

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

# INSIGHTS

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS | FALL 2017

## LATITUDE ADJUSTMENT

Alumna Has Healthy Outlook  
on Her New Life in America





Lori Thomas '99 (at left) and scholarships chair Suzanne Thompson '82 (at right) congratulate Kevin Ramirez, Maggie Routson, Andre Jackson, Alexander Hedley, Joseph Linkio, and Kristen Isaacs on receiving Association-managed scholarships at the Alumni Association's September board meeting.

We were thrilled to host the wrap-up concert of the College's 70th anniversary season, as Alyson Palmer '80 and Tony Salvatore '81 brought BETTY to MC. And by the time this issue arrives, we'll also have met new members for MC Day at Thurmont's Springfield Manor Winery and Distillery, a beautiful site owned by Amie '85 and John '88 St. Angelo—whose five children also attended MC.

We have more great times coming in the spring, so mark your calendars. On April 21, we'll celebrate our finest alumni and athletic achievements at the Alumni Awards on the Rockville Campus. Come to see how our fellow MCers have gone on to change the world. (A past awardee, Greg Wims '70, won new honors this fall from the Family Justice Center for his work with the Victims' Rights Foundation.) Also this spring, we'll host our seventh Dogfishing for MC Scholarships at Gaithersburg's Dogfish Head Alehouse, which generously donates 15 percent of their day's receipts to our scholarship fund.

All those events succeed because of efforts by many members, and the best way to connect with other MC alums is to

offer a little of your time to help make these programs better than ever. I hope you'll follow our Facebook page ([facebook.com/MCAumniAssociation](https://facebook.com/MCAumniAssociation)) for details, and visit us soon.

While we serve our Alumni Association members, we get the best rewards from seeing the students we help at MC today. Several of them joined us recently to explain what their Association scholarships mean to their education. It's a highlight of our year to welcome these future alumni into the MC family.

This year's scholarships come with a note of geeky pride. Every college has a team working to raise funds to help its students (ours is the Montgomery College Foundation), and each year they compare notes to see which college's alumni participated the most in voluntary support for education. For several years, that "VSE" report has ranked MC among the top ten community colleges for the percentage of alumni making contributions. That's a testament to the many alumni who know how important MC was for them—and is today for our newest students.

Then we looked closer at the data and found something remarkable. For three years, MC has been among the top three community colleges in total dollars donated by alumni, and this past year we were number one nationally. So, Knights, Falcons, Gryphons, and Raptors: Take a bow! You stepped up for hundreds of students whose educational goals depended on a little extra help from those of us who've been here. Now I urge you to keep us on top. Your gift to the Alumni Association counts in the total, so please remember us for year-end contributions.

Our new alumni logo debuts on this issue. Look for it on our communications and a special "MC ALUM" design on some exclusive Alumni Association items. Now, read on to learn about Nelly Mutlu '14's travel to and beyond MC's nursing program, David Matheny '16's experience with the solar eclipse, and the artistic journeys of Kenia Avendano-Garro '10 and Derrick Douglass '11.

**Lori A. Thomas '99**  
Alumni Association President

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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.

**Alumni Office** 9221 Corporate Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850 **Email** [alumni@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:alumni@montgomerycollege.edu) **Phone** 240-567-5378 **Online** [montgomerycollege.edu/alumni](http://montgomerycollege.edu/alumni) **Facebook** [facebook.com/MCAumniAssociation](https://facebook.com/MCAumniAssociation)



**Managing Editor**  
Diane Bosser

**Contributing Writers/Editors**  
Jill Fitzgerald  
John Libby '80  
David Matheny '16  
Amanda Palleschi

**Graphic Designers**  
Tracy Boyd  
Lisa Gorham  
Krista Hanson  
Jean Peterson Design  
Clint Wu

**Photographers**  
Brent Nicastro  
Pete Vidal '07

**Print Production Coordinator**  
Tom Kneeland

**Director of Alumni Relations  
and Associate Athletic Director**  
Greg Enloe

**Alumni Relations Manager**  
Colleen Dolak

**Alumni Services Manager**  
John Libby '80

**Alumni Aide**  
Mohammad Marashinia '18

**Senior Vice President  
for Advancement and  
Community Engagement**  
David Sears

**Vice President of Communications**  
Ray Gilmer

**Strategic Communications Director**  
Heather Milke

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Send questions,  
comments, and letters to  
Insights  
Office of Communications  
Montgomery College  
9221 Corporate Boulevard  
Rockville, MD 20850  
or [editor@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:editor@montgomerycollege.edu).

Send change of address to  
Montgomery College Alumni Office  
9221 Corporate Boulevard  
Rockville, MD 20850  
or [alumni@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:alumni@montgomerycollege.edu).

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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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## ABOUT THE COVER

MC photographer Pete Vidal focused on cover subject Nilufer Mutlu '14, during a work break from her shift as a nurse at Holy Cross Germantown Hospital. Mutlu was readying for her impending maternity leave, but made time to sit for portrait shots on a seasonally warm September morning. While this magazine was still in its process of gestation, she delivered a beautiful baby girl. Congratulations, Nilufer and Behrang!

# RAPTOR NOTES

## And the Award Goes to ...

The Carnegie Corporation of New York named MC President DeRionne P. Pollard a recipient of its Academic Leadership Award. Pollard is only the second community college recipient of this award. The honor consists of \$500,000 in support for each winner's academic initiatives.

Pollard has earmarked the Carnegie award funds for two landmark MC programs: the Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) academic coaching program and the Montgomery College Foundation's Innovation Fund. Both programs support student retention and completion. ACES, a partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools and the Universities at Shady Grove, provides mentoring and other services for low-income, first generation students. The Innovation Fund supports cutting-edge projects, such as the Collegewide Calculator Loan Program and Boys to Men, a special mentoring program.

"I am deeply honored to have been selected for this extraordinary award from the Carnegie Corporation," Pollard says. "Their tradition of investing in higher education is one that benefits not just current students but wider communities, and our democracy as a whole."

Pollard was among presidents from Northeastern University, Georgia State University, Georgetown University, Stevens Institute of Technology, Harvey Mudd College, and Case Western Reserve University who received the award.

The Carnegie award, established in 2005, recognizes educators who demonstrate vision and an outstanding commitment to

excellence in undergraduate education, the liberal arts, equal opportunity, the development of major interdisciplinary programs, international engagement, and the promotion of strong ties between their institutions and their local communities.

"Andrew Carnegie believed in the importance of strong, dedicated, and effective higher education leaders. As custodians of Mr. Carnegie's legacy, it is our honor to salute a new class of exemplary leaders, who join with another 20 past award recipients in representing some of the best of the American academy," says Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

"I am deeply honored to have been selected for this extraordinary award from the Carnegie Corporation. Their tradition of investing in higher education is one that benefits not just current students but wider communities, and our democracy as a whole."

**DR. DERIONNE P. POLLARD,  
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE PRESIDENT**



Dr. Pollard (front row, center) celebrates with students.

PETE VIDAL



# New Center for Justice Supports Student Activism

PETE VIDAL



Professor Vincent Intondi and Patty Pablo '18 visit the new Center for Justice.

When Patty Pablo '18 went to bed on August 13—after the nation spent the weekend watching white supremacists trudge through Charlottesville bearing torches and messages of bigotry and hate—only four people had signed up to join the protest event she advertised on Facebook. She assumed only a handful of people would show up the next day. They would make some signs, raise their voices to oppose white supremacy, and go home. Instead, Pablo awoke to more than 2,000 people, many who hailed from far beyond the Montgomery College community, expressing interest in her event. In the end, more than 500 people turned out on August 14 to march in Washington, from the White House to Trump Hotel to Judiciary Square.

"I didn't expect any of it," says Pablo, 20, of the crowd joining her at Lafayette Square that Monday afternoon. "We're not a real organization. We're just these two kids who wanted to do something."

Pablo and a friend, Olivia Mouton '19, got the idea to start the protest from Dr. Vincent Intondi, associate professor of history. Distraught after watching the events in Charlottesville, they reached out to Intondi for guidance. They were waiting for him to tell them how to get involved in something.

"Why are you waiting?" Intondi asked them. "Go out and organize your own event."

Pablo, a theatre major from the Philippines who attended high school in Montgomery County, had been active on social media, interested in social justice organizing, and plugged in to the larger Takoma Park community.

"I always wanted to do something this big," she says, "but I didn't think I would do it this young."

She will have ample space and support at the College to continue her activist efforts: the nascent Institute for Race, Justice, and Community Engagement on the Takoma

"I had so many students after the election shaking—and in tears. Students who were so scared of what was to come. I wanted a space where they could vent it out, talk amongst each other, and we could be together."

**DR. VINCENT INTONDI,**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

Park/Silver Spring Campus. The center opens officially in February, realizing a dream of a dedicated place devoted to social justice issues and support for students from under-represented and marginalized groups that Intondi has nurtured since he arrived on campus in 2013. "Faculty and administrators had always been supportive of the idea," he says, "but nobody knew exactly what this was."

The 2016 election—and the ensuing sharp divide in the country—hardened Intondi's resolve.

"I had so many students after the election shaking—and in tears. Students who were so scared of what was to come," says Intondi. "I wanted a space where they could vent it out, talk amongst each other, and we could be together."

Intondi soon got the green light for the center, consisting of three rooms on campus: one for research, academic advising, and meeting; one for speakers and movies; and one for a food and clothing pantry. Computers arrived in September—and he put his own books on the shelves. A whiteboard listing shows community organizations students can get involved with, news organizations to follow, book readings, protests, and hearings throughout the Washington, DC, area. He has big plans for its future, including partnerships with other universities and local groups, a guest speaker series, and a quote wall in the hallway.

"I've been so excited about it," Pablo says of the center. "I want to do more going forward."

—Amanda Palleschi

# Food for Thought

## Students Struggle with Basic Needs

A Mobile Market program now brings fresh food to campus for students and members of the community experiencing food insecurity. Food insecurity, or reduced quality of diet and access to nutrition, can sometimes be overlooked at the college level, but it plays an important role in academic performance. The Mobile Markets, provided in partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank, will visit each campus monthly throughout the academic year.

During the first two Mobile Markets this fall, more than 7,000 pounds of fresh produce were distributed at no cost to students and members of the community. More than 400 participants/households received the produce, equating to more than 1,600 individuals, including nearly 450 children, 60 veterans, and approximately 150 seniors. Additionally, participants received prescription savings pharmacy cards.

The market events supplement the College's well-established food pantries, which offer dry goods, canned and jarred food, ready-to-eat snacks, and personal hygiene and cleaning products at all three campuses. The food pantries are supported by the Montgomery College Foundation, private donors, and the Macklin Business Institute's Enactus students. Faculty and staff routinely donate, individually, through periodic food drives.

A study issued in August by the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution estimated that 13 percent of students at community colleges experienced food insecurity in 2015. Actual numbers may be higher, but they are difficult to ascertain because the estimates are based on households—which does not count students living elsewhere (such as those who are homeless or living in temporary situations).

In a separate article, "Hungry and Homeless in College," coauthors Sara



Goldrick-Rab, professor of higher education policy and sociology at Temple University, and Professor Katharine M. Broton of the University of Iowa suggest the real number is much higher: "In our work [sampling college students from 2015 nationally], we estimate that about half of community college students have 'low' or 'very low' food security." As founder of the Wisconsin HOPE Lab, Goldrick-Rab has led the two largest national studies on the subjects of food and housing insecurity in higher education.

Even at MC, food insecurity data has been tricky to estimate. Sarah Ducey, college-wide chair for Integrative Studies and professor of nutrition and food, worked with the College's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness to survey students in select courses for the last two years to discover need.

"There is food insecurity in our classrooms," says Ducey, "despite what everybody thinks about Montgomery County being affluent."

Ducey says the county's changing demographics account for some of the increased student requests for financial aid and support services. But, she admits, the need can vary.

"Our students' situations change tremendously during their time here," Ducey says. "Their living arrangements are sometimes tenuous, and many have the added

responsibilities of family and work. When they have a need, we want to help."

Through its Student Health and Wellness Center for Success, the College has committed to addressing various insecurities—food, homelessness, mental health wellness, and others—affecting learning conditions. Carmen Poston-Farmer and Dr. Benita Rashaw coordinate the Mobile Markets as part of Fuel for Success: Nourishing the Mind, Body, and Spirit Initiative, a program supported by the College's Student Affairs Office.



**The Mobile Markets** operate with support from student, faculty/staff, and community volunteers. Information on the initiative is available at [montgomerycollege.edu/fuelforsuccess](http://montgomerycollege.edu/fuelforsuccess).





## College Partners with County and Nonprofits To Host First Conference for Single Parents

Erica Brizuela has a two-year-old son, works as a waitress, and takes classes at Montgomery College. Single parents like Brizuela, 23, rarely have time to get together with other single parents, or attend workshops, no matter how helpful they promise to be. When she heard about the Single Parent Conference at the College's Rockville Campus, with child care provided, Brizuela decided to attend. She is glad she did.

"I attended five workshops, and they were all very informative," Brizuela says. "The resume writing workshop was my favorite. I learned just how much has changed since high school."

Odessa Davis also attended. She has an eight-year-old son, attends MC part time, and works as a teacher's assistant at Churchill High School. Before coming to MC, Davis, now 29, started a group for single parents, parents, and adults called Back on Track, which she is bringing to MC this fall as a student-run organization.

Davis attended two workshops: Dating as a Single Person and Housing—Landlord and Tenant Rights, Finding Affordable

Housing. "I learned that it's okay to wait to introduce new adults in my life to my child," Davis says. "And it was great to meet other parents who work, go to school, and have similar issues."

The August event provided a rare opportunity for single parents like Brizuela and Davis to get information tailored to their educational, career, and personal goals. Keynote speaker Nicole Lewis spoke about her own experiences as a teen parent, including finishing college after becoming a mom. She is the founder of Generation Hope, an organization promoting success for young and/or single parents up to age 23.

The conference's workshops focused on practical matters: building and managing credit, paying for college, home and vehicle maintenance, and living in multigenerational households. A significant target group was teen parents.

"To my knowledge this is the first time an event like this has been held in Montgomery County," says Beverly Coleman, event organizer and director of the College's Educational Opportunity Center. She opened the all-day



**Keynote speaker Nicole Lewis (left), founder, Generation Hope, shared her experiences as a teen parent at the Single Parent Conference.**

event with some startling statistics: "In 2014, more than 60 percent of families living in poverty in Montgomery County were single, female-headed households," she told participants. "In 55 percent of those households, the female head had only a high school diploma or less."

Brizuela says, "I am planning to break those statistics. Having events like this is just one way that MC is helping people like me. Faculty and staff here know you are here to transform your life. They know students are the future leaders, and I don't think they get enough credit for what they do to help us get to our life goals."

The conference was free and open to the public. MC staff teamed with community partners, including the Montgomery County Health and Human Services Department, Montgomery County Public Schools Head Start, the City of Gaithersburg, the Commission for Women, Family Services, Inc. (Gaithersburg), and several nonprofit organizations and county agencies that serve single parents. Event co-sponsors included United Bank, the Bank of Gaithersburg, and Subway.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DUSTIN GATES

# Q+A

*Insights* talks with Martha Schoonmaker, executive director, Pinkney Innovation Complex for Science and Technology at Montgomery College (PIC MC).

**Q: PIC MC was named for Dr. Hercules Pinkney, who was vice president and provost at the Germantown Campus when the integrated campus idea was conceived. What aspects of the 40-acre park have already been developed?**

**A:** PIC MC was envisioned 20 years ago. While Dr. Pinkney was here, the whole county was seeing exciting business development, especially in the biotechnology and life sciences area. In 2008, the county-owned life sciences/technology incubator, the Germantown Innovation Center, moved onto the campus. In 2014, we successfully located Holy Cross Germantown Hospital, a 93-bed hospital employing about 400 healthcare professionals and related jobs—and MC cut the ribbon on the Bioscience Education Center. In 2015, NextCore Group opened a medical office building with 50-plus doctors, nurses, and medical personnel.

**Q: Why would life science companies relocate to the Germantown Campus?**

**A:** First off, we are reaching out to companies in biotechnology, cybersecurity, and technology. The park's location inside the College's 229-acre campus, alongside the I-270 Technology Corridor and just up the road from Washington, DC, makes it unique. But an important distinction is the access to MC's resources—both people and facilities. Corporate residents have opportunities to interact with faculty and students (the future workforce) and potential opportunities to influence curriculum to meet industry needs, which ensures that MC students acquire relevant skills and experiences in preparation for the workforce.

**Q: Can you explain the business incubator and how it fits into the larger picture?**

**A:** This is the research component of our integrated academic, business, and research campus. The Germantown Innovation Center houses 23 start-up companies with 106 employees. It has space for biotech, nanotech, healthcare, and IT business development, including a cyber lab, training space, wet lab space, and a mock bio meeting suite. The incubator with

start-up life sciences companies provides our students the opportunity to see and/or possibly participate in cutting-edge research, more fully preparing them to walk into the type of work environment they will have ahead of them. Just think about it—we have a company here doing Ebola vaccine research. Another is in personalized medicine. All within a three-minute walk from the Bioscience Education building.

**Q: Are there plans to add more buildings?**

**A:** Yes. Currently we are seeking a development partner to add another building with wet laboratories and class A offices to accommodate more companies on campus. Complete realization of the vision will take a number of years, as with any project of this nature. We want to attract smart people by defining and marketing the area as a place where highly-skilled people, including young professionals and entrepreneurs, want to live, work, learn, prosper, and enjoy a high quality of life. We are also working on new development and financing strategies for private and mixed-use elements, and on fully engaging county and state authorities and sponsors.

**Q: PIC MC recently received an Excellence in Economic Development award from the International Economic Development Council. What can you tell us about that?**

**A:** We received a Bronze award for the promotional video produced by our very own MCTV. The video is a three-minute overview of PIC MC that showcases how and why we are developing the Germantown Campus into the center of a larger Germantown Innovation District—a hub of education, business, and entrepreneurship. We show it at presentations and as part of our Maryland Pavilion display at the BIO International Conference each year, where we have exposure to thousands of life sciences companies in the US and around the globe.



## More About Martha Schoonmaker

Schoonmaker began as executive director of PIC MC in 2014. She has a distinguished career in business development, including leading economic initiatives for Prince William County (Virginia) as business development manager in the Department of Economic Development, and then as director of business development and investment.

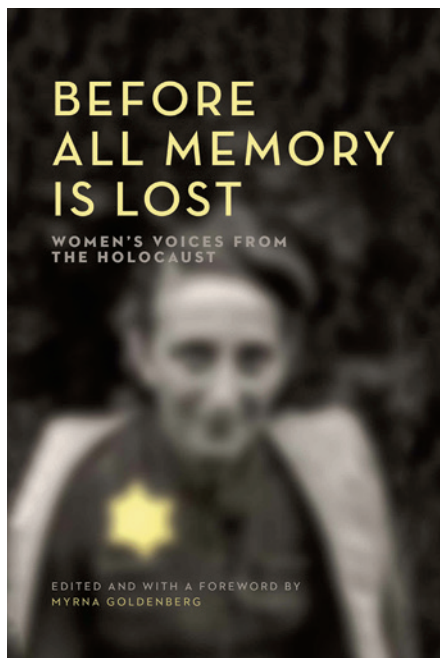


# Retired Professor's Holocaust Memoirs Book Wins Award

Professor Emerita Myrna Goldenberg's latest book, *Before All Memory Is Lost*, received the 2017 Canadian Jewish Literary Award in Holocaust literature. One juror called the book "remarkable."

"It was a kind of joy to shine a spotlight on the survivors—some are still living—and to share the book with survivors' families," says Goldenberg.

*Before All Memory Is Lost* is a series of memoirs by women Holocaust survivors who moved to Canada after World War II. The writings were translated from their original Russian, Polish, Yiddish, and "every other Slavic language you can think of," says Goldenberg. They were preserved by the Azrieli Foundation, a Canadian philanthropic organization founded by David Azrieli, a Holocaust survivor who emigrated to Canada.



"Fact-checking was rigorous," says Goldenberg, who is a Holocaust scholar and subject matter expert on American Jewish women's literature and history, gender and hunger during the Holocaust, and education. "Names have changed since 1943, when these were written, including names of places and prisons, especially in Russia, where many of the women were held. Records there were closed until the Iron Curtain came down."

Goldenberg selected entries for the book—memoirs and poetry—from more than 40 original manuscripts. Each entry is less than 50 pages. The writing, she says, is vivid. Although they contain details of starvation, abuse, and rape, there are positive notes, too.

"It was so important to maintain the original writing," says Goldenberg about the editing process, "so readers would feel like they are secondary witnesses to what happened."

Survivors' relatives, who were part of Goldenberg's information vetting process, have cheered the book for honoring their family members. Nine of the surviving writers attended the book-launch events in Toronto and Montreal last March, where Goldenberg was key speaker.

Goldenberg has taught higher education courses on the Holocaust since 1983, a time when relatively few US scholars were invested in Holocaust research and teaching.

"The Holocaust is a subject that keeps going and going," says Goldenberg. "In light of recent events where neo-Nazis held a torch-light parade and wore swastikas, we need to understand that people still have reason to fear and to get angry. It has to be taught."



DON REJONIS

## More About Dr. Myrna Goldenberg

During her 32 years at the College, she was a founding faculty member of the women's studies program and was the first director of the Paul Peck Humanities Institute. She has edited numerous books and penned more than 40 articles. Notable works include: *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis and the Holocaust* (co-edited), and *Different Horrors, Same Hell: Gender and the Holocaust* (co-edited).

# CS Students Help Keep County Networks Safe, Earn Scholarships



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETE VIDAL

Though many might think of computer science as the kind of profession where work is left at work, Bryan Solis '17 disagrees. His cybersecurity internship in Montgomery County's Information Security Department is over, but he has been busy sealing his home against a cyber attack.

"Everything I learned, I'm doing it on my own house," he says.

Solis, 20, is one of the three recipients of the MC CyberCorps Scholarship for Service award. The National Science Foundation expanded program funding for the award to two Maryland community colleges this year; MC joined Prince George's Community College in granting the award to talented computer science students.

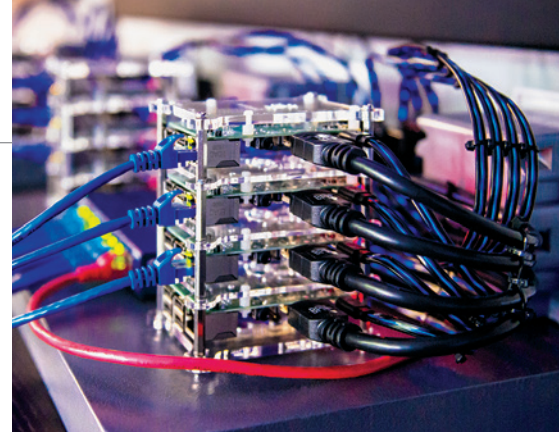
The scholarship includes an internship in Montgomery County's Information Security Department (for college credit), a summer research cybersecurity project at University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), and a full ride to transfer to UMBC to complete their computer science studies. After college, scholars must spend a year working

"I met with a lot of people in the field, so when they see me, they're going to see this is the guy who was working with Montgomery County. All my coworkers from the internship already know me, and they know what I'm capable of."

## EDWIN VALDEZ '17

in cybersecurity at a local, state, tribal, county, or federal government entity.

MC received more than \$120,000 from the National Science Foundation for fiscal year 2017, and plans to continue building its connection to the county through the project. The program was extended to the College for this school year, and cybersecurity program manager Joe Roundy says he hopes to receive another five years of funding for the program.



All three of this year's scholars—Lauren Mundy '17, Edwin Valdez '17, and Solis—said the internship provided hands-on experience and training in cybersecurity they didn't get in the classroom. While all three studied computer science at Montgomery College, the county internship provided guidance in learning how to secure an operating system and how to perform a counter cyber attack, and also provided them experience with new technical tools used in the field.

"Learning how to set up and use a [Intrusion Detection System] system is invaluable," Mundy says. "That's something that not a lot of people do until they actually get on the job. And now we actually have experience doing it before we even got out of college."

Mundy, 21, appreciated that her supervisors at the county guided and taught the scholars by throwing them into the work directly: "We learned a lot more that way."

Valdez, 24, who grew up in El Salvador and moved to Montgomery County two years ago, appreciated gaining overall exposure to the growing, lucrative field of cybersecurity—including making professional contacts.

"I met with a lot of people in the field, so when they see me, they're going to see this is the guy who was working with Montgomery County," he says. "All my coworkers from the internship already know me, and they know what I'm capable of."

Montgomery County Enterprise Information Security Official Keith Young managed the team who worked with the scholars. He says the students were an asset to the county.

"It was a win for the students in that they got a tremendous amount of learning. It was a win for Montgomery College because they could say they put people through this program and they got real life experience, and it was a win for us because we utilized their talents," he says.

—Amanda Palleschi



## Groundbreaking: Rockville Student Services Center



**Montgomery College broke ground in June on a 130,000-square-foot Student Services Center, which will provide a centralized location for all student services at the Rockville Campus.**

"I am pleased that the Student Services Center is now shovel-ready," said Montgomery County Executive Isiah (Ike) Leggett at the ceremony. "This fantastic building will give students an easier and supportive launch into their college career."

The building will be configured to provide easy access to the most frequently visited student service functions: admissions, counseling, registration, financial aid, assessment, disability support services, veterans' services, the career transfer center, and student life, among others. The lobby will provide seating and gathering space for the expanded MBI Café—a student-run coffee service—as well as receptions and presentations.

The building will also house the Office of Student Affairs' deans, the School of Education, instructional space (open lab, plus five class labs), and campus offices for the vice president and provost, Safety and Security, and Facilities.

The Student Services Center was funded with support from the state and the county. It was designed by Cho Benn Holback + Associates, a Quinn Evans Company. The general contractor for the project is Grunley Construction Company, Inc.

## Sign, Sign, Everywhere a Sign

"MC is a welcoming institution, and the College's refreshed entrances at the Rockville and Germantown campuses showcase our hospitality even more," says Emily Schmidt, marketing director. The new gateway signs feature brushed-silver lettering mounted on stone.

Digital signage was incorporated into the entrance areas to improve communications with the community. Students and visitors to campus now receive information about events and opportunities upon arrival. The signs are also visible to drivers passing by Observation Drive (at Germantown), and North Campus Drive and Mannakee Street (at Rockville).

The signs are part of our comprehensive marketing and communication strategy," Schmidt says. "We now have the opportunity to easily communicate with the MC community and the general public at the same time. The signs give us a new outlet to publicize the outstanding opportunities at MC, whether it be a new degree program, a conference on campus, or any other pertinent MC news and events."

"The nice thing about the new digital gateway signs," says Staffan Sandberg, digital media manager, MCTV communications, "is the messaging can be created, posted, and scheduled from our centralized Communications Office. It is even tied to the Emergency Communication System, which can instantly display messages in the event of a campus emergency or weather closure."



## MC on a Mission to ... Spark Conversation

Third Annual Bella Mischinsky Memorial Lecture: The Holocaust and the Danger of Not Learning from History

Frank Islam Athenaeum  
Symposia Fall 2017  
Speakers Series



**Emanuel (Manny) Mandel**  
**Holocaust Survivor**  
Tuesday, December 5 @ Noon  
Germantown Campus  
Bioscience Education Center (BE) 151

Mandel will discuss his experiences in Hungary during World War II and the German occupation.

This is the final event for the fall series, which featured Paul Taylor, author of *The Next America*; Marita Golden, author of *The Wide Circumference of Love*; and Ali Noorani, author of *There Goes the Neighborhood*. Look for spring events and information at [montgomerycollege.edu/athenaeum](http://montgomerycollege.edu/athenaeum).

This event is free and open to the public.

## Presidential Dialogues

2017–2018 Series: Defining America—Dialogues Across Difference

Join President Pollard for a series of conversations focused on American identity. All events are free and open to the public. For information, call 240-567-5267 or visit [montgomerycollege.edu/dialogues](http://montgomerycollege.edu/dialogues).

**Seth Goldman, CEO and cofounder, Honest Tea**

November 28 @ 7 p.m.

Rockville Campus, Science West Building, Room 301,  
51 Mannakee Street, Rockville, MD. Free parking.

Goldman will speak to his company's commitment to giving back to communities from which it sources products, as he explores what it means to be a businessman in a global economy.



**Robert Green, director, Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation**

February 20, 2018 @ 7 p.m.

Rockville Campus, Theatre Arts Arena, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville, MD. Free parking.

Green will share his perspectives on correctional management and the special programs that serve incarcerated and returning citizens.

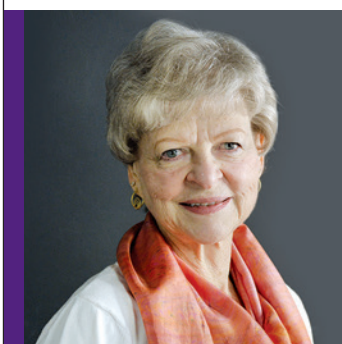
**Joshua Johnson, host of WAMU's "1A" Program**

March 8, 2018 @ 7 p.m.

Rockville Campus, Theatre Arts Arena, 51 Mannakee Street, Rockville, MD. Free parking.

Johnson hosts a daily national conversation tackling race, politics, history, and foreign policy. He will discuss the role of the media in American democracy.

## What will your legacy be?



"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

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## ABOUT THE MACKLIN BUSINESS INSTITUTE (MBI)

MBI is a sophomore-level honors business program that has grown to incorporate an additional two-year program for students applying to Montgomery College as freshmen. MBI was established in 1999 through a major gift to MC by the late Gordon and Marilyn Macklin '77. Gordon Macklin, former president of the National Association of Securities Dealers (NASD) helped create the Nasdaq stock exchange in 1971. The Macklins envisioned the institute as a place where the values of education, business, and civic responsibility would come together in a creative way to facilitate future educational and career successes.

## Grand Reopening of Student-Run Café

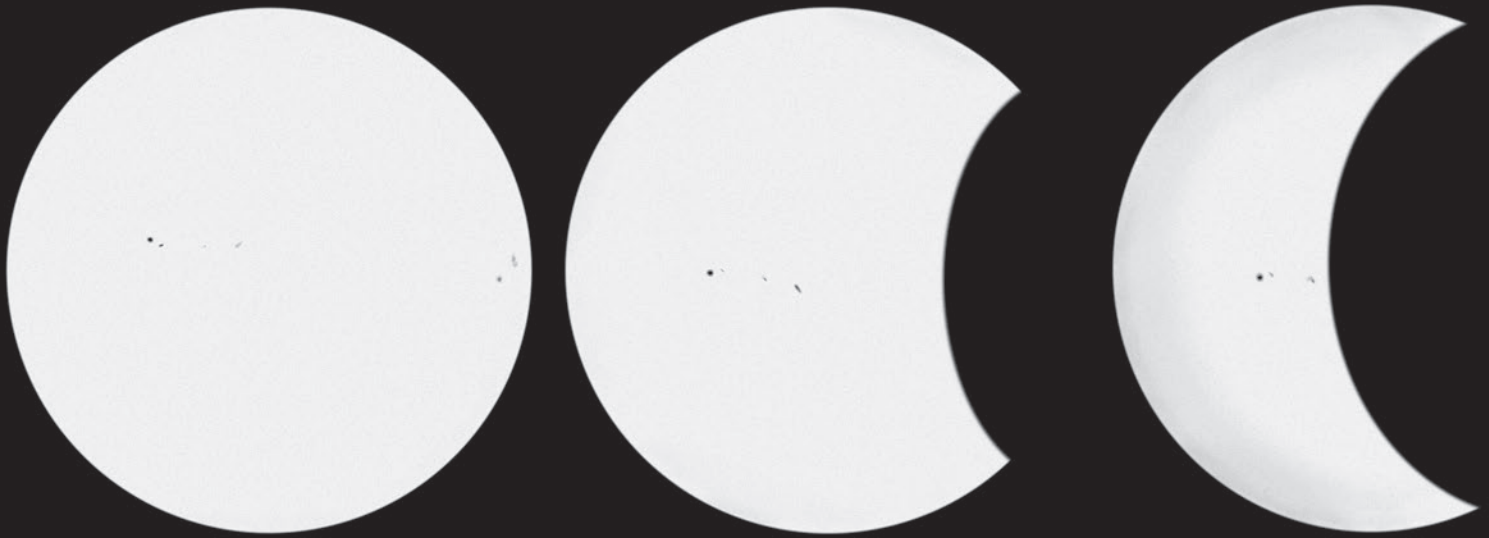
The MBI Café, a student-run coffee shop on the Rockville Campus, celebrated its grand reopening in a new and bigger space across from the campus cafeteria in June. The café is a We Proudly Serve Starbucks operation. MBI students run the café, including front line and managerial operations.

The café opened in 2003, when 17 students crafted a business plan, assisted by then-director Jeffrey Schwartz and several MBI board members. As part of their duties, Macklin students from each successive year transition into various management roles. They prepare accounting and financial reports, plan and execute marketing campaigns, hire and schedule counter staff, and maintain efficiencies and inventories. Profits from the café created and now accrue to transfer scholarships that benefit MBI students.



### NEW LOCATION:

MBI Café Rockville Campus, Campus Center Building (first floor)



Amateur  
Astronomer  
Describes an  
Experience

# eclipsing All Others



*MC professors encourage students to be lifelong learners and to reach for the stars when setting goals. David Matheny '16 took that advice to heart when he organized a group of students from Roanoke College, along with Carlos Iraheta '17 and Daniel Matheny '18, to participate in events for the recent solar eclipse.*

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DAVID MATHENY '16**

*Matheny's photography assistants for the day were fellow astronomy enthusiasts: Carlos Iraheta '17 (right) and Daniel Matheny '18 (left).*





Progression of shots taken approximately 10 minutes apart. All images are real to life, with the only editing being an increase in definition and darkness of the sunspots by two F-stops and the elimination of a small lens flare for the image of totality.

On

August 21, 2017, I traveled to the Great Smoky Mountain National Park in Cherokee, North Carolina, along with a Roanoke College physics professor and a group of like-minded amateur astronomers to observe the eclipse. Because the park's location was within the eclipse path of totality, thousands of visitors came to view the moon covering the entire face of the sun, a rare natural phenomenon. We spent the day as physics ambassadors, assisting park personnel in setting up viewing telescopes, distributing viewing glasses and handmade pin-hole viewers, answering questions, and leading visitors in safe observation of the eclipse.

Viewing the sun's corona was incredible, but some of the other celestial bodies visible during totality were nearly as amazing. Because the eclipse made the surrounding sky so dark, several planets, often difficult to see, almost jumped into appearance—in order of brightness, Venus, Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury. Also, easily visible was the brightest star in the constellation, Leo the Lion, *Regulus*. Situated very close to the eclipsed sun, we couldn't miss the blueish beauty of the hottest and brightest of at least four stars that are seemingly one when observed by the naked eye. *Sirius*, the sky's brightest star, along with two more bright stars—yellow *Arcturus* and *Capella*—also came nicely into view.

Some stunningly beautiful features of the sun provided a real “wow” factor and definitely pleased the crowd. In fact, we heard gasps and cheering upon totality. The spectacular Baily's Beads, thin slivers of sunlight that dance in and out of the lunar mountains and valleys along the edge of the sun—seemingly shooting off the sun's surface—provided the most spectacular astronomical fireworks display. The sun's chromosphere, the thin band of deep, beautiful red that hugs the solar disk, was also a thrill to see. The long, fine, silver prominences seemed to explode into the night sky. Through the telescopes, we also saw coronal mass ejections, superheated and charged matter from the sun's surface, which are many times larger than the entire Earth.

It was incredibly exciting to call the “glasses off—safe to view” (when totality occurred), which was also the signal for people to remove the protective film from cameras and telescopes. In our location, totality lasted only one minute and 48 seconds, and I needed every second to capture the images. I used two Nikon DSLRs: one camera mounted on a Celestron five-inch telescope, and another to shoot through a 300mm lens. My brother, Daniel, was my main camera assistant, so he made sure I had everything I needed and kept me posted on timing so I knew the sequence of the

eclipse. The whole event lasted about four hours, so I needed to have someone time shots for me while I was doing the technical side of capturing the images. Timing was critical during totality when I was totally absorbed and needed to know when a certain phenomenon was happening, like the Baily's Beads and the diamond ring at the beginning and end of totality. My brother also kept the telescope in alignment throughout the partial phases of the eclipse. Although I was the one with my finger on the camera's shutter, my brother should also get credit for the photos. I couldn't have done it without his support.

To capture the crowd's reactions, I also mounted two GoPros on fences and the ground. A pair of rotating egg timers gave the motion effect.

Also notable was the 12.6 degree (F) drop in temperature during the eclipse, as well as dancing shadow bands that we saw moments before and after totality. It was amazing to be among people who all shared the thrill of the experience, and I was “over the moon” to fulfill my dream of capturing this incredible event in photographs. I hope that by helping guests safely view the event, it will pique a curiosity and desire to continue to learn and observe science in action. I hope to see you—and report for *Insights*—at the next total solar eclipse in 2024. ■

# Radical DepARTure

## Pen & Ink Artist Leaves Programming Behind

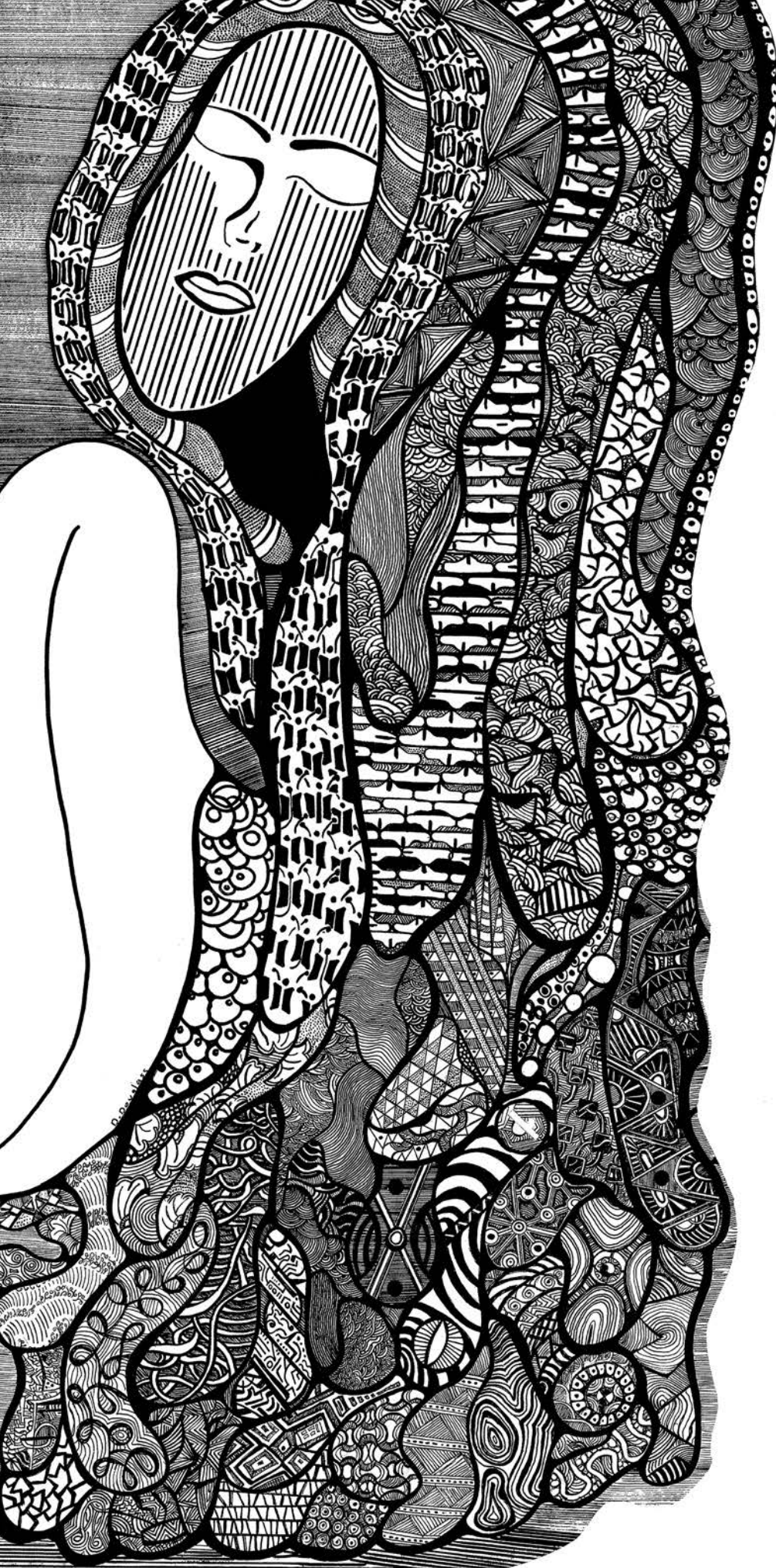
By Diane Bosser











Derrick Douglass '11 wants to hold moments in time so he—and anyone else—can examine them more closely. Rather than use photography, the computer programmer-turned-graphic designer/web designer/web developer does this by putting pen to paper.

His pen-and-ink pieces are so intricate they almost startle. Through busy linear forms—patterns of swirls, arcs, angles, dots—he creates a mélange of textures that meld into stylized portraits and designs. Their complexity draws viewers in to see what is going on, an interaction that Douglass calls having a dialogue with the image.

"I like the challenge of taking a monochrome idea (binomial/white or black) and giving it texture, form, and elements to make it have power without the impact of color. Every color brings emotion to it. In black and white, it is a different experience."

Douglass' current work in progress is a series entitled *Sakini Mwali* (Swahili for "strong quiet lady"). It features African-American female images, which he says were inspired during a trip to Morocco in 2016.

So far, I am concentrating on the face, head, hair, and upper torso—there's a lot of power in that area of the body.

"I had been doing some pattern work already, but I was still ruminating on subject matter," says Douglass. "During that trip, I witnessed a group of women meditating, and I just had that 'aha' moment. It was the big bang: I knew what my next body of work would be."

Douglass has completed six "Sakini Mwali" of 10 total; all but one are 18 by 24 inches. He spends an average of 120 hours per piece, or about three months' time, working around his full-time job, consulting work, volunteering, and amateur photography. He begins each hand-inked sketch by experimenting with patterns in a 1/8-scale mock-up. He works ideas until they achieve harmony and synergy. Only when complete does he scan the image to create a template in which images of different sizes can be printed.



"So far, I am concentrating on the face, head, hair, and upper torso—there's a lot of power in that area of the body. But one of the 10 figures in this series might be a full form," he says.

Douglass came to art after a 15-year career as a computer programmer and then time spent in graduate school. After completing an MBA in 2009, he struggled to land a new job—when the country was at the height of recession. His solution was to return to the classroom, this time for hands-on skills in graphic design, which he saw as an extension of his marketing interest.

MC's graphic design certificate program fit his schedule and his goals of acquiring skills complementary to his marketing background. Media arts and technologies instructor Valerie Burghardt, herself a graphic design and print professional, considers Douglass one of the most passionate students she has met in her 17 years at the College.

"From the first minute he came into the classroom, Derrick has been an enthusiastic and dedicated designer," says Burghardt. "His intelligence and mature outlook make him

a standout. Whether offering constructive criticism of his own work or helping others, he's always engaged... He has reinvented himself with a dedication I've had the good fortune to witness. He embodies the best of what Montgomery College hopes for in their students."

A big believer in learning by experience, Douglass makes a point to travel. Each fall, he takes the train to New York for what he calls his "cultural week." It always includes a trip to MoMA, the Museum of Modern Art, art galleries, and places where he can just look around. International trips have included exotic locales. This summer he went to Senegal.

"Inspiration from those trips isn't always tangible," he says, "but I like to go out and see what's going on in the world, and I hope some of that can be interpreted in my work, such as textures, colors, amorphous things."

Closer to home, Douglass takes his camera to area events on weekends. "DC on a Sunday is the greatest city in the world," he says. "The richness of culture, the ideas, the Smithsonian... it's all right there." ■



PETE VIDAL

*Derrick Douglass has a BS in computer software development from Arcadia University, an MBA from Clark Atlanta University, and a graphic design certificate from Montgomery College. He also serves on the City of Rockville Cultural Arts Commission. His pen and ink art is available at [selaethnicart.com](http://selaethnicart.com)*





Nilufer Mutlu and her family were among the more than 300,000 ethnic Turks driven out of Bulgaria in 1989. After Communism ended in Europe, she returned to Bulgaria but was unable to realize her dream of becoming a nurse.





# LATITUDE ADJUSTMENT

## Alumna Has Healthy Outlook on Her New Life in America

BY DIANE BOSSER // PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETE VIDAL

She brought one suitcase with her from Bulgaria. After the 12-hour flight from Istanbul via Amsterdam, she was nervous and excited to start her new life. Beside her was her fiancé, Behrang, an American she had met in Istanbul two years earlier. She did not speak any English, though she knew Russian, Bulgarian, Turkish, and French. Upon arrival in Houston, the couple was separated; she had to go through a detailed customs and immigration interview.

"By the time they escorted me to the luggage area two hours later," she says, "I saw my fiancé and the only suitcase remaining there was mine. It was opened and broken, but nothing was missing. I probably filled it too much."

Nilufer Mutlu '14's almond-shaped eyes suggest Persian ancestry. A Slavic accent hints at her Eastern European origins. Her petite frame and calm demeanor conceal a deep-seated resiliency and determination. She says she likes change and is adventurous by nature. When making the decision to leave home—neighborhoods, traditions, and family—the decision was easy: "We weren't treated very well any place we lived," she says.

When Nilufer was 10, the Communist government in Bulgaria banned the Turkish

language—her native tongue—and forced all ethnic Turks to choose new Slavic names. The efforts were aimed at assimilating the minority Muslim population, which comprised a tenth of the population, and who had lived peacefully inside Bulgaria for 500 years, dating back to the Ottoman Empire.

Nilufer remembers when police first came to their door. They told the family they had 24 hours to rename themselves. She was in third grade.

"I went to school the next day, and the teacher said, 'Now introduce yourself to the class in your Bulgarian name. You can no longer use the Turkish name or speak Turkish.'"

*Nilufer became Natalia.*

Still, government pressure mounted against them, due in part to organized protests against

*“I do not want to remember the struggles of the past. I want to enjoy now, and the future.”*

their forced renaming. In 1989, more than 300,000 people were driven out of the country completely. Nilufer's family was among them.

“My family and I, and many other Turkish families, were given 24 hours to leave Bulgaria. We left with one car, five family members, and three pieces of luggage. At that time, I was 13 years old.”

Her father left his auto repair shop; her mother, a nurse, hoped to find work in Istanbul. Natalia and her two sisters started school not speaking any Turkish. Though they did see friends from Bulgaria, others who were displaced, they were outsiders—and treated as such.

“I could not wait to graduate from high school and go back to Bulgaria,” she says. “Many of my friends were going back to study there. The lifestyle was more fun, and it was the culture that we were familiar with. The culture in Turkey was very different, suppressed, negative. I felt like I did not have any freedom there.”

Things changed after the Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989. Bulgaria followed suit by ousting its longtime communist dictator. By 1990, the new ruling party in Bulgaria restored cultural rights to ethnic Turks and welcomed them back.

The family split for practical purposes: her grandparents and father returned to reclaim the family's property, while her mother remained behind in Turkey, where wages were better, with Nilufer and her two sisters. After graduation from Dr. Kemal Naci Eksi High School, Nilufer enrolled in nursing school in Varna, Bulgaria.

“I loved the nursing program, but tuition was very expensive.” Because she was considered a Turkish citizen, a foreigner,

she paid a higher rate. After struggling to pay, she had to withdraw from school—just before graduation.

Disappointed and angry, she returned to Istanbul where her older sister, Nilgun, a doctor, helped her land a medical assistant job at Düzen Laboratuvari, a prestigious private laboratory. That was the last job she worked before coming to America.

“I knew one day I would finish nursing school,” she says. “I did not know it would be here in America, in English. Now I know that God had a better and bigger plan for me, and everything happened for a good reason.”

### **From Turkey to Takoma Park**

Five days after landing in Houston, Nilufer and Behrang moved to Maryland. He had completed a PhD in physics at Rice University and was going to start a new job as a researcher for NIST, the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg. Along the 1,400-mile road trip, Nilufer saw the country through the lens of a hopeful immigrant. The large food portions surprised her, and she found the people friendly, places clean, and society organized.

“When we arrived in Maryland, I felt at home right away,” says Nilufer. “The weather was similar to Bulgaria, and it was as green as my city of Shumen.”

One of her first priorities was to learn English. She enrolled in the English as a Second Language program at Montgomery College, and spent the next three years memorizing vocabulary, practicing sentence construction, and working on prerequisite courses for the College's nursing program.

“I worked hard. I had to rewrite essays four and five times to get them right,” she says. “I recorded class lectures and listened

to them in my car on my commute to school, instead of listening to music. And even that wasn't enough. I looked for a job, so I could learn how Americans talk and joke.”


While tackling English, biology, anatomy, and physiology, she landed a job at the MC Bookstore as a sales clerk. She later worked retail at a shopping mall, where she also learned what scented candles and body products Americans like to buy. When she was admitted to the College's nursing program, she was finally able to pursue her goal of becoming a nurse.

Patsy O'Meara, who manages the nursing lab, noted Nilufer's diligence. O'Meara, a 10-year College employee, transitioned to teaching from a career in nursing at Washington Hospital Center, then in management at Georgetown University Hospital.

“Working in the lab, I get to meet all the nursing students,” says O'Meara. “The goal is to admit 128 students each semester. Each of them is required to come in to practice hands-on skills. Nilufer was a stand-out student. She is someone who wants to make sure the right thing happens. And she is very







Today, Nilufer Mutlu works as an RN at the Holy Cross Germantown Hospital on the Germantown Campus. She has a BSN and will complete a master's degree in nursing education. She spent her first three years at MC taking English as Second Language courses and nursing program prerequisites.

diplomatic in her exchanges. In health care, that is very important."

### From Nilufer to Nelly

Today, Nilufer is known to her American friends and colleagues as Nelly. She has a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN) from Frostburg University (2016), and is currently working on a master's degree in nursing education. At Holy Cross Hospital Germantown, where she has worked since it opened in October 2014, she often encounters nursing students.

"The nursing program at MC is excellent. It prepared me to do the hands-on work of nursing as well as the academics. And in the clinical groups I see [at the hospital], the MC students are the most confident and independent. They know their stuff because MC's nursing lab is really good—and the professors are available to their students."

MC students have hundreds of opportunities to practice nursing skills, such as administering medication and injections, monitoring cardiac rhythm, and inserting catheters, long before they work with patients. Skills lab practice is a required

part of each nursing course, and the labs are equipped with lifelike mannequins of adults and children, as well as supplies and equipment identical to what is used in hospitals.

In addition, nursing faculty have incorporated simulation into the curriculum, enabling students to learn how to manage everything from patient health assessments and patient education to code blue and end-of-life situations.

For clinical rotations, a significant component of the program, nursing students work in area hospitals, nursing homes, and other health agencies.

"Our clinical model allows for eight students to have experience at the hospital with a single MC nursing instructor," says O'Meara. "This ratio allows instructors to promote learning and safety."

### Fitting In and Moving Forward

After a decade in the United States, Nelly has visited 22 states, but has never gone back to Bulgaria. The Old Country still conjures memories of being mistreated, but she welcomes family members when

they visit. "I do not want to remember the struggles of the past. I want to enjoy now, and the future."

If she were to map the places she considers important in her life, she would pin the MC classroom where she took her first English classes; the MC Bookstore, her first job in America; and the hospital on the Germantown Campus where she currently works: "These places will always be important to me."

In her future, she envisions moving into teaching at MC, and passing on what she has learned to the next generation of nursing students. Many of those students will be non-native or new Americans, whose first language is not English and who may have similar experiences with being displaced, rejected, or lost for a time in their lives. She hopes to stand in the classroom as proof to them that they can begin again, and they can do well.

"My husband asked me recently, 'what does America mean to you?' and I told him: prosperity. I have worked hard for everything, and I am proud of my accomplishments." ■

# FAB ULOUS AT 50

## Nursing Program Improving with Age

**T**he same year eight-track tape decks were introduced in Ford cars, a postage stamp cost five cents, and “Beam me up, Scotty” was first uttered in a *Star Trek* episode, Montgomery College opened a nursing program at the Takoma Park Campus. From its first academic year, 1966–1967, through today, the program has graduated 2,294 nurses. Now at 50, the program is stronger than ever.

“It’s very competitive to get into the program,” says Monique Davis, associate dean of health sciences and director of nursing. Enrollment is at a constant peak. Unlike most nursing programs, the College admits new students twice a year, in spring and fall. On average, 300 people apply for 128 seats. The program is rigorous, especially for those juggling family and work commitments, and attending full time.

“It takes new students three semesters just to get through their biology courses, which are program pre-requisites,” says Davis. “Then they begin the nursing program, which is completed in four semesters.” Each semester, students meet a 180-hour academic requirement for clinical practice, which translates to 12 hours per week for the 15-week semester.

Nursing alumni work at every hospital in the Washington metro region. Many go on to earn BSNs (bachelor’s degrees in nursing) and advanced degrees. Full-time faculty hold master’s or higher degrees, with nearly a quarter having a PhD or DNP (doctor of nursing practice).

The program has adapted to keep pace with advances in medical care and treatment. Modern-day medical care requires nurses to incorporate information

and technology into treatments, to communicate, mitigate error, and support decision-making.

In January 2004, the nursing program moved into the Health Sciences Center, a 98,000-square-foot facility, which was part of the \$90-million expansion to the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. It houses the Helen A. Statts Nursing Center, named after the program’s first director, and is among other health science programs, and a community clinic operated by Holy Cross Hospital.

For students aiming for a BSN, the College opened a new pathway (ADN to BSN Pathway) through a partnership with University of Maryland School of Nursing in 2016. The pathway will increase the number of MC students completing four-year degrees and expand the supply of bedside nurses in Maryland and DC.



"What never changes," says Davis, "is the patient-based approach to teaching and practicing nursing. Throughout the curriculum, students are taught to recognize the patient or designee as a partner in providing compassionate and coordinated care."

Graduation rates remain strong at 88 percent (2016). Overall, the nursing program has seen the number of degrees granted rise by 3 percent annually with a total of 899 over the past six years, or an average of 150 graduates per year. Since 2015, nursing has been the College's third highest degree producing program.

After graduation, students must pass the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX)—a nationwide exam for licensing of nurses in the United States and Canada—to become a licensed RN, or registered nurse. MC nursing graduates' NCLEX pass rates, traditionally in the 90 percentiles, saw dips a few years ago when the exam test plan and expectations were revised. In 2015, for example, the pass rate was 74.85 percent. The College was not alone in watching its pass rates sink.

"Nationally, all programs saw declines," Davis says. "From April 2013 to 2015, nursing schools were modifying curriculum, admissions criteria, and looking at technology and software/simulation for instruction. We expect to see the results of our curriculum changes, which were implemented in 2015, in test results this year."

Results in 2016 already showed improvements to the NCLEX pass rates at 76.22 percent, and another mid-year gain (January through June 2017) at 89.33 percent.

Looking forward, program goals include increasing the availability of clinical placements, boosting NCLEX pass rates, securing additional funding through grants, and replacing faculty who have retired. The program has been awarded more than \$4.7 million in grants and \$1 million for FY 2018. One of its largest awards, a \$3,111,207 five-year award from the Maryland Clinical Simulation Resource Consortium, establishes MC as the lead to serve as a centralized resource center for simulation training (including web-based scenarios) and laboratory facilities. ■



**Top (Left):** Helen Statts, founding director, led the nursing program for the first three decades. Statts built the fledgling initiative into a nationally recognized training program. She died in 2000. **(Right):** A nursing student checks blood pressure at the Nursing Pavilion open house, October 19, 1975.

**Center:** Mathematics, Nursing, and Social Science Pavilions under construction on the Takoma Park Campus. (October 1973.)

**Bottom:** In January 2004, the nursing program moved into the new 98,000-square-foot Health Sciences Center on Georgia Avenue in south Silver Spring. The center houses the Helen A. Statts Nursing Center, a variety of health sciences programs, and a community clinic operated by Holy Cross Hospital, which provides clinical training opportunities for nursing students.





# Speaking of Fluency...

## Language Skills in High Demand

"People were lined up for hours," says Kenia Avendano-Garro '10, who was the sole American and only female in her Japanese university's manga club (Japanese comics). When she heard about the club's part in an annual fall cultural festival, she volunteered to help. On the day, she drew manga-style portraits of people who came to their booth. After the festival, she went with the other volunteers to a "drinking club," or nomihôdai, to celebrate. For Avendano, the evening marked her entrée into a culture that can often remained closed to foreigners.







Kenia Avendano-Garro is a teaching assistant at the University of Wisconsin, teaching beginning Japanese to undergraduates.





MC currently offers instruction in European languages: Spanish, French, German, Italian, Latin, Portuguese and in critical languages: Russian, Korean, Hindi, Arabic, and Chinese; area studies in history, political science, and philosophy; and enrichment-level courses in Spanish and French, plus a full degree or certificate in American Sign Language.

**Nearly  
a half-million  
job postings  
in the US  
specifically  
requested  
foreign-language  
proficiency.**

"That was the first time I went out socially with Japanese students," she says. "In Japanese culture, it is often considered inappropriate/impolite to converse casually with a foreigner. One time, a Japanese woman on the street asked me where I had bought a sticker she saw I had. I answered her—in Japanese—but she noticed my Western face, apologized quickly, and left."

Avendano had no idea her high school interest in manga and anime (Japanese animated stories) would someday lead her to studying abroad in Japan. But as her affinity for the culture grew, so did her curiosity about the language. She started teaching herself Japanese. Working before the availability of Google Translate, she used resources at-hand then: slow Internet, language dictionaries, and anime films.

At MC, where students can choose from more than 13 languages, Avendano dabbled in Korean and Chinese. At the University of Maryland, she majored in Japanese language and literature. When a professor there encouraged her to study abroad and vied for financial aid for her to attend Keio University in Tokyo for nearly a year, she seized the opportunity.

During her first semester in Japan, Avendano did her best to adapt. Not only was it her first time living overseas, it was her first experience living away from her Rockville home. The dorm in Yokohama where she

lived with other Keio students was 17 miles south of Tokyo, so she rode the speedy but notoriously crowded trains back and forth to campus.

"I found out that the mid-day trains to Shibuya—one of Tokyo's busiest railway stations—were less crowded, so I adjusted my student train pass to travel at those times. Our dorm had a communal kitchen, but I learned that I could buy traditional cooked meals at the local convenience store. I was interacting in the language every day, which was very important in becoming fluent."

Looking back, Avendano says staying in Japan for nearly a year was better than a single semester. Since she was navigating Japan alone, she spent the first semester learning a new way of life, learning to communicate, "studying too much," and making Japanese friends. By the second part of her stay, she was able to enjoy the experience a little more.

In addition to the manga club, she joined a conversation club outside the university, where volunteers spoke with her and checked her homework.

"Japanese people don't usually correct your grammar. And I definitely made my mistakes," Avendano says. "The conversation club was very helpful." She was also learning the written Japanese forms: hiragana, katakana, and some kanji. Hiragana, the



phonetic system and katakana, the system used for foreign words, are now common alongside kanji, the traditional characters that originated in China.

After her second trip to Japan, as a University of Wisconsin graduate student, Avendano achieved her goal of fluency. She spent eleven months at the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies, or IUC, in Yokohama. There, she was among mostly American graduate students.

"I interacted in the language every day and had instruction there in my area of specialization—so I was able to practice reading and discussing Japanese literature. My skills are close to a native speaker now."

Sharon Fechter, instructional dean of humanities, says Avendano's path to fluency—immersion—is powerful. Fechter started as a Spanish professor at MC in 1999, and later chaired the College's World Languages and Philosophy Department. She herself achieved fluency after studying abroad.

"After high school, I went to Spain to study before college," she says. "I double-majored in college: Spanish and speech and drama, but stuck with Spanish. I did my doctoral work in Spain, but my PhD is from NYU." Avendano and Fechter are among less than 1 percent of US adults who achieve fluency from language programs studied in a classroom. Of the US Census Bureau's estimated 65 million US residents ages five and older who speak a language other than English at home, most acquired those language skills at home, rather than in school. Referred to as heritage speakers, they have a working knowledge of a second language acquired from family and cultural associations.

Until recent years, the common thought in US populations has been that since English is the common language of commerce and diplomacy around the world, there is less need than other countries to learn languages. But shifting demographics and an increasingly global economy are influencing lawmakers and educators to look more closely at the benefits of teaching a language other than English to more Americans.

According to a 2016 *Kiplinger's* article, "Best Foreign Languages for Your Career," nearly a half-million job postings in the US specifically requested foreign-language proficiency. The article, which circulated on social media, also stated hiring managers look favorably on bilingual job candidates. Japanese was number four on its list of

"10 best foreign languages for your career" after Chinese (number one), German (number two), and Portuguese (number three). Remaining in the top 10 were—in order—Spanish, Korean, French, Arabic, Hindi, and Russian.

A growing body of evidence for increasing language skills in the United States was supplied more recently by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences' Commission on Language Learning. In its 2017 report, "America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century," the commission outlines ways that language learning influences economic growth, cultural diplomacy, and the productivity of future generations.

In its key findings, the report states: "the United States needs more people to speak languages other than English to remain competitive in business, research, and international relations. Workers are continuously needed to provide social and legal services for a changing population."

"Students like Kenia are finding career options with language skills," says Fechter. "There is a high need regardless of college



## Help Wanted: Critical Languages Required

**The US Department of State has identified these as critical languages, non-Western European languages important to US national security (December 2016). It offers a variety of scholarships and programs for college students who wish to study them, including language and cultural immersion programs overseas.**

Arabic	Indonesian	Russian
Azerbaijani	Japanese	Swahili
Bangla	Korean	Turkish
Chinese	Persian	Urdu
Hindi	Punjabi	

[Source: CLSscholarship.org]

major. In engineering and science, candidates that can bring language skills are more desirable. And there are so many career opportunities in our area with federal agencies that employ thousands of contractors with language skills."

## Popular Language Apps for Smartphones and Computers

Lingua.ly  
Quizlet  
Memrise  
Duolingo  
GraphoGame

[Source: America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Commission on Language Learning report, 2017]



Avendano, now in her third year of a six-year PhD program, has already benefited financially from her Japanese language skills. She has translated scripts for a Japanese TV drama series, cell phone games, and anime. She has an ongoing teaching assistant position at the University of Wisconsin, teaching beginning Japanese to undergraduates. Last summer she taught Japanese at a language-immersion youth camp in Minnesota.

Whereas Avendano struggled to find resources just a few years ago, language learners today have apps for computers and smartphones that allow them to learn and practice. But for students seeking fluency—and all the benefits it brings—financial challenges prevent them from exploring their bilingual pathways.

"We are pursuing grants that will allow more of our community college students to travel abroad for language acquisition," Fechter says. "We are already so fortunate the College supports language learning. Not only do we have a robust program, but also we are adding languages and growing our Japanese, Korean, and Russian programs. When you consider the population of Montgomery County, it makes a lot of sense to support language programs." ■

# CLASS NOTES

## 1960s

**CHRISTINE LIEDERBACH '68** is founder of the Gold IRA Company in Marina Del Rey, Calif. She specializes in the addition of physical precious metals to tax-sheltered retirement accounts.

## 1970s



PETE VIDAL

**GREG WIMS '70** was recognized by the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation for his work with the Victims' Rights

Foundation. He founded the Victims' Rights Foundation in 1996 to provide support services to victims of violent crimes.

**MICHAEL G. ALLEN '74** writes, "MC was the start of a nice journey for me in computer science and software development. When I transferred to University of Maryland, I was told that MC was the highest rated two-year college in the state."

**W. THOMAS CURTIS '74** was elected to a three-year term on the foundation board of Maryland Public Television. He previously served on the board of WETA in Washington, DC.

**PATRICIA L. MITCHELL '74** has been named district administrative judge for District 6 (Montgomery County) of the District Court of Maryland. She had previously served as an associate judge since 1996.

**LYNN ASRAEL GRODZKI '79** is a social worker in private practice in Silver Spring.

## 1980s

**ABBY ALCOTT '81** writes, "Love the College, grateful for the career it gave me!"



COURTESY SHOBHA DANDEKER DUNCAN

**SHOBHA DANDEKER DUNCAN '81** retired from the University Health Center on the College Park campus of the University

of Maryland. She writes, "It has been a good 35 years of nursing, a profession that I love. Many thanks to Montgomery College where I got my start." She included a photo of her own pinning ceremony with the nursing program's founder, Helen A. Statts.



**WAYSON LEE '86** is a professional hypnotist in Huntsville, Ala. He returned to the area to cheer on **ALYSON PALMER '80** at her June concert at the College.

## 1990s

**BECKY TRUPP '91** completed her BSN at the University of Texas at Arlington and is a clinical trials nurse navigator at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

**RICHARD HOLLEY '92** was promoted to lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve's medical department. He serves with the 328th Medical Detachment in Coraopolis, Pa.

**RUTH T. NAYLOR '93** exhibited a solo show of her work at the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through Spring 2017.

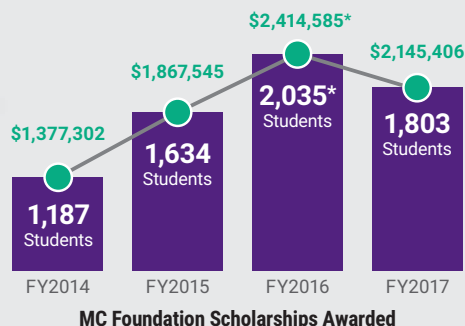
Cara  
MC Scholarship  
Recipient



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For more information, contact Noah Saposnik, annual fund manager, at 240-567-4108 or [noah.saposnik@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:noah.saposnik@montgomerycollege.edu).



MC Foundation Scholarships Awarded

\* In FY16, the MC Foundation had a one-time contract from Montgomery County to administer a \$300,000 scholarship program for MI-BEST students. In FY17, those resources were directly appropriated to MC's operating budget for the same purpose.



## 2000s

**CYNTHIA CAMPBELL '04** is a certified nurse practitioner at Howard University.

**MARIA MORENO URIBE '07** is an administrative aide for the public safety office at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

**JULIE JACQUES CHERY '05** is a hospital surgical technologist in Cumming, Ga.

**LATASHA KELLY '07** is the main office secretary at Paint Branch High School in Burtonsville, Md.



COURTESY CHRISTIAN BARRERA

**CHRISTIAN BARRERA '09** is the deputy chief of staff and legislative director for the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and

Human Services. He was formerly the special assistant for health policy with the DC government.

**CLAUDIA MULCRONE '09** has moved to Cary, N.C.

**AYSE AKTURK '09** is an office manager and real estate agent with the Timur Edib Law Office in Rockville.

## 2010s

**KRISTY SANGALANG '10** plans to complete her BSN at Capella University in May 2018. She is a registered nurse and a certified medical-surgical registered nurse.

**TILANDRA RHYNE '11** is an administrative coordinator with the College's nursing department.

**YOHANCE AARON '12** is an authorization administrator with the International Baccalaureate organization in Bethesda.

**LAURANNE GORDON '14** is in the PTA to DPT (doctorate in physical therapy) Bridge Program at the University of Findlay.

**YAT-CHUN SHOON '14** transferred to Towson University to pursue a degree in life sciences.

**MATTHEW ZAMORA '14** is president of Enact Productions, a video, web, and graphic production company in Gaithersburg.



NINH TRAN

**RAMÓN L. DE LA CRUZ '15** is the College's Central Services building coordinator. He supports current students through

mentoring in Advancing Latino Male Achievement (ALMA), serving as advisor for the Outdoor Adventures Club, and performing with the World Ensemble.

**MICHAEL MASON '16** is a registered nurse at Holy Cross Hospital.

**TREANNA ALSTON '17** is a program analyst with the National Institutes of Health.

**JANETH CASTRO '17** is an aide with the Takoma Park Child Development Center.

**TREVEN HARRIS '17** is a service desk engineer with designData in Gaithersburg. He has served as an office aide with the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Cultural Arts Center.

**ERIKA HUNTER '17** is a special education paraeducator with Montgomery County Public Schools.

**DAVID KONTEH '17** is a library technician with the Library of Congress.

**ALAN RANDALL '17** is a human resources assistant with the National Park Service.

**TIFFANY WALLACE '17** is a customer support specialist with Frontpoint Security.

Send your updates and photos via email to [alumni@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:alumni@montgomerycollege.edu) or the online "Submit Your News" form at [montgomerycollege.edu/insights](http://montgomerycollege.edu/insights).

## IN MEMORIAM

### DR. JEANANN BOYCE

July 8, 2017

She taught computer applications, computer science, and business—both on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus and online.

### VINCENT CLINCY

June 30, 2017

He taught sociology at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

### DR. CHARLES MARCANTONIO

May 26, 2017

He served as coordinator of the Mental Health Associate program.

### JAMES H. "JIM" MOSS

May 20, 2017

He was a stationary engineer at the Germantown Campus.

### SARAH FISHER

May 2, 2017

She was manager of libraries on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

### THOMAS S. PRICE '75

March 21, 2017

He retired after serving as a counselor at each of the College's three campuses.

### PEGGY MACKINNON GREENE '83

December 4, 2016

### RICHARD L. "DICK" SHELLEY

November 8, 2016

He coached and taught health and physical education at Rockville from 1968 until his retirement in 2007.



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