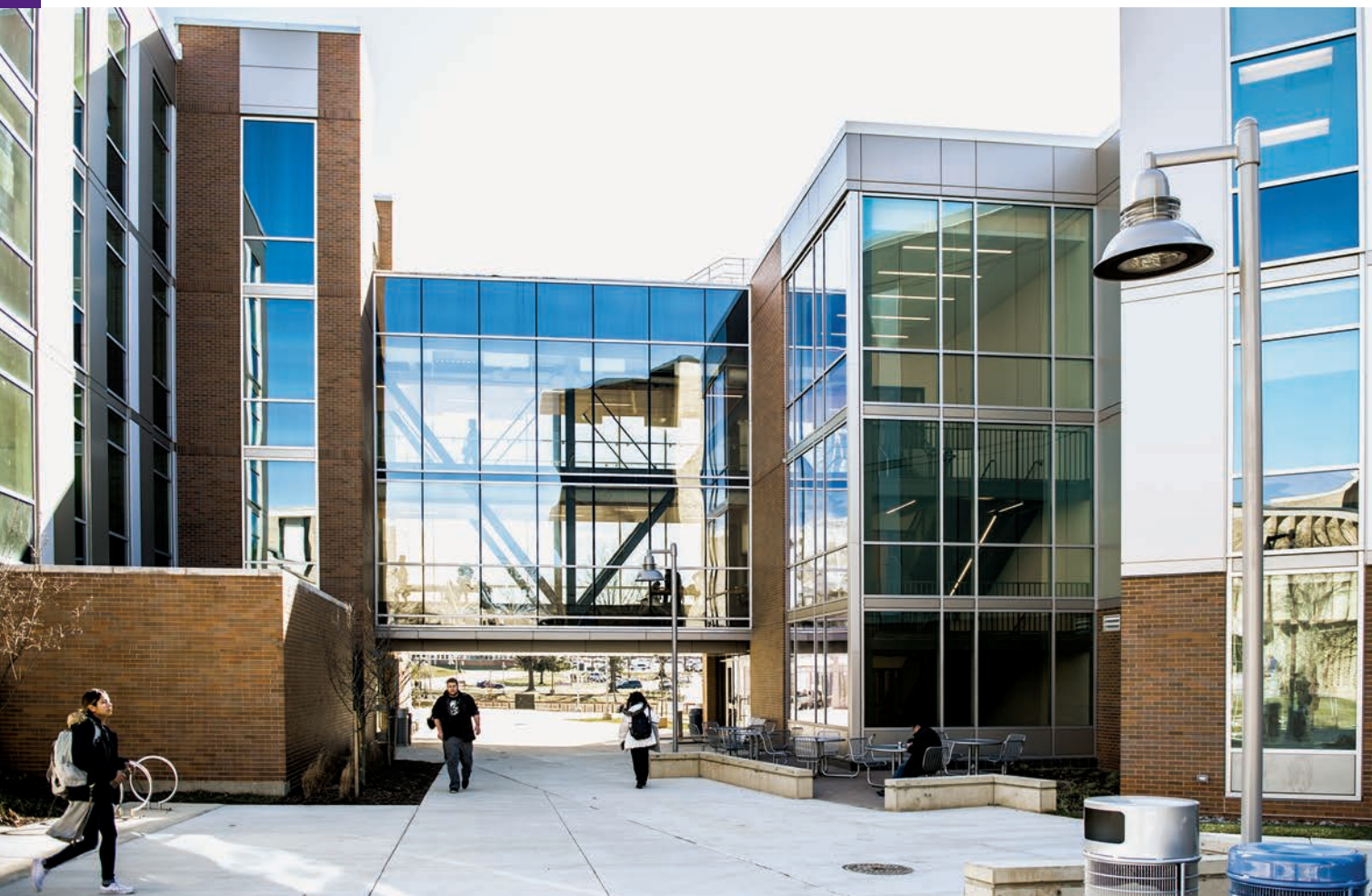
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ABOUT THE COVER



Brandon Honemond, a student in the polysomnography certificate program, showed *Insights* he was a natural for playing someone sleep deprived. The photo shoot took place in the polysomnography lab at the Health Sciences Center on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. Honemond, who teaches pre-K at a public charter school in Washington, DC, wants to work with pediatric patients after he takes his credentialing exam in August.

RAPTOR NOTES



PHOTOS BY PETE VIDAL

Science Center Complex: 'Money Well Spent'

"This building is a dream come true. This complex represents the very best of Montgomery County, Montgomery College, and the future."

KIMBERLY KELLEY
ROCKVILLE VICE PRESIDENT
AND PROVOST

Rockville Campus celebrated the opening of its newly renovated Science Center West building early in February. Soaring windows and spacious and adaptable instructional rooms enhance teaching and learning in popular science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs.

The \$29 million project, which included adding a third floor, completes a 12-year plan to upgrade science and math facilities considered critical for student success and for workforce preparedness. The building adjoins the Rockville Science Center, a 140,000-square-foot new construction opened in 2011, via glass bridge/walkways and hallways. Inside and out, the

structures complement each other in design—balance, scale, color—and in energy features.

MEETING DEMANDS FOR STEM EDUCATION

When Science West was built in 1965, it served 7,000–8,000 students. Today, Rockville's student population averages 16,000 and the campus is now surrounded by federal agencies,

BUILDING FEATURES

68,261 square feet

Construction budget: \$23 million

Façade is made up of brick, metal panels, polished porcelain tile and glass.

Interior corridors are terrazzo.

Classrooms and computer labs are furnished with either projectors or Bright Link Smart Boards. Flooring is Marmoleum*.

95% of furniture is provided by Maryland Correctional Enterprises. This arrangement allows prisoners to receive training in CADD design and furniture fabrication on real projects.

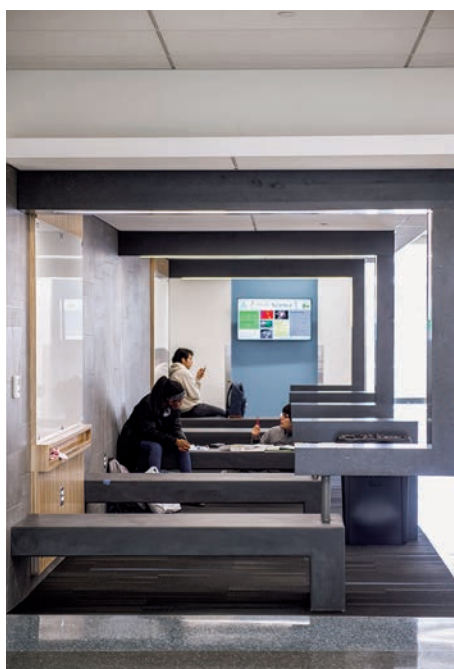
Three small bio-retention facilities (water gardens) on the exterior site capture rain water.

**Marmoleum is a floor tile made from recycled and renewable resources.*

Architect: Stantec

Construction: Grunley Mascaro Construction LLC

Project Management: Peter J. Hanley, senior project manager, Montgomery College Central Facilities Department



"The right space can have a positive effect on students' attitudes. The sense of community here promotes collaboration."

VIRGINIA MILLER
CHEMISTRY PROFESSOR



a vibrant health care sector, and burgeoning technology and life science industries. The College has the largest engineering program of any community college in the United States, with more than 1,100 students enrolled in the engineering transfer program. And overall science, engineering, and mathematics enrollment is up 57 percent since 2000.

The new science complex added 25 new math and general use classrooms, laboratories, a math emporium, open study area, lecture hall, and an administrative suite. Classrooms and labs, generally larger and more versatile than before, promote collaborative learning.

Diverse work styles are now accommodated in spaces like the first-floor STEM Learning Center, a large open room with work spaces for students who work on laptops, iPads, and cell phones, and glass-enclosed study rooms for small groups and study carrels around the perimeter.

"From the Macklin Tower basement for 30 years to this!" says Carol Burbage, director of the Judy E. Ackerman STEM Learning Center.

Officials and College administrators—including Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett and County Council President Roger Berliner—participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony on February 16. Building tours closed the event.

To see more photos of Science Center West and other MC people, places, and events, visit [flickr.com/photos/montgomerycollege/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/montgomerycollege/albums).



PARKING IMPROVEMENTS

On the first day of spring semester MC officially opened the long-awaited parking facility at Rockville, a 918-space, seven-level garage. Located adjacent to the Physical Education Center, the North Campus Garage (NC on collegewide maps), includes 59 security cameras, 20 electric charging stations, two elevators, and nearly 700 parking spaces designated for students. The facility cost \$24 million [Christman Company, Reston, Virginia].



Governor Hogan Delivers State Economic Update from Germantown Campus

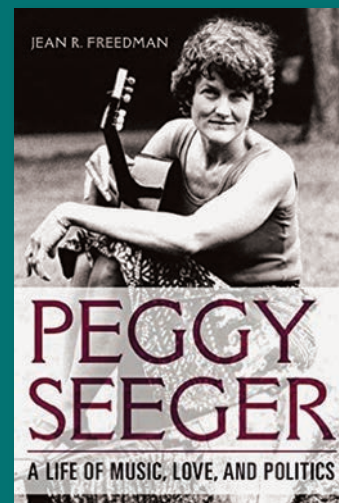
Maryland Governor Larry Hogan traveled to the Germantown Campus on February 28 to deliver the 2017 Economic Development Update for the state of Maryland. MC President DeRionne Pollard and Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce President Marilyn Balcombe also attended.

In his 15-minute speech, the governor announced that Maryland had just been recognized as one of the best states in the nation to live in by *U.S. News & World Report*, which analyzed data in seven key areas—education, health care, infrastructure, economy, government, opportunity, and crime and corrections.

He also said Maryland had created more jobs than all of the mid-Atlantic states combined (73,000 manufacturing jobs in 2015), and mentioned that his administration had introduced the More Jobs for Marylanders Act, a proposal to create thousands of jobs and to attract businesses by eliminating all state taxes for 10 years for new manufacturing employers that create jobs in high unemployment areas.

CREW Maryland Suburban, a professional organization for women active in commercial real estate, coordinated Governor Hogan's visit. CREW members, chamber members, and Montgomery College students watched the presentation that highlighted the state of Maryland's economy.

KUDOS



Professor Jean Freedman recently published the first full-length biography of music legend Peggy Seeger, entitled *Peggy Seeger: A Life of Music, Love, and Politics*. The book covers Seeger's career in music as well as her lifelong advocacy for environmental and feminist causes. Professor Freedman earned a PhD in folklore from Indiana University and is author of *Whistling in the Dark: Memory and Culture in Wartime London*.

Three members of the MC community—Dr. Uchechukwu O. Abanulo, Dr. Judy E. Ackerman, and Dr. Barbara G. Hoberman—were honored for their work to create outstanding STEM programs. The March event, held at the Rockville Campus's Science Center, also served as a naming ceremony for the Judy E. Ackerman Math/Science Center in the former vice president and provost's honor.

IN SPORTS Montgomery College Raptors women's soccer team coach, Phil Nana, was selected the 2016 MDJUCO Coach of the Year. In just his second year as head coach, Nana led the MC women's soccer team to a 17–3–1 season (8–0 in conference play) with over half of their conference games on the road. Check out highlights of the MC women's soccer team on YouTube at youtube.com/TheRaptorsMC and follow the team on Instagram @MCWomensSoccer.



COURTESY PARILLA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Arts@MC Eric Burdon & The Animals

Performed March 6 at the Parilla Performing Arts Center to a sold-out crowd

Rolling Stone hails Eric Burdon as one of the 100 greatest voices of all time. A member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame since 1994, Burdon has released nearly 50 records in those 50 years as front man for the British invasion band The Animals, War, and as a solo artist. Along with "House of the Rising Sun," his other string of hits include "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," and the Vietnam-era anthem, "We Gotta Get Out of this Place."

The Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center has three to four Guest Artist shows each year. Past performances have included Sergio Mendes and Brasil, The Family Stone, Junior Marvin of Bob Marley's Wailers, the B-52s, and comedian John Leguizamo.

@Rockville Women's Work: Artists Impacting Social Change

"Women's Work: Artists Impacting Social Change" exhibited in the Sarah Silberman Gallery in the Art Building in March. The exhibition featured work by women, femme, and nonbinary artists that deals with contemporary social issues. Among the works were blocks of The Monument Quilt, an ongoing collection of stories from survivors of rape and abuse.

@Takoma Park/ Silver Spring Artist Amy Hughes Braden

Artist-in-residence Amy Hughes Braden gave a talk on her work as a painter who likes to make work quickly and instinctually.

Braden is a fan of bold color (especially neons), large scale, and cutting her paintings apart. She constantly reworks previously "finished" pieces. Her current work centers around women, freedom, and the relationship between the two.

@Germantown 3rd Annual Art Walk

Students' art works were displayed around campus, indoors and out. The event, "artw@lk: Take Part in the Arts!" complements a similar event held at Rockville one week earlier, which is in its sixth year. montgomerycollege.edu/artgermantown



Community Engagement: Public Forums on Campus Modernization and County Education Budgets

- On March 21, Dr. Pollard and Takoma Park Mayor Kate Stewart led the first in a series of three Community Conversations with Takoma Park and Silver Spring residents, students, and alumni about the College's construction projects to replace or modernize existing buildings on the East Campus within Takoma Park. The next project slated for construction is a new math-science building along Fenton Street. The events, held at the Takoma Park Community Center (see Note below), allowed the public to learn more about the proposals, provide feedback, and suggest changes.
- In a county tour of five public forums hosted by councilmember Craig Rice on education budget matters, county and MC officials addressed budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2018. The Montgomery County Board of Education, the county executive, and the county council combine forces to craft the MCPS and Montgomery College annual operating budgets. For the third year in a row, the forums sought input from the public on the programs and budgets of the county's public school system and the community college. The county council adopts its budget in May; it goes into effect July 1.

Note: The final Community Conversation on June 6 (7:30 p.m.) will conclude the series. It will be held at the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland.

MC in the News

Fox News's "New Yorkers Working with Doctors Without Borders" featured Michelle Mays, MA, RN, BSN, and Montgomery Scholar '02.

Hechinger Report article, "Placement rates, other data colleges provide consumers are often alternative facts," (March 22, 2017) included comments from Kevin Long, director of policy and planning, on collecting student data.



LISA USHER

WTOP featured student Constance Roberts as an outstanding member of the community. Roberts, a social work major, volunteered more than 900 hours to various nonprofit organizations during the last year-and-a-half. She also works part time at the College as a service-learning assistant.



COURTESY MCTV

New Active-Shooter Training Video

MCTV completed a 15-minute video for the MC community on how to prepare for an active shooter incident. The video features tips on the recommended A.L.I.C.E. response plan (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate). Hosted by Director of Public Safety and Emergency Management Shawn Harrison and featuring MCTV voice talent Michael Brown, the video was produced inside College buildings and features MC staff and students. "Being prepared," says Harrison, "could be the first step in saving your life." To watch the Active Shooter Training and Preparedness Video, visit montgomerycollege.edu/emergency.



What will your legacy be?

Bequest: Make a Difference for Future Students

You can change the course of a student's life by including Montgomery College in your estate plans with a bequest. After you ensure that your family is taken care of, you can name Montgomery College as residuary beneficiary of your estate. Find out how simple it is to leave your legacy. Call us today.

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"My days at MC were significant in shaping my future, and I'm pleased to provide for future students through my trust." —Marcia Meltzer, alumna

India Lessons

Eighteen members of the Montgomery College community traveled to India during spring break as part of the Global Humanities Institute's (GHI) "Seminars Abroad" initiative, funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

They learned about India's complex history and cultures, and forged academic partnerships with colleagues at OP Jindal Global University and Osmania University.

"In traveling to India," says English Professor Matthew Decker, "I experienced a country, which, in many respects, was completely unlike my own. I've never needed to be thoughtful about the water I drink or food I eat. I rarely consider the trash that impacts our own local spaces. Upon our return to the US, these topics seem to matter more to me than they ever have before."

Decker plans to remind students to value their global citizenship and to use what they learn to inform their responses to different cultures. For incorporating India into curricula, MC faculty can draw from specific "Teaching India" resources, created by the GHI, E-Learning, Innovation and Teaching Excellence (E-LITE), and MC Libraries.

The Global Humanities Institute is funded in part through a challenge "Bridging Cultures" grant by the National Endowment of the Humanities. Its purpose is to support systematic integration of other cultures and countries to study the humanities. The project includes faculty training and support of teaching, cultural community engagement, research and scholarly work, and scholarly exchanges abroad. Past trips have been to China, India, and El Salvador.



PHOTOS COURTESY GLOBAL HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

FACT OR FICTION

The MC Libraries launched a guide to educate students on spotting fake news articles: libguides.montgomerycollege.edu/fakenews.

The guide introduces students to the concepts of fake news and information literacy. It provides guidance on identifying a fake story, links to watchdog websites, links to sources of valid news, a list of known sites that produce misleading or fake news, and an example that leads students through the process of evaluating an article.

Faculty are encouraged to use the guide as a resource for classroom discussion on information.

Montgomery College Course

MONEY MATTERS

MC's Personal Finance Academy Offers Money Management Classes

Courses: Financial Planning Tips for Singles, Health Care Insurance for Retirement, Smart Money Management, Retirement Planning, Maximizing Social Security, Stocks: An In-depth Look, and many more.

For a complete Personal Finance Academy schedule, visit cms.montgomerycollege.edu/wdce/ce/lifelonglearning/personal-finance.html.



"These were frugal, enterprising years during which the College operated after-school hours in borrowed high school facilities and temporary wooden buildings."

WILLIAM C. STRASSER JR.¹

1946–1947

A Year of Firsts... and Simpler Times

Celebrating Montgomery 70th Anniversary Series

Part 2 of 2*

Enthusiasm among the first class of 186 students was high during the College's first semester in 1946, as evidenced by the remarkable list of firsts in the College archives. Students established the first student council and the first yearbook committee—which produced the first edition of the yearbook, *Accolade*. The same committee coordinated with art students to create the first College seal, still in use today.

Dr. Bernice F. Pierson, founding member of Montgomery Junior College's full-time faculty, recalled the community's warm welcome for members of the new junior college.

As the inaugural class of students and faculty turned the calendar to 1947, school spirit and energy for building a first-rate institution stayed strong. By 1947, a Montgomery Symphony Orchestra formed, comprising students and members of the community. It later became affiliated formally with the College (as did the Montgomery County Light Opera Association in the mid-1950s). Pierson's descriptions of all-College picnics, held at the Meadow Brook Recreation Center in Rock Creek Park, seem particularly quaint:

"The students, faculty, and their families... swinging on the swings, playing baseball, eating gobs of ice cream and singing and singing until dark."

Looking to improve conditions for his energetic college community, which was borrowing classroom space at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School and limited to evenings and Saturday courses, Dean Hugh Price acquired two war surplus buildings (BOQs, bachelor officers' quarters) to house the biology and chemistry labs, faculty and administrative offices, a bookstore, and student lounge. Another small building, provided by the Federal Works Agency, housed the new athletic director Frank Rubini, and an equipment room.

In fall 1947, enrollment doubled as the College added a sophomore class. Part-time faculty—professional scientists (some recruited from the National Cancer Institute and the Navy Medical Center), artists, writers, businessmen, and others—proved invaluable to academic outcomes that garnered approval for accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools by 1950. The credential signaled to the community it had succeeded in establishing an institution that delivered on its promises: to provide higher education on par with four-year schools. The workforce-oriented choices, including secretarial and business, and "technical-occupational" courses provided practical options for a population eager to work and earn college degrees after World War II.

With the entire national capital region booming after the war, the College was all but assured continued growth. By academic year 1949–1950, enrollment reached 473 students. In the summer of 1950, the Board of Education purchased the Bliss Electrical School in Takoma Park—six buildings on six acres—for \$350,000. The move allowed the College to expand programs and services and increase the number of people it served by operating on its own campus for the first time.

Top left: The College seal features the cupola of Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School and crossed American and Maryland flags, encircled by the institution's name and date of founding. Seventy years later, the seal remains in use largely unchanged today.

"The pleasant neighborhood setting of the campus, shaded by large and overarching trees, created a comfortable, community-like environment... The campus site was small enough, and the number of students and faculty few enough," writes Strasser, "that people could readily and naturally interact daily, become acquainted easily, and develop a sense of community and a personal identity on campus."

MJC continued to grow and branch out through its first 70 years, eventually dropping the "Junior," dropping football, dropping the yearbook, and dropping programs that no longer met the needs of a changing workforce (e.g., shorthand courses). But among Maryland's 16 community colleges, it retains its title of "first in the state"—and more importantly, remains rooted in the community. With a budget now in the millions and a student enrollment of 60,000, the College's next 70 years will likely continue its legacy of innovation and service to all who desire higher education in Montgomery County.

Source: ¹Montgomery College in its Formative Years 1946–1979; William C. Strasser Jr. The Montgomery County Story, Montgomery County Historical Society quarterly. Strasser was the College's fourth president, from 1966 to 1979.

*This follows a segment published in *Insights* fall 2016, available online in the archives section at montgomerycollege.edu/insights.



PHOTOS COURTESY MC ARCHIVES

Past Presidents Reunited for Special 70th Anniversary State of the College

At the sixth annual State of the College in March, Dr. Pollard was joined by three former College presidents: Dr. Hercules Pinkney, Dr. Charlene R. Nunley, and Dr. Robert E. Parilla. During her introduction, Pollard drew comparisons among their tenures—which among them spans 37 years of the College's 70-year history—as well as differences (e.g., budgets, faculty and staff numbers, tuition rates, and budget dollars).

After revisiting their greatest challenges, strategic achievements, and leadership philosophies, Pollard asked them to name their favorite part of the job. Parilla quipped: "retirement!" before waxing eloquent: "Seeing students come in with dreams,

accomplish things... watching the faculty grow, and listening to their stories," he says. "Those were inspirational times."

Pinkney's favorite part of the job was commencement. "Seeing students with their very supportive families, and shaking the hand of each graduate. ... I shook my own daughter's hand at commencement," he says. Pinkney served one year as president, after returning from retirement (formerly, he served as vice president and provost of the Germantown Campus).

Nunley, who Skyped in from Daytona Beach, where she was on spring break, says she loved every part of the job. "I got to change lives every single day I went to work."



PETE VIDAL

Embracing Change in Demographics

"We are browner, older, and less wealthy than ever in the history of this county. How do we ... ensure that those three facts are not seen as negatives, as they are in other places in this world? How do we have student support services so students understand we are here to meet them where they are and to help them graduate?" —DERIONNE POLLARD, "MILESTONE MOMENTS: BUILDING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS"

Ask anyone in the county what they like about Montgomery College and you will hear: "great faculty," "affordability," and "quality courses," among the responses. You will also likely hear mention of diversity, which is among the College's most visible traits. Today, students who identify as nonwhite comprise 72 percent of the enrollment, compared to just 8 percent in 1975. In classrooms, students are just as likely to sit next to someone from Ghana as they are someone from Gaithersburg.

The demographics on campus reflect Montgomery County's changing population. The US Census Bureau reports that nearly a third of today's residents are foreign-born (32.6 percent), and almost 40 percent (39.6%) of residents speak a language other than English at home.¹ In 2012, county officials projected a 10-year increase in nonwhite populations as follows: Hispanic (20 percent), Asian (13 percent), and African American (7 percent).

"We invest a lot of resources in diversity and inclusion," says MC President DeRionne Pollard. "This last term is important: inclusion goes beyond tolerance. It means everyone belongs here, and we will make them feel welcomed. And how do we help them succeed?"

While an open-access admission policy assures higher education for anyone with a diploma or GED credential, maintaining it has resulted in an increased number of students considered "academically vulnerable," or underprepared to succeed at the college level. Students take an assessment test after enrollment to determine their placement in math and English courses. On average, 72 percent of entering first-time students need at least

one developmental class (slightly above the 68 percent national average for community college students). One in five MC students enrolls in a developmental math course; nearly 54 percent of math classes offered now are developmental.

To meet its mission of student success, the College has increased programs, support services, and staffing for these students. Pollard's signature program, ACES (Achieving

"These are students who many people would call 'at risk'—largely students of color, poor, and most of whom do not have a parent who went to college themselves," says Pollard.

ACES students receive extra academic support, financial assistance, and a host of other mentoring tools using a case management approach while students are still high school. ACES has coaches (MC staff) at 10 MCPS schools, with 1,700 students enrolled currently. Students who choose to attend MC and then USG continue to receive support via on-campus academic coaches.

"That's what it comes down to in the end," says Pollard, "to feel like one matters and is included in a community. When students feel this way, and they are supported, then they achieve. If this is a radical idea, then so be it. People are included and they thrive: that's radical inclusion from where I sit."

The College has concentrated on accommodating academically vulnerable students at the same time the state implemented measures (via the College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act, 2013) to increase college completion in Maryland by 2025. With implications that future funding may be tied to performance, status quo is not an option.

Right now, the average MC student takes 4.5 years to complete a two-year degree program. Reasons students fail to progress more quickly at MC are many and varied. Those without clear academic interests or goals can become distracted by courses that do not align with degree or certificate requirements. Students who must repeat remedial courses—in mathematics and English—sometimes

Who Are the Academically Vulnerable Students?²

- First-generation college student
- From underrepresented minorities
- Financial limitations—cannot afford books
- Poor high school academic preparation
- No family guidance to help him or her navigate the academic world
- Has job responsibilities
- Has child care responsibilities
- From low-income family
- Involved in hours of commuting
- Distracted by transportation difficulties

Collegiate Excellence and Success), for example, targets students in county high schools who are most often underrepresented in college, and students who are first in their family to attend college. The program launched in July 2012, and the first ACES students graduated MC in 2016; all 16 transferred to four-year institutions.

become discouraged. Students who lack the skills to plan for six years of part-time study while working full time are often at risk of falling behind. Others face financial obstacles. The College has seen an 80 percent increase in students applying for financial aid since 2015.

Efforts to improve graduation and transfer rates under Pollard's leadership have run the gamut from a collegewide restructuring to streamline operations and make popular programs available to students at all three campuses, to instituting new programs for students in under-performing populations, including some for students before they ever enroll at MC. Currently, there are 31 academic initiatives in the MC and MCPS partnership designed to help prepare students for a smooth transition to postsecondary education.

Revising the General Studies curriculum, in which approximately 12,000 declare their major each year—has shown results in student retention. By requiring students to choose one of four "core" areas they wish to follow, the College encourages students to put themselves on a path to success. When students see a path from the outset, they save time and money. "We're using it as a model for moving students more effectively through other disciplines," says Pollard.

Technology has been another tool in improving student progress. In 2013, the College acquired the Starfish retention program, which allows students to make appointments online with instructors, counselors, and advisors, and to view and follow academic plans more easily.

Online courses are increasingly giving students flexible scheduling options, considering many MC students juggle work and family obligations while attending college. Four degrees can be completed fully online now:

general studies, business, computer science and technologies (two tracks: computer science and information systems), and criminal justice. "Online education is no longer an experiment in pedagogy," says Pollard. "Twenty-two percent of MC students took a course online last year."

Technology has also reduced the need for expensive textbooks; nationwide, the average book now costs \$180 and students typically must spend \$1,200 on books and supplies each year.³ Through the use of Online Education Resources (OERs) and the MC Open initiative, faculty are rewriting courses to eliminate cost-prohibitive course materials.

By removing—or at least lowering—barriers that exist for students striving to "achieve the promise" of higher education, the College can better meet accountability standards imposed by public policy and the community at large. It can also continue to brag about its diversity—160 nations represented at MC—in terms of what it contributes to cultural competence.

Diversity provides opportunities to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds, which in itself has become an important skill set for navigating an increasingly multiethnic, multinational, and globally interdependent world. Financially, closing achievement gaps is critical to the state and county's economic viability. Based on the county's projections for sustained increases in multicultural populations, the College foresees ongoing need for special programs that support students inside and outside the classroom.

"We have to be more responsive to our students' complex lives," says Pollard. "This is the reality of the population of students we serve. It's also a market reality: we have to be competitive, and this is becoming the industry standard."

"Montgomery College will always be a safe and open institution."

Prompted by policy actions at the federal level and concerns for some on the College's campuses, the Montgomery College Board of Trustees met in February and issued a statement to confirm the College's commitment to what President DeRionne Pollard calls "radical inclusivity."

"Discrimination against people of color, international or undocumented students, and students of any specific religious tradition have no place in a civil society or in our learning environments. We will continue to craft policies and practices that combat intimidation, harassment, and hate crimes, and to nurture a culture that condemns such affronts."

The official statement reflects the national debate about immigration and policies regarding law enforcement for undocumented immigrants. In Maryland, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and Baltimore City are listed as sanctuary jurisdictions by the Center for Immigration Studies.

Montgomery County has maintained sanctuary policies without officially declaring itself a sanctuary county, or self-designated safe zone for undocumented immigrants.

According to the College's Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, the top countries represented among MC's international students are: Cameroon, Peru, Ghana (Germantown Campus); Cameroon, Ethiopia, El Salvador (Rockville Campus); and Ethiopia, Cameroon, El Salvador (Takoma Park/Silver Spring). ["Distribution by Campus of International Students, Fall 2015"]. Collegewide, 28 percent of credit students are international students.

Sources:

¹ Montgomery County census data (2011–2015)

² MC Office of Institutional Research and Analysis report, "Underprepared Students: Their Progression to College Level Courses, Bailey, Jaggers, and Jenkins: "Introduction to the CCRC Assessment of Evidence Series" Community College Research Center, Columbia College, January 2011

³ bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/quick-guide-college-costs

LOSING TO GAIN

By Fritzi Bodenheimer

He stopped by Taco Bell so often the employees knew his \$20 order by heart. Some days he went twice. Over the course of a year, Chuck Carroll estimates he spent \$10,000 at the fast-food restaurant.

The only thing surpassing his big expense was the 400-plus pounds he carried on his 5'6" frame.

Today, Carroll, a health science major who is also a news anchor for NBC Radio, is 265 pounds lighter—and thriving. He enrolled at Montgomery College last fall because he wanted to study nutrition.

"I want to get a formal education so I can talk about it intelligently on air and work with people individually as a nutritionist," Carroll says, adding that he thinks people who are trying to lose weight would benefit from working with someone who has been in their shoes. He says he walked in those shoes for a long time.

"In the earliest pictures I have, I was a pudgy kid. It really started spiraling out of control in high school, and then it got crazy after I graduated."

In high school, being the "big guy" was not easy. "I felt like I had never had a chance with the ladies. I would have these little connections with the girls, but I could never muster up the confidence to ask them out. I know that's tough for any teen, but especially with low self-confidence about my physical appearance...."

After graduation, Carroll moved briefly to New York to live with his father and

stepmother. He put on a lot of weight and says his family was eating "huge, out of control portions."

Returning to the DC metro area and weighing more than 300 pounds, Carroll began a career in radio, eventually making his way to BIG 100, Washington's Classic Rock station. "I started to justify my weight as part of my personality." At events, he was introduced as "Big Chuck from BIG 100."

Carroll started dating someone at the station—his first real girlfriend—but it did not last.

"I thought she was awesome, but she did not want to tell anybody that we were dating. That hurt. I knew it wasn't normal to be hidden like that. But I didn't have a lot of confidence in my physical appearance so I thought, 'that's as good as it is going to get.'"

At one point, Carroll lost 70 pounds on the cookie diet—cookies he says tasted like a "cross between rubber and cardboard." As soon as he stopped the diet, he gained all the weight back and then some, which wreaked havoc on his back and knees.

"I could not walk across the street without getting severely out of breath, to the point where my chest would tighten. I was sweating profusely, and I was only 25 or 26 years old."

At one of his trips to Taco Bell, Carroll gave his order to a new employee. She replied, "You eat too much." Carroll spun a story about buying the meals for other people, but admits the comment really stung.

Soon after, afraid he might not live to see age 30, Carroll decided to undergo weight loss surgery.

"I was a full blown food addict," Carroll says. "Leading up to surgery, I was already scheming. Let's see, after surgery, I can go back to eating this, I can eat what I want."

The recovery from surgery was very painful, but something clicked. He could not go back to his old habits.

Carroll says his addiction is still very much present. "They can re-route your intestines, but they can never rework your brain. I just changed my addiction. I will gleefully tell you I am addicted to healthy foods. I used the addictive part of my personality in my favor."

Because he has an addiction, he makes no exceptions to his new healthy eating routine (see Chuck's Daily Diet). Not one potato chip, not one cookie, not one taco.

And not one trip to the gym. During his post-surgery weight loss journey, he has never walked into a gym. He had joined gyms before, but would go for a while and then quit. He wanted this time to be different.



PETE VIDAL

CHUCK'S DAILY DIET

Breakfast: Mixed fruit with plain yogurt, no sugar added

Lunch: Lean protein like chicken* and vegetables. He eats every three hours, even if he is not hungry. For his busy schedule, going between class and work, he says snacks are "supercritical."

Dinner: A salad made of kale and spinach, red pepper, and carrots. (He will add chicken or another lean protein if he is very hungry). "It is a beautiful salad with all sort of colors. That's heaven to me," he says. He also has half a piece of pita bread and hummus.

Snacks: Nuts or an apple, banana, or carrots. Sometimes both.

**He eats no red meat or pork.*

At work, after the surgery, Carroll arranged a 90-minute lunch break, using every minute to walk. "At first, I could barely get across the street. Then I could walk around the block. Then two blocks."

He progressed to a five-mile walk every day—and was religious about his commitment.

"Blazing hot, freezing cold, pouring rain. No matter what the weather, I walked. I was like a mailman; sleet, snow...."

He says the little things make a huge difference—taking the stairs, not the elevator; parking as far from his destination as possible. At one job, Carroll figured if he parked in the last spot, it meant an extra mile. "Over a year," he says, "that's 50 miles."

Now seven years post-surgery, Carroll combines his professional career in radio and journalism with his passion for healthy living. In addition to his work on the radio, he runs a website called—appropriately—theweightloss-champion.com and contributes articles about nutrition to DC Refined, Washington's online lifestyle and culture magazine.

He is also making a name for himself around campus. Keith Elphick, professor of English, says Carroll impressed him from the start in Critical Reading, Writing, and Research at Work. "He asked pertinent rhetorical questions and started the writing process early. Chuck understands how valuable communication skills are in the real world, so he works hard in all endeavors to polish his rhetorical skills."

Carroll's future clients will appreciate his communication skills and his endless enthusiasm.

"I realize my passion is talking about nutrition and inspiring other people. Nothing would make me happier." ■



COURTESY CHUCK CARROLL

A Wake Up Call for the Sleep Deprived

By Jill Fitzgerald Photography by Grace Gladhill '05

Between 50 and 70 million US adults have sleep or wakefulness disorders, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Moreover, studies at the National Institutes of Health show people whose sleep sessions are irregular or short are more likely to develop diseases that can lead to an early death, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, Alzheimer's disease, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety.

There is increasing evidence about how pervasive the problem is. According to the CDC, nearly one-third of all Americans get fewer than seven hours of sleep a night. And with the growing dependence on mobile electronic devices and video games, sleeplessness starts early: nearly 70 percent of high school students are not getting enough sleep on school nights.

"Of the 80-plus sleep-related disorders, the most common are insomnia, obstructive sleep apnea, periodic limb movement disorders, and restless leg syndrome," says Jomo Nkunika, coordinator of Montgomery College's polysomnography (sleep medicine) technology program and an adjunct faculty member. Nkunika said these sleep disorders are evaluated—and often corrected—at an American Academy of Sleep Medicine-accredited sleep laboratory.

There are more than 2,500 certified sleep centers in the United States today—a nearly five-fold increase over 10 years. Consequently,

the demand for qualified polysomnographic technologists also has increased. In an effort to meet this demand, Montgomery College created its one-year polysomnography certificate program in 2009.

"The demand for qualified polysomnographic technologists in the Washington metropolitan area was so great, we had to create a robust program that would prepare students to hit the ground running in a short amount of time," said Nkunika. The 34-credit program includes courses in anatomy and physiology, sleep disorders, computer applications, psychology, medical terminology, and hands-on lab courses. Students then complete clinical rotations at hospitals and sleep centers in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Nkunika says MC's polysomnography students are well prepared to enter the field. About 85 percent of the students pass the Registered Polysomnographic Technologist credentialing

Polysomnography student Thomas Haile is wired with an electroencephalogram (EEG) and electromyogram (EMG) set up.



exam delivered by the Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologists (BRPT). Once credentialed, polysomnographic technologists officially can start working in the sleep medicine field.

One of MC's aspiring sleep technologists is Julia Spenadel, a 25-year-old Bethesda resident. Spenadel, who went to art school, then enrolled in University of Maryland's public health program, wanted a field with a "better financial outcome." "I knew I wanted to stay in the health field," she says, "so I Googled what health professions were lucrative, and discovered polysomnography."

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) doesn't provide employment data

She said MC's class schedule is a perfect fit for her because she is a makeup artist on the weekends. "All of our classes start at 4 p.m. and run about four hours. Then we go to our clinical rotations a couple nights a week."

At a sleep center, patients arrive at a certain time in the evening. A polysomnographic technologist explains the procedure and equipment that will be used for the study and answers patient questions. Next, the polysomnographic technologist attaches nearly two dozen metal sensors, or electrodes, to the skin on the head and body with a mild adhesive.

The sensors on the scalp measure the brain's activity; others glued to the collar

patient's fingertip to measure oxygen levels and tapes a microphone near the patient's throat to monitor snoring. Many sleep study centers are equipped with video cameras that record body movement during sleep.

The data obtained in a sleep study is extensive. An average sleep study generates 800 to 1,000 pages of information. During the day, a polysomnographic technician analyzes all of the data from the sleep study and compiles statistics from the various leads attached to the patient. This information includes how the patient was breathing, how steadily the patient slept, how often the patient woke up, whether or not the patient experienced neurological arousals due to breathing disorders, and other factors. The

“Sleep affects almost every tissue in our bodies,” writes Dr. Michael Twery, a sleep expert at NIH. “It affects growth and stress hormones, our immune system, appetite, breathing, blood pressure, and cardiovascular health.”¹

specifically for sleep technicians, but it does profile related fields. According to the BLS, jobs for medical and clinical laboratory technicians are expected to increase 18 percent between 2014 and 2024, which is about as fast as average. Additionally, PayScale.com reported that registered polysomnographic technologists earned a median salary of \$50,046 as of 2016.

Spenadel will complete her credit courses, as well as clinical rotations at MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital, the Washington DC Veterans Administration Hospital, and Children's National Medical Center this spring. "Very often, students are hired by one of the hospitals where they interned," she said.

bone and chest measure heart rate and rhythm; some on the leg and chin monitor muscle movement; more in the nose and mouth monitor airflow; those placed near the eyes monitor eye movement, which is important for detecting rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. According to NIH research, during REM sleep, the brain and body are energized and dreaming occurs. REM is thought to be involved in the process of storing memories, learning, and balancing mood, although the exact mechanisms are not well understood. Two belts—on the chest and abdomen—monitor movement and help understand breathing.

Additionally, a polysomnographic technologist places an oxygen sensor on the

sleep center then forwards the report to the doctor for interpretation.

If the doctor determines that a patient has sleep apnea, the doctor most frequently will order a positive airway pressure device, or PAP machine. A PAP machine uses air pressure to open the airway while a patient is sleeping to prevent the airway restrictions that lead to the decreased oxygen levels and brain arousal associated with sleep apnea. The College's polysomnography students train to fit patients with PAP interfaces and machines at follow-up visits to the sleep center. Doctors also treat sleep apnea with lifestyle changes, mouthpieces, and surgery. Medicines typically are not used to treat the condition.



Top: (left, right) Julia Spenadel practices set up and hook up procedures for a baseline sleep study on fellow student Brandon Honemond.

Center: Professor Jomo Nkunika (left) shows polysomnography student Lawrence Fells (right) how to properly calibrate sleep study software.

Bottom: Professor Nkunika (center) teaches students proper PAP therapy desensitization techniques.



Nkunika, who is also a practicing polysomnographic technologist, clinical sleep health specialist, and board member of the BRPT, says doctors may treat issues like high blood pressure with medicine, but if they do not treat the underlying problem—sleep apnea—patients may continue to have high blood pressure. He said there are several signs that should alert someone that they need a sleep study. “If your partner tells you that you are snoring excessively, you may have sleep apnea,” he says. “You should visit your physician and speak candidly about the problem.” Nkunika also says people who suffer from fatigue, excessive daytime drowsiness, morning headaches, dry mouth, hydrosis (excessive sweating), and those who have a larger neck size (men, greater than or equal to 17 inches; women, greater than or equal to 16 inches)² may also be at risk for sleep apnea.

According to researchers at NIH, sleep deprivation is a common public health problem in the United States. In fact, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conservatively estimates that 100,000 police-reported crashes are the direct result of driver fatigue each year. This results in an estimated 1,550 deaths, 71,000 injuries, and \$12.5 billion in monetary losses. These figures may be the tip of the iceberg, since currently it is difficult to attribute crashes to sleepiness alone. Although many people believe they can shortchange themselves on sleep and still be okay, the risks associated with sleep—or lack thereof—should not be taken lightly. ■

¹ *The Benefits of Slumber: Why You Need a Good Night's Sleep*
NIH News in Health, April 2013

² *Sleep Apnea: Is Your Patient at Risk?*
National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 1995



PHOTOS COURTESY MANJULA DISSANAYAKE

Manjula's Mission

By Diane Bosser



(Above) Dissanayake with Educate Lanka Foundation (ELF) scholars and their parents in Sri Lanka's war-torn Northern Province.

When Manjula Dissanayake '03 left his job in finance for a nonprofit startup, he discovered a few things about himself: he could get by on a lot less sleep than he ever thought possible, he didn't need a Porsche, and he was easily swayed by a hard-luck story—or thousands of them.

Shrouded by November's predawn darkness, Manjula Dissanayake '03 gets into the Uber car that will take him to Dulles International Airport. Chara, his wife, and Ayaan, his six-month-old son, are still asleep. The journey to Sri Lanka—approximately 10,000 miles across the Atlantic, over Europe through Dubai, and on to South Asia—is arduous, but the

athletic, personable Dissanayake, who works 60 to 70 hours a week from a home office in Rockville, sees the travel time as a rare chance to unplug.

"The long flight home is one of my favorites," he says. "It's one of the rarest times you actually get to spend without Internet or phone. And I use this time to do a lot of thinking and reflecting."

Dissanayake, 35, is founder and CEO of the Educate Lanka Foundation, Inc. (ELF), a nonprofit social enterprise that gives economically disadvantaged youth in Sri Lanka access to quality education, mentoring, and employment opportunities. Sri Lanka is 10.5 hours ahead of Rockville time, so he normally works odd hours via Skype and email. Because virtual communications can not replace a handshake, he travels there two or three times a year.

Since 2007, the ELF has provided education funding for more than 1,000 students in Sri Lanka. Support from donors (mostly Sri Lankans living abroad who send payments of \$10 to \$25 monthly) totals \$500,000 in micro-scholarships. To date, 450 ELF scholars have graduated university and found gainful employment, feats that would have been unimaginable without financial angels.

"While Sri Lanka is blessed with a universal education system on paper, poverty has become the number-one factor preventing students from completing their post-secondary and higher education. Nearly 300,000 students currently belong to families living on less than \$1.50 per day, and every year, an estimated 140,000 students complete their education without job-related skills," says Dissanayake.

Disenchanted with his country's decades-long ethnic conflict and destined for a bleak future, he came to Maryland at 19. He enrolled at Montgomery College and worked 50 hours a week at two jobs to support himself. It was during his second year at MC, as a Macklin Scholar, that Dissanayake honed his business acumen while learning project management, leadership skills, and the personal rewards of helping the less fortunate.

As part of the MBI SIFE team (Students In Free Enterprise, now called Enactus), Dissanayake and his peers accompanied mentor Brian Cunningham to Washington, where they spent Saturdays helping promote entrepreneurship among DC residents.

He continued to volunteer after transferring to the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business in 2003. He cofounded a SIFE team there, which won first place in the annual competition for outreach and entrepreneurship projects. They built a crowdsourcing website and fundraised for Sri Lankans after the devastating December 2004 tsunami. The team raised \$20,000 in six months.

"Two things I learned from raising money for tsunami victims," he says, "were the positive difference we could make back home



In a TEDx Talk, "Talent is Universal, but Opportunity Is Not," produced by George Mason University, Dissanayake describes his experience and motivation for changing careers from investment banking to social entrepreneurship.



Dissanayake with ELF scholar, Jayendran Rajinthkumar (21). Jayendran was living with his grandmother with basically no income when he was selected. He now attends the University of Jaffna and is pursuing a bachelor of arts degree. He aspires to join Sri Lanka's civil services and serve his own community.



(Above) With ELF alumna Kalpani Rathnayake (25), from Kurunegala (North Western Province). After 10 years of ELF support (since grade 9), she completed higher education in 2016 and is awaiting appointment as an English teacher.

(Right) With ELF scholars Nipuni Poornima (18) and Kevin Fernando (16), both from Negombo (Western Province). Both students visited the US in 2016 through an ELF partnership with St. Mark's School in Massachusetts.



from here, and how many Sri Lankans living abroad are willing and able to give back."

Several members of that SIFE team became founding members of the Educate Lanka Foundation: Rasan Amintha (MC alumnus '04), Hasika Pamunuwa (UMD, '05 who developed the web platform single-handedly), and a few other young professionals from the Sri Lankan community in the greater Washington area. Dissanayake worked full time in banking while keeping Educate Lanka running on the side, but eventually—after a life-threatening car accident while in Sri Lanka—gave up his dream of personal wealth to run the organization full time.

"After the accident, my purpose and perception of life changed," he says. "I realized I didn't belong in finance. What was most important to me was family, friends, and people I've helped—not what I accumulated, but what I would leave behind."

When he returned home, he quit his job and enrolled in a master's program for international development and social entrepreneurship. During his two years of graduate school at the Fletcher School at

Tufts University, he tested Educate Lanka Foundation's model through a series of business plan competitions in Boston, including at Tufts, Harvard, and MIT. It also became his graduate thesis.

He incorporated the social enterprise and assembled an impressive board of advisers that includes the former Sri Lankan Ambassador to the United States, a director of Harvard School of Education, the former chief counsel at World Bank, a commissioner for the US national committee in UNESCO, and experts in education and developmental entrepreneurship.

"It's not an effort of a few individuals," he says. "Thousands have backed and contributed to this, and every one of them is a part of the journey."

Today, the Educate Lanka staff in Sri Lanka comprises seven full-time employees, including Country Director Dhanusha Amarasinghe, who oversees operations across all nine provinces, a network of 25 volunteer liaison officers, and a number of corporate partnerships. Headquartered in Kandy, in central Sri Lanka, ELF staff have

taken over duties Dissanayake previously did himself, including traveling around the country and meeting with every student (about 300 at that time) during scholarship distributions and new student screenings.

"Dhanu has been my pillar of strength in Sri Lanka, and Rohan Vimalachandran, my right-hand guy in London, has made a huge contribution to our (and my personal) success in recent years."

Having staff in Sri Lanka allows Dissanayake to focus on business development, strategy, and recruiting. In November, he logged 54 meetings in 14 days—many with corporate executives and government officials who are receptive to the ELF mission and want to collaborate for their common purpose. He returned stateside with MOUs (memos of understanding) with several multinational firms—including Deutsche Bank, MasterCard, and Rotary Club. He also carried a 50-page outline for national educational reforms, handed to him by the Sri Lankan Secretary of Education.

Days after his return, he delivered closing remarks to attendees at the World Bank's

Youth Summit 2016 in DC. His audience was thousands of young adults from more than 100 countries, gathered, some in person and some virtually, for “Rethinking Education for the New Millennium.” Old enough to advise, but young enough to be their peer, Dissanayake spoke about his experiences structuring a nonprofit, outlined ELF’s goals and strategies, and advised the students to follow their passion in social entrepreneurship:

“Our generation is expected to tackle some of the world’s most pressing issues. It’s unacceptable that we live in a world where 60 million children do not have access to education. More than 100 million youth do not have basic literacy skills. If we do not commit to address these critical issues today, we would have failed as a generation. This is our responsibility.”

At a meeting for international diaspora organizations, Dissanayake learned how some organizations are using the Internet to provide work for Syrian refugees. He realized a similar strategy could work for the Sri Lankan community: ELF scholars in Sri Lanka could teach Sinhalese or Tamil languages online to Sri Lankans living abroad. The students would benefit from the income source and exposure, and the overseas community would strengthen ties to a distant cultural homeland.

Dissanayake’s long-term plans—other than spending more time with Chara and Ayaan—include guiding the social enterprise toward becoming sustainable so the work will continue even when the current team of managers is no longer there. He also wishes to see the ELF model replicated in other parts of the world, and to be able to positively influence the current education systems in Sri Lanka.

“We hope that what we started in Sri Lanka will reach many other countries and empower thousands of high-potential future leaders from destitute backgrounds to achieve their dream education. We want them to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values needed in the 21st century, so that they possess the tools needed to lift themselves, their families, and societies from the cycle of poverty.” ■



Award-winning CEO/Founder

Manjula Dissanayake, Macklin Scholar '03, earned a bachelor of science (cum laude) in finance from University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business and a master's in international development and social entrepreneurship from the Fletcher School at Tufts University. He has received numerous awards for his leadership and vision, including Under 33 Global Foreign Policy Leaders and Top 15 Social Innovators in the United States by American Express and Ashoka. He was also nominated for the Inspire Leadership Award (an award previously won by Richard Branson and Melinda Gates).



After graduating from the Harvard Business School, Ivan Salas Orono (left) will be joining Warner Brothers Entertainment in Los Angeles as part of their corporate strategy team. Gilles Mepossi Noutcha (right) will be looking to move back to Africa to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. Their professor, Larry Culp, will continue to serve as a senior lecturer at HBS, while serving on the boards of Washington College and Wake Forest University.

By Jill Fitzgerald
Photography by Susan Young

As a first-year senior lecturer at Harvard Business School last spring, Larry Culp perused the 61 candidates in his Field Immersion Experiences for Leadership Development (FIELD) Global Immersion course and discovered he had two Montgomery College graduates—Gilles Mepossi Noutcha '07 and Ivan Salas Orono '08—on his class roster.

"It was jaw dropping," says Culp, who grew up in Rockville and whose friend, Steve McAuliffe, sits on the Montgomery College Foundation Board of Directors. "I had no idea this kind of talent was at our local community college."

Mepossi Noutcha and Salas Orono earned admission to the prestigious MBA program in 2015, which accepted just 12 percent of the more than 9,300 candidates from around the country—and around the world. Culp, thinking they might recognize one another, sat the MC graduates together the first day of class. What he did not realize is Montgomery College, much like Harvard

Big dreams were the last thing on Ivan Salas Orono's mind when he arrived in the United States in 2005. A self-proclaimed "terrible high school student," he begrudgingly enrolled at the College because his older brother was a student. He worked full time the first year, taking classes at night. When he heard about the Macklin Business Institute (MBI), it piqued his interest. He applied—and earned a spot in the honors business program.

"This [MBI] was the first time I was given real-life responsibilities," he says, "and I gained a lot of self-confidence." Salas Orono built on that experience, earning a bachelor's degree from the Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland.

After earning their bachelor's degrees, both men embarked on successful careers. Mepossi Noutcha landed a job with Eaton, a global leader in power management. He was plucked for a leadership development program for employees with high potential, traversing the United States to learn all aspects of the

plan, Culp received a congratulatory call from Dr. Nitin Nohria, HBS dean, who inquired about Culp's interest in teaching. "I was very honored to get this offer," says Culp, who found his way back to HBS 25 years after he graduated.

Culp developed a close relationship with the two students throughout the semester. Part of the course required Culp, the two MC graduates, and the rest of the FIELD class to fly to Shanghai, China, for a 10-day project working with local companies to create new business models using design thinking—a method of meeting people's needs and desires in a technologically feasible and strategically viable way. Both students described him as affable and approachable. "Larry has a way of explaining complicated concepts in a way that is simple, to the point, and engaging," says Salas Orono. "He was able to motivate us HBS students who can be pretty jaded and cynical at times."

Confidentiality issues precluded Culp from divulging how the two men fared in his class, but he did extol their virtues. "These are

by Themselves

How Two Harvard Business School Students Discovered Their MC Roots

Business School, attracts students from more than 160 countries. Mepossi Noutcha and Salas Orono, from Cameroon and Argentina, respectively, enrolled at the College and overcame obstacles. Now, more than 10 years later, each man recounted how transformative their Montgomery College experience was.

Mepossi Noutcha came to the United States two weeks before the fall 2004 semester started. His limited English skills forced him to enroll in American English Language Program classes, but after two semesters, he took on the rigors of the engineering curriculum. He also immersed himself in student life opportunities, participating in the Men of Purpose program, earning a spot in the Phi Theta Kappa honor society, and at 6'8", playing on the men's basketball team. He transferred to the Georgia Institute of Technology as a mechanical engineering major. "Coming to the United States was a difficult adjustment at first," he says. "But I am so grateful to everyone at MC for encouraging me to dream big."

business. Orono landed his "dream job" with Morgan Stanley in New York City, then moved to Miami to work for Starwood Hotels. In three years, Salas Orono signed more than 25 deals to develop new hotels in Latin America.

Although they were on upward trajectories career-wise, both men sensed something was missing in their lives. Mepossi Noutcha described it as a lack of fulfillment: "After five years of working in the field, I started wondering, what am I here to do?" Salas Orono characterized it as: "I felt like there could be something more for me out there."

Coincidentally, their HBS professor, Larry Culp, began his new venture the same time the two MC graduates embarked on theirs. After stepping down from a 14-year tenure as CEO of Danaher Corporation, having increased revenues nearly five-fold to \$20 billion while increasing shareholder returns to five times that of the S&P Index, he found himself writing the next chapter of his personal and professional life. When he announced his transition

two outstanding young men. I know they will parlay their opportunity at Harvard Business School into two excellent careers."

Mepossi Noutcha is looking to move back to Africa to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. "I had this wish I made on my 30th birthday," he says, "to be one of the top-40 businessmen in Africa by the time I reached the age of 40. This [Harvard Business School] has been amazing—there's a 'me' before and after this experience. I have such belief in my capabilities now. And most importantly, I want to use these capabilities to impact as many lives as possible in Africa."

Salas Orono, who recently accepted a position with Warner Brothers Entertainment in Los Angeles as part of their corporate strategy team, says, "Someday I hope to start my own company in the entertainment industry, ... tell great stories, make it grow, hire people, and leave something behind that continues to generate jobs and entertain people beyond my lifetime." ■

FORTY SEASONS OF SUMMERS

Summer Dinner Theatre Celebrates 40 Years



2017 Performances

Into the Woods

June 23, 24, 25, 30; July 1, 2

Seven Brides for Seven Brothers

July 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30

Reunion Event

June 2

Join Alyson Palmer and the
band BETTY at 8 p.m.

Cultural Arts Center

Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus

No story about the College's Summer Dinner Theatre would be complete without a chat with Dr. Gerry Muller, who was one of the project's founding faculty.

"In 1967," says Muller, "the chair of the Music Department wanted to produce an opera. The opera, *Die Fledermaus*, was produced in the new Fine Arts Arena. It was a success and by 1968 we were producing musicals and a strong summer theater project that included both opera and musical theater."

In 1976, Muller's opera, *Joshua*, was produced in the spring. With its success, an additional production of the opera was performed as a summer work in DC's Lisner Auditorium, but failed to yield the same success. The next fall (1977), the student theater got permission to produce *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* in the cafeteria as dinner theatre.

"Dinner theatres were popping up all over," says Muller, "and it was becoming a very popular form for the musical theatre."

Charlie Brown was a success, and everyone involved suggested the department make the summer theater project as a dinner theater. *The Fantasticks* and *Li'l Abner* were chosen as the two productions.

"Student activities and cafeteria staff got involved, and the rest, as they say, is history," says Muller.

Since 1977, Montgomery College students have been bringing classic

Broadway musicals to life. An annual event, the Summer Dinner Theatre (SDT) features aspiring performers, artists, and theatre technicians from the College's music and theatre departments, along with members of the community. As part of the SDT company, students work with professional directors, choreographers, music directors, and designers to create two productions. Students also serve as waitstaff at each performance, while theatregoers enjoy a buffet dinner before the show.

The Summer Dinner Theatre program began as a Montgomery College internship program for students interested in working in the musical theatre industry. Intern students could specialize in performance or stage production while being mentored by professional staff. They could master classes in improv, makeup and wig design, choreography, auditioning, stage management, and business aspects of theatre production, taught by professionals from Washington, DC and New York.

SDT interns have gone on to work for Arena Stage, Cirque du Soleil, Washington Savoyards, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, American Dance Institute, Maryland Opera Society, Atlas Performing Arts Center, and The Capital Fringe Festival.

Each year, auditions for Summer Dinner Theatre cast—singers, actors, dancers—and interviews for technicians begin in early May. After callbacks, a cast list is assembled, and rehearsals begin. Rehearsals lead right up to show openings in June and July, respectively.



A typical summer will involve 70 actors, 15 technicians, and 12 to 14 College interns.

Throughout its 40 seasons ... The 1978 *Godspell* season featured Alyson Palmer '80 of the pop rock band BETTY and Grammy nominated singer/songwriter Tori Amos '83. Members of the SDT company have earned accolades for outstanding work. Brad Nacht starred on Broadway in *Billy Elliot* and *The Addams Family*. Several have received Helen Hayes Awards, including Brad Oscar '81, Priscilla Cuellar '04 (2013), sound designer Matt Nielsen '95 (2007, 2009, 2013), and Lawrence Muncey '86, associate artistic director at Toby's Dinner Theatre. ■



PHOTOS COURTESY SUMMER DINNER THEATRE



Summer Dinner Theatre Since 1977

- 1977 The Fantasticks & Li'l Abner
- 1978 Godspell & South Pacific
- 1979 Paint Your Wagon & Little Mary Sunshine
- 1980 Man of La Mancha & Carousel
- 1981 The Unsinkable Molly Brown & Camelot
- 1982 Mame & Guys and Dolls
- 1983 Oliver! & Kiss Me, Kate
- 1984 Gypsy & The Music Man
- 1985 Damn Yankees & Pippin
- 1986 The Fantasticks & Hello, Dolly!
- 1987 South Pacific & Bye Bye Birdie
- 1988 Sweet Charity & The Pajama Game
- 1989 Annie & Annie Get Your Gun
- 1990 Fiddler on the Roof & 42nd Street
- 1991 Brigadoon & The Boys From Syracuse
- 1992 Carousel & Anything Goes
- 1993 The Music Man & Kismet
- 1994 Meet Me in St. Louis & Bells Are Ringing
- 1995 Theatre Arts Renovation (no shows)
- 1996 Man of La Mancha & Oklahoma!
- 1997 The Sound of Music & West Side Story
- 1998 Camelot & The Wiz
- 1999 Guys and Dolls & Bye Bye Birdie
- 2000 Once Upon a Mattress & Crazy For You
- 2001 The Pirates of Penzance & 42nd Street
- 2002 South Pacific & On The Town
- 2003 Me and My Girl & Hello, Dolly!
- 2004 Anything Goes & Kiss Me, Kate
- 2005 The Music Man & Annie Get Your Gun
- 2006 Damn Yankees & Thoroughly Modern Millie
- 2007 Dames at Sea & Ragtime
- 2008 Evita & Disney's Beauty and the Beast
- 2009 Cabaret & All Shook Up
- 2010 Brigadoon & Crazy For You
- 2011 Aida & Meet Me in St. Louis
- 2012 Hairspray & Fiddler on the Roof
- 2013 The Pajama Game & The Wiz
- 2014 Seussical the Musical & Les Miserables
- 2015 A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum & Legally Blonde
- 2016 Catch Me If You Can & Side Show

GLORY DAYS

By Fritzi Bodenheimer



In celebration of Montgomery College's 70th anniversary, the Alumni Office and the Athletic Department welcomed home more than 40 former student-athletes from six different teams in February. Alumni from men's and women's basketball, football, tennis, women's soccer, and track and field enjoyed a catered reception and an introduction to the fans between the women's and men's basketball games.

The group included athletes from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and more recent players from the 1990s and 2000s. Several members of the 2011 National Championship women's soccer team and their coach, Kelly Wakeman, were recognized in celebration of the five-year anniversary of their championship season. Several attendees agreed to help reinvigorate the dormant "MC Club," the alumni letter winners' society.

Among the former athletes introduced was Dr. Peter Hartsock '66. In the 1960s, Hartsock, now age 70, was a member of MC's first track team (he has not stopped running since).

"I remember good people at the College, especially on the team," says Hartsock. "When you are intensely involved with people on a daily basis, you get a good feeling working out together and being together hours and hours every day."

Even after many decades away, Hartsock remains enthusiastic about the value of a Montgomery College education. "MC is a good place and you won't end up in debt for all eternity; you get a good education and go on from there. The College gives you a stepping stone and you move on," he says. Hartsock did

just that, earning a PhD and spending much of his career as an AIDS researcher.

Socrates Koutsoutis '56 attended the College between 1954 and 1956 and played on the football team as well as an intramural boxing team. He says it was a thrill to play in the College's first bowl game—against North Carolina's Chowan College—which MC won 12–0 in November of 1954. Koutsoutis and his teammates were inducted into the College's Athletic Hall of Fame last year.

And like Dr. Hartsock, Koutsoutis says the College provided him a much-needed education boost. "I was a bad student in high school and did as little as possible to get through. At MC, the attention from instructors and small classes gave me the foundation to move forward in my education." Today, he generously helps the students who followed in his footsteps with the Socrates and Anne Koutsoutis Statue of Liberty Endowed Scholarship for first-year students.

Coach Wakeman's satisfaction with her time at MC comes from seeing her former student athletes succeed.

"It's been great to see how lives grow; girls that have gotten married, have finished degrees, have jobs," she says. "I think one of the true measures of a coach comes later down the line when you see your former players as people, as members of the society," Wakeman says. "The fact that they are contributing so much and are such positive people is as meaningful to me as a national championship."

Greg Enloe, director of alumni relations and associate athletic director, calls the event a success—not only in terms of a full house,



Top: Tony Upson, Andrian Stewart, and Daniel Scott

Above: Women's basketball alumni (left to right): Shaniquewa Barnes, Porcha Davis, Melissa Weithman, LaKisha Nickens-Gaither, Angela Noel, and Tiffani Williams (back row)

Far left: Former women's soccer coach Kelly Wakeman waves to supporters at the spring reunion event.

but in terms of connections made. "If you can link the past to the present," he says, "you help ensure a strong future for these programs and the College."

And a strong link it is. With the alumni in the stands cheering on the current men's and women's basketball teams that afternoon, both emerged with decisive wins over Harford Community College. ■

FIGHTIN' KNIGHTS REMEMBERED

Nearly 200 former players, coaches, and team personnel from the 1960s through 2002—including Hall of Fame Coach Phil Martin—gathered at the College's inaugural Football Reunion last December. Special recognition was given to the 1986 Fightin' Knights, who lost in the Mid-American Bowl, the NJCAA national championships.



CLASS NOTES

1960s

EVERETT T. GREENSTREET, JR. '66

retired as CEO of Senate Masonry, a company he founded in 1979. Greenstreet and his family have been key members of the Washington, DC, masonry industry since 1920.

1970s



COURTESY AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF SOUTH CHINA

HARLEY SEYEDIN '78 is one of four 2017 winners of the Oslo Business for Peace Award, chosen by an independent committee of Nobel Prize winners in

Peace and Economics. The recipients were selected from 40 candidates nominated by the United Nations Global Compact, the United Nations Development Program, and the International Chamber of Commerce. Harley, known as Hamid in his student and Board of Trustees days, is president of the American Chamber of Commerce of South China.

JEREMY GRUENBERG '78 is retired.

1980s



COURTESY DEBBIE DWYER

DEBBIE DWYER '80 was sworn in as a Maryland Circuit Court judge in November. Previously, she was an assistant US attorney in Maryland for 14 years and served as the deputy chief of the United States Justice Department's Organized Crime and Gang Section Division.

1990s



DON REJONIS

DR. USA BUNNAG '90 a recipient of the Milton F. Clogg Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award, was recognized

by the American Dental Association (ADA) for her humanitarian work with her

medical nonprofit, Smiles on Wings. (ADA Humanitarian Award, 2017)

Dr. Bunnag founded Smiles on Wings in 2003 to give back to her native Thailand. Smiles on Wings strives to improve the health and well-being of underserved communities in Thailand by delivering dental care, humanitarian aid, and providing education and training for rural communities.

Smiles on Wings also focuses on enabling long-term health services by mentoring and educating young Karen refugee women from the villages Bunnag's clinical missions serve. Young women from Thai hill tribes on Smiles on Wings scholarships study nursing, early childhood education, and other vocations that will benefit the people in their villages. After completing their degree, these young women commit to returning to their families and villages to work. They assume leadership roles within their villages, serve as role models to other young women, and provide essential healthcare and education.

JOVAN ILIJIC '94 is a board member with the Canadian Serbian Business Association.

2000s

JERMAINE W. SEWELL '00 is a mortgage loan officer at PNC Mortgage.

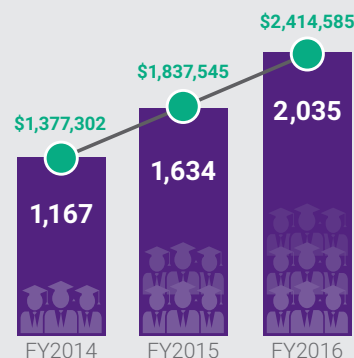
Cara
MC Scholarship
Recipient



Your Support of Scholarships and Emergency Aid Help Our Students During Their Greatest Time of Need

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For more information, contact Noah Saposnik, annual fund manager, at 240-567-4108 or noah.saposnik@montgomerycollege.edu.



Scholarships Awarded by the Montgomery College Foundation

DEBRA THANGARAJAH '02 is a management analyst at the National Institutes of Health.



COURTESY LISA KU

LISA KU '04 currently lives in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where she is working on marketing her four brands of products produced in East Africa. Her newest brand is The Paw Tribe, which offers handmade accessories for pets using traditional designs and techniques from around the world.

SONYA JACKSON-WALKER '09 is an assistant director and third through fifth grade lead teacher at Hope Christian Academy in Beltsville, Md.

CANDY ROSEL '09 is an office administrator at Lopez Design, LLC, a full-service fire protection company based in Silver Spring, Md.

2010s

BELEN MARQUINA BARRIENTOS '10 will graduate in May from American University with an MBA in international relations.

NEDYN GOMEZ '11 is currently attending the Francis King Carey School of Law at University of Maryland. She also volunteers with The Safe Center, an organization that provides legal and social services to survivors of human trafficking, and with Catholic Charities.

ELISA RIVERA '11 is an accountant at Snyder Cohn, PC, a CPA firm in Bethesda, Md.

PATRICIA JOHNSON '12 was an environmental educator at the Audubon Naturalist Society.

LAURANNE GORDON '14 is a doctoral student in physical therapy in the Bridge Program at the University of Findlay in Ohio.

CLAIRE RAMIREZ-DE-ARELLANO '15 is in Spain with the National Guard, where she has been studying at a language school.

FATIMA DOUMBOUYA '17 is a medical secretary at Columbia University Medical Center.

Send your updates and photos via email to alumni@montgomerycollege.edu or the online "Submit Your News" form at montgomerycollege.edu/insights.

IN MEMORIAM

JIM TENCH

February 11, 2017

He was a coaching assistant for the Knights football team in the 1990s.

WILLIAM P. POOLE '51

February 1, 2017

JOHN L. DUFIEF '48

December 31, 2016

CORNELIUS (DIXIE) MCFADDEN, BLISS '46

November 17, 2016

WILLARD BELLAIS

October 20, 2016

He was a professor in the Rockville Speech and Drama Department from 1970 to 1999.

JOHN RAMPERSAUD '01

October 4, 2016

BERNARD F. HIGGINS '90

April 21, 2016

ELIZABETH (BETH) PUDLEINER MEIER '02

February 3, 2016



SANJAY SUCHAK

EMILIE CROWN RN '79

February 6, 2017

Crown was the county fire and rescue service's child safety seat program manager and Safe Kids Montgomery County co-coordinator. She participated in thousands of car seat safety checks and was instrumental in the passage of Maryland's car

safety seat law. She was a 2010 recipient of the Milton F. Clogg Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award.



COURTESY SET DEPARTMENT

UCHECHUKWU ABANULO, PhD

November 25, 2016

Dr. Abanulo was a professor of engineering, physics, and numerical methods at Rockville. She taught Introduction to Engineering Design, Scientific and Engineering Computation, Digital Logic Design, and Physics III for Engineers. Her devo-

tion to student success energized the Science, Engineering, and Technology area, and she was instrumental in supporting outreach efforts on behalf of K-12 science and engineering partnerships. In addition to her STEM education for pre-college students, her research interests included speech processing and analysis for speaker recognition and speech enhancement. She leaves her behind husband, Dr. Jude Abanulo, three young children, and many colleagues and friends.

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ROCK OUT WITH BETTY

JUNE 2, 2017, 8 p.m.

**Cultural Arts Center
Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus**

**Join the Alumni Association in welcoming
BETTY back to Montgomery College.**

BETTY is fronted by Alyson Palmer and sisters Elizabeth and Amy Ziff. The band has been featured on national and international radio, TV, films, web projects, and live theater. Named Arts Envoys in 2012, BETTY has worked with the US State Department internationally in cultural diplomacy.

**Tickets are \$45, \$35 for MC alumni. Purchase online
at montgomerycollege.edu/cac.**

