

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

INSIGHTS

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS | SPRING 2018

MC + MCPS = MC²

*Middle College program (MC²)
lets students earn an associate's
degree while in high school*



Dominique Desmarattes '18

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



MC President DeRionne Pollard met with past Alumni Association presidents in March. From Left: Socrates Koutsoutis '56, John Libby '80, Robert Hydorn '71, Tookie Gentilcore '94, Richard Beall '71, Carol Leahy '74, Dr. Pollard, Dr. Lucy Vitaliti '77, Association President Lori Thomas '99, Stacy Wood '74, and Association Executive Director Greg Enloe.

What a difference six months can make! In our last issue's class notes, we reported that Christian Barrera '08 held a senior advisor's position in the DC government. Since then, he's received our "Rising Star" Young Alumni Recognition Award. He joined football and baseball great Gene Thomas '89 and basketball star Melissa Weithman '05 for this spring's Alumni Awards, along with architect Paola Moya '05 and Hughes Network Systems vice president Jim Muir '75.

As you'll see in this issue, Jim has a remarkable track record in the community—both advocating for the Germantown Campus's improvement and raising scholarship funds for students there. And Paola has made her mark on the community with stunning building and monument designs, notably in the interior remake of the District's historic Howard Theatre.

As the academic year ends, we return to our own theatre tradition: Alumni and College Retiree discounts for the opening Friday of both Summer Dinner Theatre shows. Use the alumni discount code to reserve your tickets

and join us for some of the best talent our region has to offer onstage!

We announced in April's *Happenings* e-newsletter that members are receiving their updated Alumni Association cards, showing our new address and emblem and listing some of the membership benefits now available. We depend on you to identify new ways to serve our members and support our future members—today's students. Please get in touch if you'd like to help roll out a new benefit.

We also depend on you to let us know about your academic milestones and career successes, as they enable us to celebrate Montgomery College's real product—successful students. I encourage you to send us your updates for class notes.

In this issue, we highlight a recent graduate who's already making a mark in our work. Audrey Awasom '16 has volunteered to strengthen our ties to new alumni. If you're transferring to a four-year program this year, Audrey will need to hear what you need as you enter your next institution—and how we can arrange for fellow members already there to help deliver it.

I'll also give a shout-out to one of our older alums, Jacob Wilson '42 of the Bliss Electrical School. He's still going at age 97 and is checking in to see if any of his buddies are still around. If you served with him in the Southwest Pacific or Brisbane, call the office and we'll put you in touch. From World War II to the present, the College continues to support and train our military and veterans—as you'll see in our profile of Sukwon Koh '18, who's completing a nursing degree while on active duty at Walter Reed.

In March, we hosted a reunion of past Alumni Association Presidents in our new office space. This summer, I'll join their ranks as my term concludes. I thank you for all you've done to serve your fellow Association members, and support the students who've come along after us. Please keep up the good work!

Lori A. Thomas '99
Alumni Association President

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION President Lori A. Thomas '99 Vice President Jane C. Smith '76 Secretary Carole O. Carlson '94 Treasurer Bobbi Price '80 Immediate Past President Richard E. Beall '71
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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 **Phone** 240-567-5378 **Online** montgomerycollege.edu/alumni **Facebook** facebook.com/MCALumniAssociation

INSIGHTS

SPRING 2018

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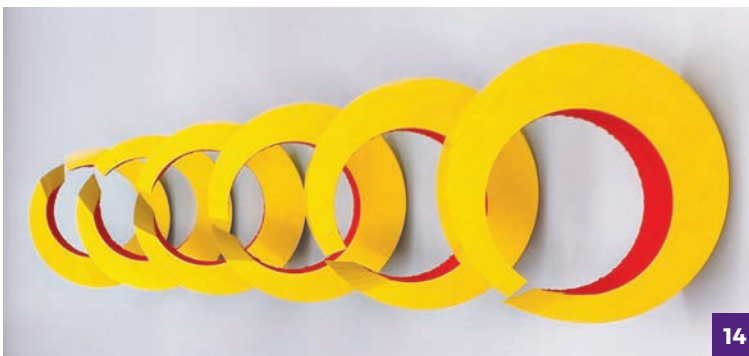
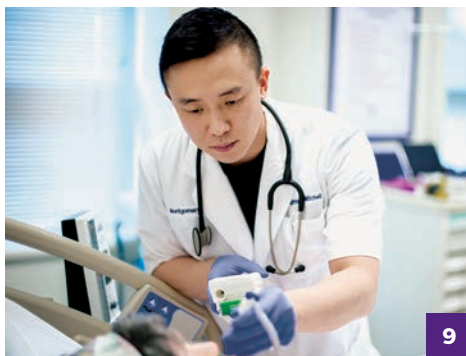
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Montgomery College is an academic institution committed to promoting equal opportunity and fostering diversity among its student body, faculty, and staff.

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ABOUT THE COVER



Insights had to catch up with cover model Dominique Desmarattes at her Organic Chemistry class on the Rockville Campus to do this photo shoot. Stellar performances in her classes at the College—and on her track team at Northwood High School—earned her a Phi Theta Kappa honor society nomination from MC and qualified her for the high school regional championship on the girl's relay team.

RAPTOR NOTES

Testify!

President DeRionne Pollard gave testimony on Capitol Hill and in Annapolis in February as part of an effort to persuade lawmakers to make higher education more affordable. She spoke to the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, detailing MC's efforts to close the affordability gap, which also helped make the argument for urgent large-scale reform.

Pollard suggested the committee expand Pell grants to workforce development programs and peg their value to inflation. Currently, federal rules define how Pell grants can be used and for how long, keeping some students from accessing them.

At the state level, she testified in favor of legislation allowing Maryland community college students the opportunity to earn an associate's degree or a certificate debt-free.

"I think we all know that this would be a win for our students, our communities, and our economy," says Pollard.

In both instances, Pollard demonstrated how MC programs already support students who are close to, or below, the poverty line. She cited the food pantries, emergency aid, open educational resources, loaner laptops, a clothing library, and scholarships, among other initiatives.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETE VIDAL

"[Community colleges] were created because enlightened people realized that higher education should not be reserved for a few. That giving more young people—and our returning veterans—the opportunity to earn a degree was a win for all. Because both the individual and the community benefit when good jobs are filled by an educated workforce."

DR. DERIONNE POLLARD
MONTGOMERY COLLEGE PRESIDENT



Former United States Secretary of State and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell spoke at the Rockville Campus on January 30 with an audience of students and staff members. Montgomery College President DeRionne Pollard introduced him as someone who has been serving the public for more than 50 years through his vision, democratic values, and his passion for helping young people succeed.

Raptors Basketball Teams Finish Fifth in the Nation

The Raptors men's and women's basketball teams both finished fifth in their 2017–2018 NJCAA Division III Championship tournaments.



MC ATHLETICS

This season the women's team tied best finishes from their 2012 and 2013 national tournament appearances. The Raptors finished their season with an overall record of 22–7 and fifth place in the country out of 100 Division III teams. Armonie Lomax was selected to the NJCAA All-Tournament Team, as she scored 52 points in the three-day tournament, averaging 17.3 points per game.

Men's basketball made history in Loch Sheldrake, NY, finishing fifth in the tournament—the best finish for any MC men's basketball team in the school's history. The team finished their season with an overall record of 26–9 and fifth place in the country out of 112 Division III teams. Players Collin Turner, Ramel Davison, and Freddie Harris led the team in points, rebounds, and steals. Turner, who scored 104 points during the three-day tournament, earned NJCAA All-Tournament Team honors and was named Spalding Division III Men's Basketball Player of the Year.

Web Updates

Alumni Association

If you have visited montgomerycollege.edu/alumni recently, you'll notice that things have changed. We have redesigned our Alumni Association web pages, making it easier to become a member, access your benefits, and find ways to stay involved with MC. Check it out, and send your feedback on the new pages to alumni@montgomerycollege.edu.

Language Resource Web Pages

The MC website now contains resource pages in six different languages identified as most common among the MC student population: Amharic, Chinese, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The pages contain information about admissions and registration, financial aid, English as a second language classes, transfer credit information, and more. Visit montgomerycollege.edu/language for links to all six pages.



Color Trending

MC is at the height of fashion this year, according to color experts at the Pantone Color Institute. The institute, a consulting service with Pantone, chose a shade of purple (18-3838 ultra violet) akin to MC's official color (Pantone 2617) as 2018 color of the year. Each year, the institute forecasts global color trends and advises companies on color in brand identity and product development.

MC first used purple—along with black, white, and grey/silver—in 2012, when it reorganized its athletic programs in compliance with NJCAA association rules (NJCAA allows only one of each athletic team per institution). That change was followed by a new athletic logo, mascot, and College logo.





PETE VIDAL

Professors Tulin Levitas and Pat Ruppert



Ruppert is among a cadre of faculty, staff, and students at MC that promote peace through education and practice. Organized as a grassroots initiative in 2005, the Peace and Justice Studies Community* is the driving force behind many on-campus events that promote human rights and equality.

Community collaborators have brought renowned peace activists and heads of international organizations to campus. Arun Gandhi, fifth grandson of Mohandas K. Gandhi, spoke at Germantown in 2013. David Killian, US Ambassador to UNESCO, spoke in 2011 about the role of the United Nations and UNESCO in building peace. In 2007, Mpho Tutu, daughter of Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, gave a presentation on forgiveness and reconciliation to the college community, and taught a master class on conflict resolution through forgiveness and reconciliation.

Each fall, Ruppert co-organizes a Hunger Banquet event, based on the Oxfam America initiative in which participants experience the world's food distribution inequities firsthand. At a Hunger Banquet, 15 percent

Giving Peace a Chance

“What we talk about in this class is important, it is crucial, but if it doesn’t connect to what’s going on outside our class, out in the world, then it is irrelevant.” —Professor Patricia Ruppert, Introduction to Philosophy (PHIL 101)

One week after the deadly school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, Professor Pat Ruppert asked her philosophy class to comment on the Parkland students’ activism. In a closed, online forum their conversation—like many across the country—held opinions ranging from anti-gun to pro-Second Amendment.

But Ruppert noticed a glaring difference between her students’ interactions and what she saw on social media and television.

“The students were civil, thoughtful, respectful, deep, engaged, and passionate,” Ruppert says. “What we learned from each other was how to have a conversation without hurting each other.”

**The Peace and Justice Studies Community at MC includes administrators, faculty, staff, and students in the Humanities Area, the Paul Peck Humanities Institute, the World Languages and Philosophy Department, the Women’s and Gender Studies Program, Smithsonian Fellowship Program, Boys 2 Men, the Global Humanities Institute, the Honors Program, Global Nexus, MC Libraries, Counseling and Advising, and Office of Student Life.*

SPEAKERS HOSTED OR CO-HOSTED

by Peace and Justice Studies Community at Montgomery College (as of spring 2018)

Dr. Randall Amster, Georgetown University, professor and director of the Program on Justice and Peace, and former executive director of the Peace and Justice Studies Association (National)

Arun Gandhi, fifth grandson of Mohandas Gandhi

David Killion, US ambassador to UNESCO

Manjula Kumar, program director, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC

Daphne Levitas, Esq., community activist for resettlement of Syrian refugees

Colman McCarthy, director, Center for Teaching Peace

Alli McCracken, CODEPINK representative

Ralph Nader, consumer advocate, US presidential candidate, peace activist

Daoud Nassar, director, The Tent of Nations, an international peace center in the West Bank

Steven Roberts, American journalist

Cathy Lisa Schneider, Jewish Voice for Peace

David Smith, former program director, US Institute of Peace

Mpho Tutu, daughter of Desmond Tutu and director, Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation

of participants receive a full meal, 35 percent eat beans and rice, and 50 percent sit on the floor and eat a small amount of rice and water. The meal distribution is determined by a random drawing. An in-depth discussion afterward engages the group to explore strategies to ease hunger in their own communities and across the world.

"Our pattern is to do the Hunger Banquet in the fall just before Thanksgiving," Ruppert says. "The hunger banquet from last year, 'In Harm's Way: Understanding Families Seeking Refuge,' focused on Syrian refugee families, with keynote speaker Daphne Levitas telling the story of how she and her Cheverly, Maryland, community adopted a Syrian refugee family. We found older simulations from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees that we used as a template for a scenario that was relevant to a current crisis. We had 120 people participate in 12 groups of 10."

Peace is also part of the MC curricula. Courses like Introduction to Human Rights,

Introduction to Peace and Justice Studies, and Introduction to Global Humanities lead students toward a better understanding of human rights, or lack thereof, in the modern world. Professors accomplish this through lessons on cultures and societal differences, basic legal concepts, international humanitarian law, and current events, including a focus on parts of the world where critical human rights problems persist. They spend significant class time on community service activities.

But no conversation about MC's peace programs would be complete without mention of philosophy Professor Tulin Levitas, who has written curricula for honors tutorials and Introduction to Peace and Justice Studies. Levitas has devoted years to studying peace, beginning with a 2004 trip to South Africa.

"In South Africa," Levitas says, "I learned about the work that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission did to bring closure to the apartheid system and support the South

Africans to move on as a unified people in their country. [It] constituted an epiphany for me, for I became acquainted with an alternative resolution to conflict—that of compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation."

In 2013, Levitas took sabbatical to study with local peace activist Colman McCarthy. She has also studied with Zen Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hahn, attended the Peace and Justice Studies Association annual conference, and participated in peace-building seminars with David J. Smith that focused on peace, conflict, and international affairs.

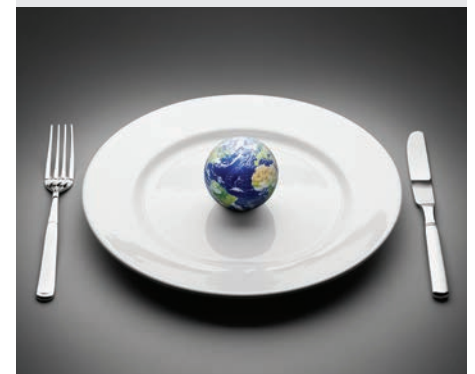
"My personal motivation in developing the courses at Montgomery College is that I want to offer an alternative narrative to violence: that of nonviolence and peace. I want to focus on our common humanity, brotherhood and sisterhood, collaboration rather than competition, with the goal of creating a better world for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren."

The Introduction to Peace and Justice Studies course is offered every semester. Ten to 15 students typically enroll. Levitas says they are "as diverse as the Montgomery College students in terms of their ethnicity, race, religious background, and age." Ruppert adds, "Students in that class often have firsthand experience or knowledge of strife, oppression, and war. They are seeking a better world."

JOIN THE HUNGER BANQUET EVENT

November 16, 2018

Open to the public
Events at all three campuses

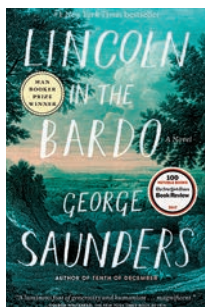


Lit Picks

MC librarians at all three campuses know a thing or two about good books. And—no surprise here—they had a lot to say when *Insights* asked for summer reading recommendations. Here are a few of their new favorites.

Kari Schmidt, technical services manager, recommends:

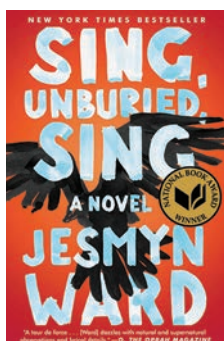
Lincoln in the Bardo by George Saunders



This imaginative ghost story about the death of President Lincoln's son Willie won the Booker Prize in 2017. A prolific short story writer of high acclaim, Saunders' delivered a first novel that is deeply captivating and wildly

inventive. Saunders' engrossing work features metaphysical and philosophical musings on the meaning of life and death. For those who love modern literature and historical fiction this novel artfully enthralls the head and the heart. Available at the Rockville and Takoma Park/Silver Spring libraries.

Sing, Unburied, Sing by Jesmyn Ward

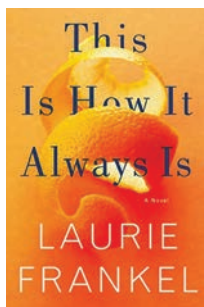


Fans of Ward's novel *Salvage the Bones* will delight in her most recent novel about three generations of an African-American family in coastal Mississippi. Ward's deep compassion for her characters,

even those who are challenging, brings the reader into a deep understanding of one family in the modern day rural south through the deeply affecting voices of its patriarch, his daughter, and her teenage son. Ward's art stands alongside William Faulkner and Toni Morrison with this heartfelt and deeply moving novel. Available at the Rockville and Takoma Park/Silver Spring libraries.

Anne Briggs, web services and communications librarian, recommends:

This Is How It Always Is by Laurie Frankel



This Is How It Always Is follows the Walsh-Adams family through the children's adolescence, a cross-country move, and the dozens of transformations of various sizes that make up a life.

In particular, this novel focuses on Poppy, née Claude, who was born as the family's fifth son, but who quickly announces herself as the family's first daughter. The author drew on her own experiences with a transgender child to create this thoughtful exploration of gender and cultural norms. The characters, in particular Rosie, the mother, are so well-drawn that the reader can't help but engage with them and evaluate his or her own biases and expectations.

Darktown by Thomas Mullen

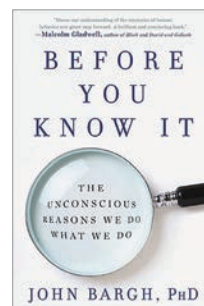


Darktown takes place in post-World War II Atlanta where, under intense political pressure and despite objections from the white community, the police force hires its first African-American officers. These new officers face hostility from their white peers and restrictions on their authority from the department that hired them. This novel follows two officers, Boggs and Smith, as they maneuver these obstacles to investigate the murder of an African-

American woman. Not only is the mystery engaging, but the author also paints a vibrant and terrifying picture of the vicious racism in the American south during this era. Available at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring library.

Shwuing Wu, library technical assistant, recommends:

Before You Know It: The Unconscious Reasons We Do What We Do by John Bargh



Have you ever wondered why we do what we do? Have you ever seen or felt that the longer a couple is married, the more they look alike? Do you think we can change our behavior by changing our environment? Do

you believe that human beings have "free will," or do you believe we are pretty much "factory-equipped?" This book will give you some insights, and even some answers.

The book is written in everyday language with lots of facts, stories, and research data. It sometimes makes you laugh too. Available at the Rockville library.

Amanda Stroud, library assistant, recommends:

After the Fall: How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again by Dan Santat



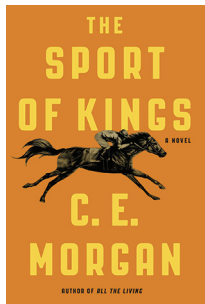
Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty Dumpty had a great fall, All the King's horses and all the King's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again. Well it turns out

the staff at Kings County Hospital could put Humpty Dumpty back together again, for the most part. However, the book makes a point that after a traumatic experience sometimes not everything can be healed with bandages

and glue. And that an avid birdwatcher who loved to sit high upon the wall might now have issues with heights, which is why he's eating Cardboard Cereal (which is down low) instead of his favorite Sugar Frosted Sugar Cereal (which is on the top shelf). But through a series of baby steps Humpty Dumpty manages to overcome his fear of heights. There's a surprise twist at the end! Available at the Germantown library.

Randy Hertzler, reference services and periodicals librarian, recommends:

The Sport of Kings by C.E. Morgan



I love horses, but horse breeding—let alone racing—was always an endeavor I looked at sideways. Perhaps even a bit more so after reading this tour-de-force set amidst the lush pastures of central

Kentucky—ground zero for American thoroughbred horse breeding. But *The Sport of Kings* does little to fetishize the industry, and in fact exposes many of the ugliest practices in a highly lucrative and competitive tradition. Within this scientific and social setting, we follow the history and fortunes—or misfortunes—of two families whose life experiences could not be more opposite, but whose respective fates become inextricably entwined. Race, honor, eugenics, slavery, miscegenation, animal welfare, and the possibility of redemption—or revenge—play into a tale written in prose that often borders on pure poetry. I frequently found myself re-reading sentences or passages just to savor the gorgeous turns of phrase. Morgan rounds the final turn into a nail-biting finish worthy of “The Run for the Roses.” Available at the Rockville library.

Note: All titles recommended in this article, except *This Is How It Always Is*, are available at the specified campus library.

MC alumni have borrowing privileges at any MC library with a photo ID showing the borrower's current address. Ask your campus librarian for assistance.

Community Events

Come out and say Hello. *Hola. Bonjour. Selam. Namaste ...* to our Raptor representatives from the Office of Community Engagement at these community events.

- **Salvadoran American Festival**
August 5 – Rockville Campus
- **World of Montgomery Festival**
October 21 – Rockville Campus
- **Gaithersburg Book Festival**
Annual event in May
Gaithersburg City Hall grounds
gaithersburgbookfestival.org



PHOTOGRAPH BY DUSTIN GATES

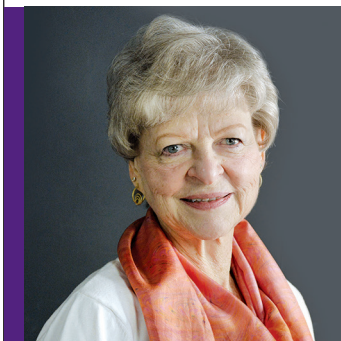


World of Montgomery, 2017

Keep up on events and opportunities throughout the year online at montgomerycollege.edu/engagement.

Like us on FB @MCEngagement and FB Español @montgomerycollegelatino. Follow us on Twitter @MCEngage.

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

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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MC MONTGOMERY COLLEGE FOUNDATION

All That Data

New program helps meet workforce demands in a data-driven world.

All organizations and enterprises—profit, nonprofit, private, public, etc.—need to find efficient methods to turn data into usable information. And they need workers conversant in ideas and tools. Data science combines math, statistics, programming, and hacking skills, as well as data journalism, to gain insight from a growing volume of information produced by an increasingly data-driven world, and to communicate them effectively enough to help solve real-world problems. Montgomery College is now offering a data science certificate.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, demand for data science and analytics talent is projected to grow by 15 percent by 2020. To help meet the demand, MC launched the new five-course data science certificate program last fall. Professor Brian Kotz, who proposed expanding the College's single statistics course to a series of courses, says the program matches workforce needs and those of MC's transfer institutions.

"Every corner of society is producing data at a tremendous rate and with great ease,

whether it's in business, health, security, social sciences, and so on," says Kotz. "The data are also easier to obtain than ever before, due to data transparency initiatives and advances in technology. The volume is staggering."

In 2015, Dr. DJ Patil became the first chief data scientist of the United States. One of his first blog posts stated: "I'm the US Chief Data Scientist and I got my start in community college." Seizing the moment, Kotz reached out to Patil for a campus visit—"since," he says, "we were developing a data science course or program here at MC."

Not only did Patil accept the offer to meet, he invited Vice President and Provost Margaret Latimer, Director of Special Projects Beatrice Lauman, and Kotz to the White House. There, Patil told them Montgomery College "had a great opportunity to promote the accessibility of data science education to two-year college students."

Kotz's efforts to expand data science at MC were supported by John Hamman, dean of mathematics and statistics: "Data is becoming the language in which we speak.

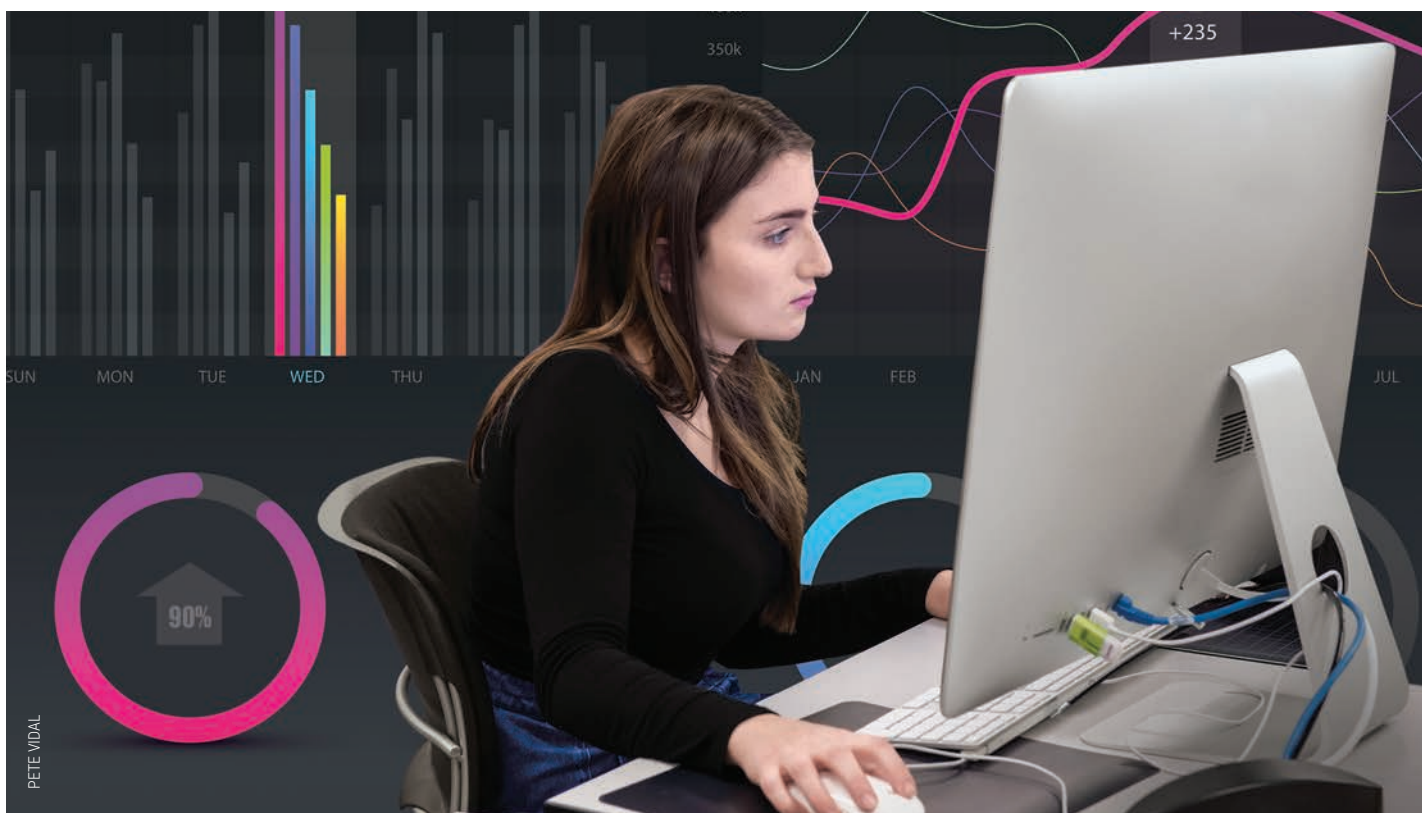
Brian's vision and his work has allowed the College to be at the forefront of community colleges." According to the American Statistical Association Community, Montgomery College is one of 12 community colleges in the country to have a data science program.

A recent study by IBM and the Business-Higher Education Forum reported that the Washington Metro region, with 110,000 data science and analysis jobs in 2015, represented five percent of the national market for data science jobs, second only to the New York City area. About one-third of these jobs require data skills that could be met by the certificate.

Students earning the certificate will be positioned to meet this new economy's growing demand for a more data-literate workforce in all professions, as well as to fill data analyst and data developer jobs in Montgomery County and the Washington, DC, area.

The certificate program benefits extend to liberal arts students, as well. A recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported there are an additional 137,000 entry-level jobs for liberal arts graduates who had data-analysis or management skills. It also found that data-analysis jobs paid at least \$12,700 above the average salary for jobs traditionally open to liberal arts graduates.

—Brady Patton '14





PETE VIDAL



Sergeant Koh, shown here in the nursing clinical simulation lab at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus, is advancing his medical career by becoming an RN. The accelerated Medic to LPN Transition to Nursing course helped him matriculate the program in four semesters while fulfilling his full-time military duties.

FROM MEDIC TO LPN

PROGRAM'S FIRST ACTIVE-DUTY SOLDIER GRADUATES

BY DIANE BOSSER

When Sukwon Koh '18 left South Korea to study as an international student in 2004, he had no plans to re-enter military service. He was a sophomore at Emory University when he returned to his home country to fulfill his obligation; in South Korea, three years of military service is mandatory for all adult males aged 18 to 35. Koh returned to Emory in 2008 to complete a dual bachelor's degree in anthropology and human biology. He then enlisted in the US Army as a path to citizenship.

Now 30, married, and living in Germantown, Koh has earned the rank of sergeant and will join the ranks of MC nursing alum—as of commencement this spring. He is the first active-duty military member to complete the College's intensive Medic to LPN Transition to Nursing program, NU 130.

The eight-credit course, tailored to military medics and veterans, requires classroom study, plus 14 hours of laboratory and clinical training each week at off-campus locations. Originally 12 weeks long, it was

condensed to 10 weeks to accommodate time off for students before the start of fall semester.

"Serving in the military is a 24/7 responsibility. Sergeant Koh has shown exceptional dedication to country and self and has opened doors for other medics at Walter Reed who may want to attend school while serving," says Michele Harrell, nursing professor and coordinator of the Medic to LPN Transition to Nursing program.

While meeting program requirements—including clinical assignments at Holy Cross, MedStar, and Children's Hospital—Koh worked his regular 40–42-hour work week as a dialysis nurse at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

The College introduced the Medic to LPN program in 2009 as part of its efforts to meet a Maryland Board of Nursing mandate (2010) for promoting gainful employment for military members exiting service. Students entering the program receive credit for their prior experience, but must also complete prerequisites in biology, English, math, and psychology, a total of six courses. After successfully completing the program, students move into the regular nursing program (ADN). After graduating, they are eligible to take the NCLEX exam and become licensed registered nurses.

"Our goal for the program is to build capacity for nurses in Maryland while also impacting the needs of the military treatment facilities. Last year, 18 students matriculated," says Harrell. ■

Koh completed his basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and AIT (advanced individual training) at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. He was stationed at Fort Benning (Georgia) when he applied to a dialysis program offered only at Walter Reed Hospital (a five-month program). He has been a dialysis nurse at Walter Reed in Bethesda for more than a year. After MC, he will work toward a BSN and a military commission.

Sweet Dream

Sarah Dwyer left a corporate career to build a business that makes her smile. It makes her customers—and her team—smile, too.

For Sarah Dwyer '06 life isn't like a box of chocolates. It's thousands of boxes of chocolates a year, each morsel made by hand following her recipes, her dream, and a commitment to giving her employees a chance they might not otherwise find.

At an industrial kitchen in a business park in Gaithersburg, she and her team turn out as many as 6,000 chocolates a night. They are chocolates filled with sweet caramel and sea salt. Chocolates flavored with hazelnut or raspberry or single-source coffee. Chocolates hiding bits of maple bacon or seasoned with bay spice. Rich dark chocolate. Smooth milk chocolate. Chocolates for the adventurous, and for simple pleasures. Chocolates to bring a smudged smile to the face of everyone who tries them.

Her life as a chocolatier was a sweet surprise she did not expect when she walked away from

a corporate career. Now, when she slips into the kitchen, work brings a smile to her face, too. Employees crank up rock music on the radio as they mix the chocolate in the machine they have nicknamed Simone and pour the mixture into molds.

Dwyer says she loves being in the kitchen, but even better is watching her customers' faces light up as they put one of her treats in their mouths and break through the brittle shell into the smooth interior.

"That's the real joy," she says. "That ability to make somebody happy with something you make. I made it with my hands. I thought about it with my brain. I know it sounds sappy, but I made it with love."

Dwyer, 46, is the owner of Chouquette (pronounced shoo-KET), a gourmet chocolate company that sells to stores throughout the Washington, DC, region and beyond, and creates



BY David Frey

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
Pete Vidal



custom designed chocolates for corporate gifts, school shows, events, and weddings. Filling her shelves are two-bite treats with scalloped edges decorated with designs printed in cocoa butter, from cherry blossoms to college mascots to logos for PBS and NPR.

The Silver Spring resident is proud of her chocolates, but she is also proud of her team that makes them. Most of her employees cope with mental health issues that can make landing a job difficult. But the specific—even repetitive—tasks that come with working in a kitchen, from piping caramel to arranging boxes, can be fun, they say. On a night in March, all but three of the workers hovering over the chocolates came from Cornerstone

Montgomery, a nonprofit working with people with mental health disorders, or Sunflower Bakery, which teaches culinary skills to young people with learning differences. About half this group, including Dwyer—are also Montgomery College alumni.

Neva Adasack, 21, of Olney, came to Chouquette last August through a job placement program at Cornerstone. “It’s been great,” she says. “Everybody here is so patient and understanding. They let you ask questions, and they understand when you mess up.”

Dwyer says she didn’t set out to work with people with mental health challenges, but she has come to respect the skills they bring to the kitchen and the fun atmosphere she

finds when she walks in the door. “I love being here,” she says. “I can be in a bad mood and once I get here, it goes away. I never felt like that with any other job. We laugh. We all look forward to coming here.”

It is not the life Dwyer imagined when she was a student at Montgomery College more than 20 years ago (but she says those accounting classes still come in handy). She was a part-time student then, studying while working in a corporate banking career.

It seemed like a natural fit. Her sister worked at NASDAQ. Her brother worked in mergers and acquisitions. But the job was not working out. Sure, it paid well. But she hated her boss, and, she says, the feeling was mutual. When she thought about devoting her career to it, she realized it could mean decades of agony.

So she quit. It was time for that gap year she never took.

“I decided I was going to take what I thought was a year off,” Dwyer says. “I wanted to go to Paris.”

In 2009, she set off for the City of Light, determined to learn pastry at the famed Le Cordon Bleu Pastry School—the school where Julia Child learned the art of French cuisine. It would just be a year, she thought. Then she would come back, get an office job, settle down.

“I loved every minute of it,” she says of her time in pastry school. She learned to make croissants and chouquettes—the tiny eclairs whose name she took for her company. She also learned to make chocolate, and European-style dark caramel with a nutty flavor that comes from long, slow cooking.

“Pastry and chocolate and caramel come from such basic ingredients, but when you put them together, it’s magical,” she says.

She decided to bring that magic to her own life. When she returned home, still trying to figure out her next career move, she often stayed up late making chocolates for friends, she says. Then she realized, maybe the traditional career path was not for her. She had loved chocolate since she was a kid, smushing her fingers into boxes of chocolates to find the flavors she liked. Other people, it turned out, loved her chocolate, too. Maybe, she thought, that should be her future.

“I think it was really what I was meant to do,” she says. “All of a sudden, I found it out. I followed my passion. I don’t think everyone gets to figure that out.”

In 2010, she started Chouquette, making the flavored chocolates herself by hand, sell-



Dwyer is a hands-on business owner. In addition to her executive duties, she still spends most days working alongside staff. Here she is making specialty and custom chocolates by hand in the Gaithersburg, Maryland, production facility.



Dwyer with her employees, Amani El Chayeb (center) and Liz Smith (right). Chouquette sources workers from Cornerstone Montgomery, an organization that empowers people living with mental health disorders to work and thrive within the community.



Employees Dillon Carone (left), Chevelle Hall Jr. (center), and Daniel Pollock (right) work on a custom order.

ing them at farmers' markets and trying to convince stores to put them on their shelves.

She became a staple at the Bethesda Farm Women's Market, and it was there that a job coach from Cornerstone showed up at her stand with a question: Would she consider hiring people with mental health issues? Dwyer was open to the idea. "I didn't realize then that it would be such a big part of what I do," she says.

Since then, she's become an important resource for people with mental health issues in search of culinary jobs.

"Sarah's been nothing but great," says Brittany Belscher, a program supervisor at Cornerstone Montgomery. "She has even

adapted her business to help the employees," Belscher says, including creating step-by-step guides to walk them through how to tackle certain tasks.

"She's a really good, supportive employer. It's rare to find that," says Alex Dudley, vocational program manager at Cornerstone. "It's important to find a good job match. A lot of times that means an employer who is understanding and encouraging of everybody and meeting them where they are at."

Dwyer praises her employees' work. Watching as one worker removes chocolates without a trace of scratches, Dwyer says, "She wants them to be perfect." Those pieces go into a box for new customers to sample.

Standing over a table lined with chocolates, Jonathan Turcios, 21, of Gaithersburg, pipes peanut butter into them.

"Out of all the jobs I was considering going to, this was the one I really wanted to join," says Turcios, who came from Sunflower Bakery. "I was definitely interested in how chocolate worked and how the process of making it goes."

What started as a one-woman operation selling at farmers' markets has become a business turning out chocolate that sells at 150 stores, including the White House Historical Association and Dawson's Market. Her shelves are stacked with edible logos ready to go for places like the University of Maryland, Georgetown University, and of course, her alma mater, Montgomery College.

The kitchen crew has enough experience that they can run it without her if she needs to attend an event or tasting, but she loves to be there making her small batch caramel, testing out new recipes, and sharing the sweet smells.

"Being able to do what I do is amazing," Dwyer says. "Not too many people get to do what they love *and* do good. I love these people. They make my business good." ■

GOOD VIBRATIONS

By Diane Bosser | Photography by Daniel Jackson



"Bump #6," plywood, acrylic,
and epoxy, 16" x 72" x 4"

Dennis Beach '91 transforms plywood, epoxy, and paint into geometric sculptures, paintings, and kinetic designs that echo natural forms and phenomena.





Beach's work in a solo exhibition at School 33 Art Center in Baltimore (2016). Back (left): "Pop," acrylic on plywood; Back (right): "Drift #24," plywood, acrylic, and epoxy. Center: "Spins #2"; Front (right): "Spins #3." Both hanging sculptures are suspended by steel cables and use photovoltaic motors to rotate.

His sculpture, "Drift #24," for example, evokes sound waves or ocean waves in its symmetrical undulations. "Flow," a kinetic sculpture, suspended above gallery-goers, features moving water inside a tubular acrylic pipe. "Bump #4," a 96-inch-long wall-mounted piece, might resemble a dinosaur spine or modernized sand dunes. In each piece, Beach's interpretations express his affinity for nature and engineering.

Beach's work has exhibited in solo shows and been installed in permanent collections throughout the mid-Atlantic: in Philadelphia, New York, Delaware, Baltimore, and Washington, DC,—all places where the artist has lived, worked, trained, and been inspired. In 2016, he exhibited at the King Street Gallery on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus, invited by his former professors/mentors Joyce Jewell and Wil Brunner.

In his Wilmington, Delaware, studio, Beach works from sketches to develop his large 3D works, often in series that explore themes and repetition. For the former US Navy mechanical engineer, fitting geometric shapes together into a cohesive contemplative design is work that satisfies his affinity for machinery in general.

"I really like putting things together in new ways," Beach says. "Every time I make something, I experiment by taking a simple shape and repeating it over and over. I make a decision to cut the wood a certain way, but the works evolve from each other. For series, I build it first—deciding how big, how round, how curved and then the next time, I go bigger, longer, and curved differently."

Beach's geometric abstractions begin as sketches. To build the sculptures, he layers the wood pieces and laminates them using pigmented epoxy, which is left exposed as a design element. He makes precise cuts from high-quality plywood. Experimenting with shapes, he often finds use for scraps from previous projects. When the build is complete, he sands it to a smooth finish. Then, he does a test assembly before taking it apart to paint. His sculpting process can take anywhere from a few months to more than a year to complete.

Beach paints in saturated tones that create a visual vibration when placed side by side with their color complements. Red on green, blue on yellow, bubble-gum pink on neon green energize pieces already suggesting movements in their undulations and repetitions.

Concerning scale, Beach says, "bigger is more exciting." He built a floor sculpture, "Curve," that runs 24 feet long and stands 8 feet tall. "Twist 1" and "Twist 2" are each 8 feet tall. He builds large works as modular pieces so they can be transported and re-assembled on site. "Aesthetically, I like the spaces between the modular parts to be obvious," he says.

Beach has an upcoming show this fall at Schmidt Dean Gallery in Philadelphia, as well as a show early next year in Wilmington to coincide with the 2018 Established Fellowship in the Visual Arts: Sculpture Discipline that he recently received from the Delaware Division of the Arts. He has been working on new pieces for both shows, as well as finishing up a large commission. "I am excited about a new floor piece that will be about 16 feet by 16 feet that you will be able to walk on," Beach says. "That should make for a new way to experience my art." ■

Dennis Beach earned a BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art and an MFA from University of Delaware.

Dennis Beach's
paintings and sculptures
are featured in solo
shows and collections
throughout the
mid-Atlantic region.

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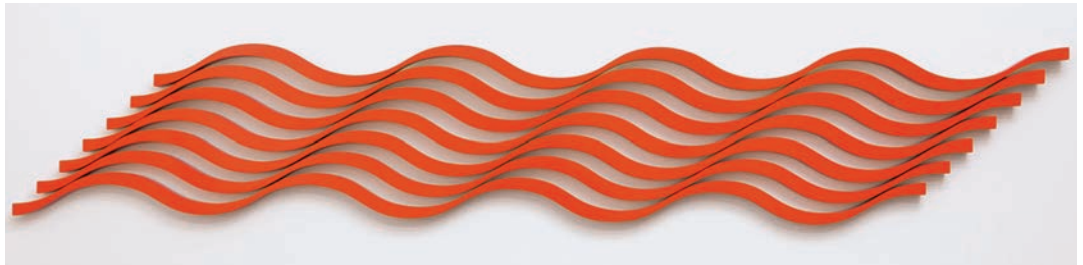


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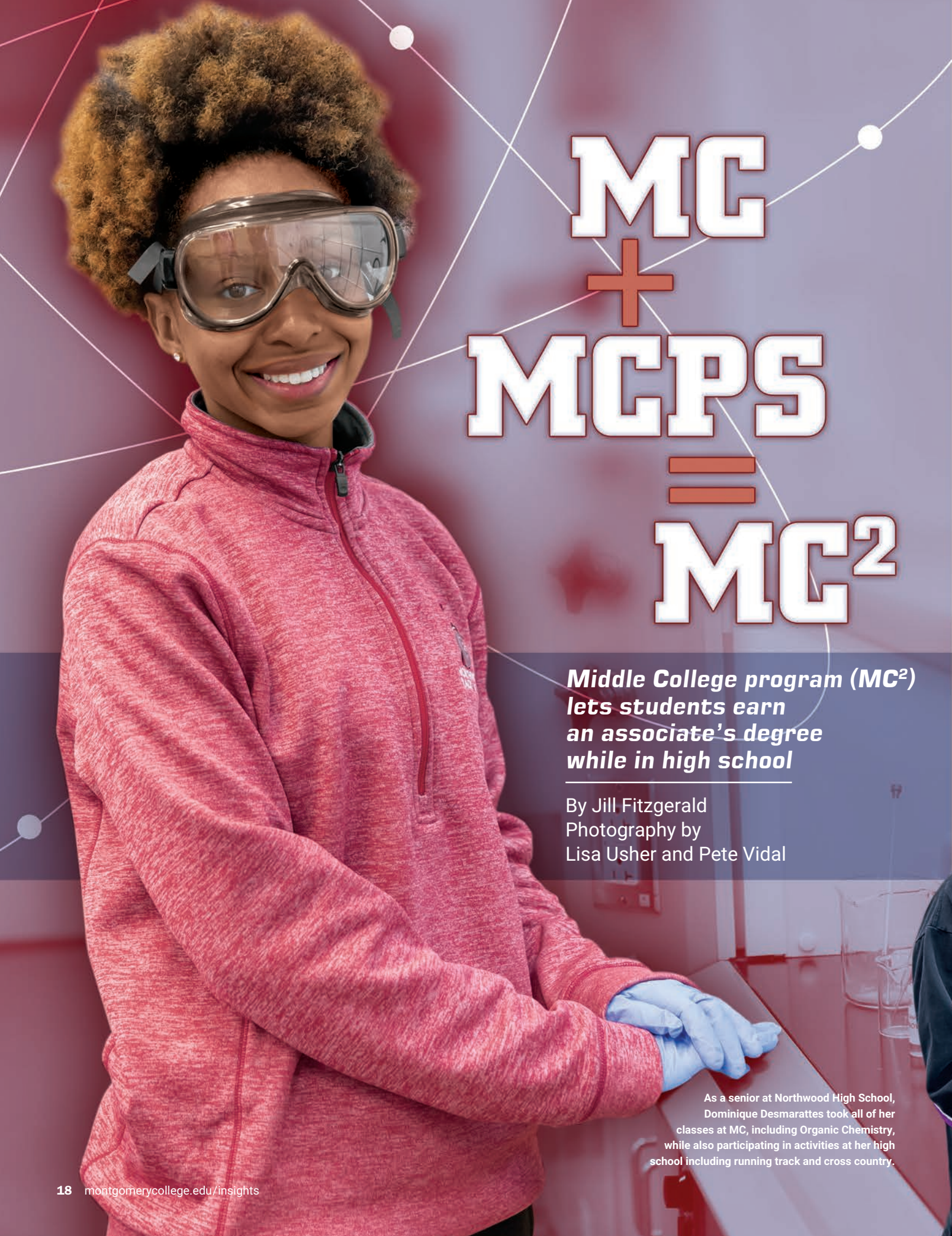
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5



- (1) "Wedge #4," plywood and acrylic
(2) Beach in his Delaware studio
placing concentric rings in a new
work designed to be walked on
(3) "Curl #3," plywood, acrylic, and
epoxy, 45" x 48" x 5" (4) "Wave #2,"
plywood and acrylic, 18" x 114" x 2"
(5) "Curve," plywood, acrylic, and
epoxy, 8' x 24' x 2'



MC + MCPS = MC²

***Middle College program (MC²)
lets students earn
an associate's degree
while in high school***

By Jill Fitzgerald
Photography by
Lisa Usher and Pete Vidal

As a senior at Northwood High School, Dominique Desmarattes took all of her classes at MC, including Organic Chemistry, while also participating in activities at her high school including running track and cross country.

When Northwood High School's Dominique Desmarattes crosses the stage at DAR Constitution Hall on June 6, she will finish a storied high school career. Her senior-year accomplishments include running cross-country and track, garnering Homecoming Queen honors from her fellow students—and earning a degree from Montgomery College.

Desmarattes and six other Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) students strategically commingled Advanced Placement (AP) testing, MC classes offered at MCPS high schools, and classes on campus to get the degree. Their success is a testament not only to their tenacity, but also to forward thinking on the part of College and MCPS officials to provide innovative dual enrollment programs.

"We have to make sure that our [Montgomery County] businesses and industries have the talent they need to fill positions—and a pipeline to fill that talent," says Dr. Sanjay Rai, senior vice president for academic affairs at Montgomery College. "We also need to make sure that every segment of our society has equal access to the jobs in the region."

Rai's sentiments echo those of the legions of policy makers, foundations, and business and education leaders who issued exhortations to expand access and improve college graduation rates for Americans. Barack Obama, as president, gave voice to these concerns and issued a clarion call of his own when he asserted America would again have the highest proportion of college graduates if 60 percent of American twenty-five to thirty-four year olds earned at least an associate's degree by 2020.

In 2013, the Maryland General Assembly passed landmark legislation, College and Career Readiness and College Completion Act (CCRCCA), raising expectations for at least 55 percent of Maryland's residents (ages 25 to 64) to hold at least an associate's degree by 2025. In short, CCRCCA ensures students are college and career ready, expands access to early college, enhances transferability, and drives timely college degree completion.

For their part, Montgomery College leadership wanted to bring more and more high school students to the College early, especially in degree areas heavily aligned with industries. After studying workforce trends and consulting with MCPS colleagues, as well as local business partners, they identified STEM-based positions as those most coveted in the Washington area.

In 2014, the MC-MCPS partnership launched Middle College programs (also called MC²) in general engineering at Northwest High School and general studies (with a STEM core) at Northwood High School.

In Middle College, students enroll in general high school courses, including AP courses, in tandem with Montgomery College coursework offered at their high schools in eleventh grade and at an MC campus in twelfth grade. The result is a rigorous, structured academic program for students, including academic support from both MCPS and MC staff.

"I was intrigued by the possibility of graduating high school with a college degree. I thought it would be challenging. I thought it would be exciting."

—Genevieve Tan

MCPS personnel provide assistance with AP exam preparation, as well as writing support and ACCUPLACER preparation courses. ACCUPLACER, a test developed by The College Board, evaluates students' skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. The College uses test scores to assess student readiness for introductory credit courses. Students must have college-ready scores and a 3.0 cumulative grade point average at the end of the first semester of tenth grade to participate in the college-level portion of the program.

Officials worked closely to tailor Middle College so students could transfer back credits earned at Montgomery College for their MCPS transcript, as well as transfer MCPS credits forward to MC.

"I was intrigued by the possibility of graduating high school with a college degree. I thought it would be challenging. I thought it would be exciting," says Genevieve Tan, who graduates from Montgomery College on May 18 and Northwest High School on June 6. Tan, who earned a 4.0 grade point average in high school and college classes, also received top scores, 5, on all the AP exams she took.

Tan, who is headed to University of Maryland in the fall, also had offers from University of Virginia and University of Pittsburgh. While she finishes her last semester at MC and Northwest High School, she is participating in MC's NASA Swarmathon competition to develop cooperative robotics to revolutionize space exploration.

"Genevieve is very conscientious and smart. In short, she is a joy to have had in my classes," says Dr. David Kuijt, an MC professor who teaches engineering classes in the Middle College program and sponsors MC's Swarmathon team. Of Tan's work on the Swarmathon team, he says, "She worked really hard on the robot construction last semester. This semester, she focused on the outreach effort, which included being a presenter at one of the demonstrations at a local high school." He adds, "I have been very impressed with all of the Middle College students I have come in contact with over the last year and a half. They tend to be bright, respectful, and engaged."

As a high school senior, Genevieve Tan (right) helped build the robot for MC's Swarmathon team, sponsored by Dr. David Kuijt (left).



Seventeen-year-old Moussa Haddad, whose self-confidence and poise belie his age, says he enthusiastically enrolled in MC² as an eighth grader preparing to enter Northwood High School. He admits the demands of the program initially were overwhelming. "The first years are really difficult," he says. "My teachers expected college-level writing—and I was just coming out of middle school. It was really stressful."

Haddad overcame his initial trepidation, embraced the demands of the program, and eventually found his footing in the STEM-oriented curriculum at Montgomery College. In fact, he did so well in his science classes, he now works in the College's Learning Assistant Program, leading discussions and providing lab support to students in a chemistry class.

Professor Aksana Chabatar, who teaches the Principles of Chemistry class in which Haddad assists, says he quickly developed an excellent rapport with her students. "They really like him," she says. "I don't think they have any idea he's still in high school because he is so supportive and knowledgeable."

Haddad, who accepted admission to a limited-enrollment program in biology at University of Maryland for the fall, wraps up his last semester at MC this spring. While taking 16 credits including Organic Chemistry, Principles of Genetics, Calculus, and English, he goes back to Northwood to fulfill his role as vice president of the National Honor Society.

The benefits of the Middle College program extend beyond earning an associate's degree. The program boosts a student's college admissions profile and potentially compresses the time spent in college, thus decreasing the cost of college for many participants.

Maryland's CCRCCA law requires MC and MCPS to cover part of the costs of this program, thus reducing the amount the student pays for tuition. Students pay for their MC textbooks and use their College ID card for free transportation to and from campuses via Ride-On buses during school hours. Qualifying students can receive full tuition and financial assistance for the Middle College program.



Moussa Haddad, a senior at Northwood High School, served as a learning assistant for a Principles of Chemistry class at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

APPROXIMATE COSTS: MIDDLE COLLEGE VS. TRADITIONAL

Program	Required Years After High School	Tuition, Fees, and Books for Degree
University of Maryland (UMD) <i>Bachelor of Science degree</i> Student graduates from MCPS and attends UMD for four years.	4	\$45,520
Montgomery College <i>Associate of Science Degree</i> and University of Maryland <i>Bachelor of Science Degree</i> Student graduates from MCPS, attends MC for two years, and UMD for two years.	4	\$34,873 (MC: \$12,113 + UMD: \$22,760)
Middle College (MC²) program <i>Associate of Science Degree</i> and University of Maryland <i>Bachelor of Science Degree</i> Student completes MC ² program through MC-MCPS partnership while in high school and attends UMD for two years.	2	\$29,298 (MC ² : \$6,500 + UMD: \$22,798)

Amount for MC and UMD based on 2017–2018 tuition and fees. Students admitted to the A. James Clark School of Engineering at University of Maryland will be charged an additional tuition differential of \$1,400 per term (or \$5,600 total for four years) once they achieve junior or senior class standing.

MC² Class of 2018

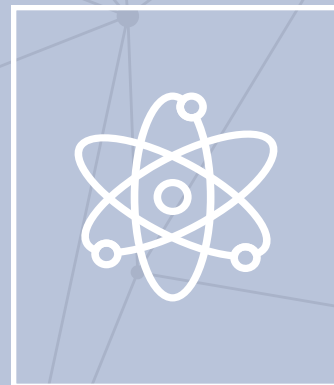
□ COURTESY PRESTIGE BY LIFETOUCH
○ COURTESY VICTOR O'NEILL STUDIOS



EMILY CHO
Northwest HS
University of Maryland
Clark School of Engineering
Received UMD Presidential
Scholarship & Clark Scholarship
(Note: She will graduate from
MC in August 2018.)



DOMINIQUE DESMARATTES
Northwood HS
University of Maryland
Engineering



ADRIAN GUISADIO
[not pictured]
Northwood HS
Montgomery College
Nursing



MOUSSA HADDAD
Northwood HS
University of Maryland
Physiology and Neurobiology



CELIA HARRIS
Northwood HS
University of Maryland
College Park Scholars



PRIYANKA KISHORE
Northwest HS
University of Maryland
Computer Science



GENEVIEVE TAN
Northwest HS
University of Maryland
Clark School of Engineering
Bioengineering



BRIAN WILMARTH
Northwood HS
University of Maryland
College Park Scholars
Computer Science

These Middle College (MC²) students are going places, too.

The following received at least 50 college credits
through the Middle College program

YASH ATITKAR	Northwest HS	University of Maryland, Clark School of Engineering
DEEPAK BINKAM	Northwest HS	University of Maryland
NICOLA BURA	Northwest HS	University of Maryland Baltimore County Major: Computer Science
CAROLINE GRIFFIN	Northwest HS	University of Maryland
KRISHNAN GURU	Northwest HS	University of Maryland, Clark School of Engineering Major: Aerospace Engineering
MIGUEL ROJAS	Northwest HS	University of Maryland
SAHAJ SHAH	Northwest HS	University of Maryland, Clark School of Engineering

"The CCRCCA really pushed everyone to think about how we provide students opportunities to go to college," says Dr. Jack Smith, superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools. "We need to ask students, 'What do you want?' and 'How do we help you get there?' This includes offering programs like Middle College and dual enrollment."

Desmarattes funded her Middle College program by applying for Montgomery College's High School Student grant. The need-based grant covers the cost of College fees and required textbooks for courses.

"The Middle College program saved me the cost of tuition," she says. "I've completed all of my general education credits, so when I attend a university, I'll be able to gain more experience in the biomedical field. I could also spend time abroad if I choose because I have the time to do so."

Desmarattes, a Phi Theta Kappa honor society member, considered offers from Clemson University, Louisiana State University,

University of Maryland Baltimore County, and the University of Pittsburgh before deciding on University of Maryland.

Monica Bond-Lamberty, who taught Desmarattes and Haddad AP history at Northwood High School, says, "For kids like Dominique and Moussa, who are both driven and dedicated, but not necessarily certain that they will have the funds for four years of college, Middle College gives them an opportunity to cut a few years off of their bill. That is a huge relief for them and their families."

Rai believes many more students and families will benefit from the cost savings afforded by dual enrollment programming. He says the MC-MCPS partnership intends to roll out programs in biotechnology, computer science, cybersecurity, and world languages in the next two years.

"The model we're using is very unique, innovative, and more closely tied to the local economy and community—and it's implemented in a way that there is little additional burden on the taxpayer," he says. ■

TWO NEW MC-MCPS PARTNERSHIPS BEGIN THIS FALL

Pathways in Network and Information Technology at Clarksburg High School

The Pathways in Network and Information Technology is a dual enrollment program enabling participating high school students to earn both an MCPS high school diploma and an MC associate of applied science (AAS) degree for free.

The AAS ensures students meet industry expectations, gain technical skills and workplace competencies, and achieve industry certifications. Students earn certifications in microcomputer technician and network administration in either Microsoft or Cisco, or in wireless technologies. Moreover, the program will afford students mentoring, internships, and a paid summer employment opportunity in the technical industry in Montgomery County.

This program is offered at Clarksburg High School, and the only entry point for this program is in ninth grade. However, students within the Seneca Valley, Damascus, and Watkins Mill high school districts may apply.

For information on eligibility requirements, contact melissa_kupferschmid@mcpsmd.org.

Early College Program at MC's Rockville Campus

The Early College (EC²) program affords a more independent and advanced learning environment for MCPS students. Housed at the Rockville Campus of Montgomery College, EC² provides students an opportunity to attend MC full time in eleventh and twelfth grade to earn either an associate of arts in teaching (secondary mathematics) or an associate of science in mathematics. In addition to the associate's degree, students will earn a Maryland State High School diploma from their home high school.

Students can participate in their home high school extracurricular activities, athletics, and other school events, as well as join clubs and activities as MC students.

For more information on eligibility requirements, contact amy.crowley@montgomerycollege.edu.



AWE SOME AWASOM

BY DIANE BOSSER

Audrey Awasom '16 was among the first class of ACES students. This year, she completed a BS in marketing, minor in technology entrepreneurship, at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business.

PHOTO COURTESY AUDREY AWASOM

Lumnwi Audrey Awasom, 21, always wanted to do something big for the community. During her sophomore year at MC, she co-founded the One Heart Project, a community service project supported by MC-Enactus that already helped more than 50 homeless women with career and job readiness skills. During her last semester at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business this spring, Awasom founded her own organization, Noble Uprising. The new 501(c)(3) organization continues the mission of providing career readiness training and employment.

"Our main objective is to empower a population of individuals that are often overlooked in our community," says Awasom, who serves as the organization's CEO and president.

Awasom's own experiences motivated her to make a difference. She and her family emigrated to Maryland from Cameroon when she was six. The third of four children, she knew paying for a college education would be impossible for her parents. During senior year at Seneca Valley High School (2014) in Germantown, she heard about a new program for students like her: ACES (Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success), initiated by Montgomery College.

As an ACES student, Awasom received coaching and advising while still in high school. At MC, and later as a transfer student at the Universities at Shady Grove, she continued with ACES. She also received a three-year Hillman Entrepreneurs Program scholarship, which provided tuition assistance, advising and mentoring, three credit courses in entrepreneurship, and membership in a growing network of alumni, community and business leaders, and future sponsors and partners.

On launching Noble Uprising, Awasom pulled together a board of directors from people in her network that she knew would help the organization be successful. Among the team are two of Awasom's mentors: assistant director of ACES, Damian Robinson, and director of the Hillman Entrepreneurs Program, Rebecca Razavi.

"Audrey's determination, grace, and passion to make a difference are irresistible," says Razavi about her decision to join the board.

While at MC, Awasom worked with Fiorella Rayme '16 and Herwina Alyssa '17, both Macklin Business Institute scholars, to form the One Heart Project. They focused on helping women at the Montgomery Avenue

Women's Center in Rockville. The center, now renamed Interfaith Works and relocated on Taft Court in Rockville, is a 70-bed emergency shelter serving approximately 300 women per year.

They put together a multifaceted plan to help center residents prepare for employment. They led a career-clothing drive and produced workshops in time management, resume building, software instruction, and occupational personality testing during a three-month period.

Thirty women signed up for the inaugural program; 11 completed the entire series and received citations from Senator Chris Van Hollen's office at a special ceremony at the College in January 2016. Two participants received scholarships for college; two others found employment. One program alumna, Sonji Greene Vazquez, has joined the Noble Uprising team as a community outreach consultant. She is working to create the organization's summer training program, projected to begin in July.

"Going forward," Awasom says, "we are looking forward to establishing strong corporate partnerships that will result in employment for our clients. The clients go through intense training. When completed, they have Microsoft Office Suite certification, mentors, electronics, and the confidence needed to start their new jobs. Through Noble Uprising, our clients are one step closer to their new careers."

Before Awasom collects her UMD diploma—she earned a degree in marketing with a technology entrepreneurship minor—she will accept special recognition for Noble Uprising as a fall 2017 Do Good Mini-Grant Recipient, at an event sponsored by the University's Academy for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Noble Uprising was one of 27 teams to win the grant out of 54 applications. ■



ALICIA



CARROLL

*TRAVEL NURSE **THRILL SEEKER***

BY DIANE BOSSER

ALICIA CARROLL '07 travels light. When she moved to South Carolina in February for a position in the neurotrauma ICU at Greenville Memorial Hospital, she fit everything into her Subaru Crosstrek and rooftop carrier. As a travel nurse, Carroll works under 13-week contracts at hospitals around the country. She works with a recruiter and chooses where she wants to go, usually based on climate or natural surroundings. South Carolina is her fourth assignment and fifth state in three years. So far, she has worked in Colorado, Arizona, Oregon, and Seattle.

"There's such a big nursing shortage right now nationwide," she says. "Extra hands are always needed."

According to TotalMed recruiter Josh Cutchins, hospitals hire travel nurses like Carroll for various reasons. The staffing agency sends "travelers" to hospitals that need extra hands during winter months; Arizona is a prime example, he says. The population there swells when snowbirds escape winter in their resident states, and then thins when spring arrives.

"It saves the hospitals a lot of money to hire travelers to fill the gaps for six months, instead of keeping a large staff year-round," he says.

Hospitals also need extra help to cover staffing gaps while training new hires, or while transitioning to a new charting system. "Sometimes," Cutchins says, "they like to try a travel nurse to see if they are a good fit before offering the person a staff position."

Both Carroll and Cutchins say travel nursing is not for everyone. "The beginning of each contract is the most stressful time," says Carroll. "You don't know anyone and orientation is short. You have to learn your way around a new hospital and a new charting system quickly."

"It takes a certain personality to be the new person all the time; you have to be adaptable and know your specialty," says Cutchins. "It also helps if you can get along with people easily and be somewhat independent; I've had people try it but quit because they didn't feel like they fit in with the regular staff."

Fortunately, Carroll has the winning combination of an adventurous spirit and the medical expertise needed to adapt quickly to new hospitals. She worked as a

volunteer EMT while attending MC. As a student nurse she worked in the Multitrauma Critical Care Unit for R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center. After graduating Towson University, she became an RN and worked in the medical ICU at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

"Patients in Baltimore were high-acuity," Carroll says, referring to seriously ill patients needing staff dedicated solely to their care. "As a result, we saw a high turnover in staff. I became a charge nurse; I trained six new nurses and served on several committees. Of all the places I've worked, it was by far the most demanding."

Carroll's Maryland nursing license allows her to work in 30 states, thanks to a nursing compact among states. If she chooses a state outside the compact, she can attain a license on an annual basis. Leaving her permanent position in Baltimore, she gave up some benefits, like sick leave and vacation time, and she buys her own health insurance when she is not on contract. But by and large the benefits outweigh the losses.

Travel nurses earn 40 to 60 percent more than staff nurses. The standard median wage for staff nurses (national estimates) is \$68,450 or \$32.91 per hour, per the US Department of Labor. Their compensation includes a tax-free stipend for housing, meals, and incidentals, which can average \$1,200 to \$1,800 per week. During her contracts, Carroll usually rents a furnished apartment or in-law suite. When needed, she buys furniture and household items at thrift stores, and then resells or donates them when she leaves.

"I do know several travel nurses who live in vans and RVs while on the road," says Carroll. "I dream of one day buying a



Sprinter van and turning it into a mini RV to use on the road."

While staying in one place and working a typical week of three 12-hour days has its advantages, Carroll wanted more time to pursue her passion: globe trekking. Taking contracts for limited times allows her more time and flexibility for extended trips overseas. In the last two-and-a-half years, she has traveled to Thailand, Iceland, Ireland, New Zealand, Belize, and Guatemala. She is planning her next two trips: an Antarctic cruise and a backpack trip to Patagonia, Chile, and Argentina.

"Alicia is making the most of out every minute of her life," says Cutchins. "And she is doing it while building an impressive



Left: Carroll at her latest assignment in Greenville, SC; volunteering at an elephant nature park in Thailand; and hiking in Mt. Rainier National Park, Washington.

Previous page: Carroll at Blanca Lake in the Cascade Mountains, one of her "favorite hikes in Washington."

TRAVEL PHOTOS COURTESY ALICIA CARROLL



CRAIG MAHAFFEY

resume. Internal recruiters love travel nurses; they understand that by working in different hospitals all the time they learn new ways to do things and are conversant with lots of methods and systems."

Carroll understands the value of her experiences, too, especially for future employment opportunities.

"The nursing shortage is getting worse with time, not better," says Carroll. "With baby boomer nurses retiring and the popula-

tion of elderly growing, nursing instructors retiring, and over-65 life expectations rising, nurses like me have good opportunities all over the country. Whenever I stop traveling, I know I will still have good opportunities in my career."

Alicia Carroll completed an AA in general studies as a Montgomery Scholar. She earned a bachelor's in nursing (BSN) at Towson University in 2010. ■

BENEFITS OF TRAVEL NURSING

- Higher pay—40% to 60% higher than staff nursing (includes stipend for housing, meals, and incidentals)
- Travel the country
- Avoid hospital politics
- Resume builder—hospital staffing recruiters view travel nurses positively for their experience with different systems and methods

DRAWBACKS

- Unfamiliar faces and places—being new every 3 months can be challenging
- Possible licensing problems
- Feeling left out among regular staff

Provided by Josh Cutchins, senior recruiter, TotalMed, Southern Pines, NC

CLASS NOTES

1940s

JACOB M. WILSON, BLISS '42, enlisted in the Navy on July 10, 1942, and served in the Southwest Pacific. He was trained as an electronic aviation technician and went to Brisbane, Australia. He is 97 now, and his daughter, Rachel Harper, writes that he would love to hear from anyone who might have served during this time.

1950s

JOHN G. POIDOMANI, BLISS '50, is enjoying retirement at age 92. He attended the Bliss Electrical School under the GI Bill following his service in World War II, then entered the appliance field as an appliance technician and started Reo Appliance Inc. in 1952 with his wife, Marie. He retired due to health after 35 years in 1987 and passed the business on to two employees, made partners, who have continued the company. Marie passed away in 2012.

BETTE GLAZIER '53 is living in Highland, Maryland. She remembers her time on the cheerleading squad with Frances (Pevey) Daly.

1960s

DR. SONJA SPERLICH '68, who attended what was still known as Montgomery Junior College, retired from the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1997. She writes, "MJC enabled me to eventually achieve my PhD from Catholic University. That achievement enabled me to move up the career ladder from typist-secretary to associate director of the Office of Science and Technology Development at NSF."

1970s

JACQUELINE GARDNER '78 has retired and is living in Massachusetts.

2000s



COURTESY MONTGOMERY SCHOLARS

LINDSAY SCHATTENSTEIN, MONTGOMERY SCHOLARS '07 was featured on the cover of the spring 2018 edition of *Scholarly Pursuits*, the Montgomery Scholars alumni newsletter. She works as an event planner for the National Football League Players Association, her dream job. "As an avid football fan, there is no place I would rather be," she states in the article. Touchdown!

2010s

YVES GOMES, MONTGOMERY

SCHOLARS '12 received the John Delloro Generations Rising Award from the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA). The award is given to "an outstanding student or youth advocacy organization committed to worker, immigrant, and civil rights. An officer in APALA, Gomes is currently a third-year pharmacy student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore.



COURTESY YALE UNIVERSITY

JOEL SATI '13 was born in Nairobi, Kenya, and immigrated to Kennesaw, Georgia, at age 9. Early on, his mother worked

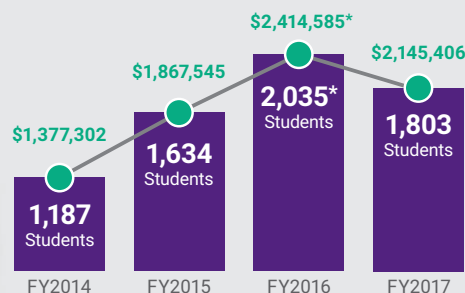
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MC Foundation Scholarships Awarded

* 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.

night and double shifts at a gas station to support themselves. In 2010, after moving to Maryland, he applied to college but found out he was undocumented. This meant he had almost no financial aid options though he was accepted to four-year colleges.

In 2012, however, Sati benefited from two then-new government policies: the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) instituted by President Obama, which provided protection from deportation; and the Maryland DREAM Act, which allowed undocumented students to pay in-state tuition at public colleges and universities.

Sati completed an associate's degree, then transferred to City College of New York (CCNY). At CCNY, he was a youth organizer for African Communities Together, where he mobilized African youth around immigration issues. He also co-designed and co-taught a black political thought course, which is now a permanent offering in CCNY's political science department.

As a PhD student in the jurisprudence and social policy program at University of California-Berkeley and a JD candidate at the Yale Law School, Sati examines the intersections of law, epistemology, and philosophy as they relate to contemporary issues of non-citizenship and illegality.

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

Outstanding Alumni

Five past MC students received honors at the College's biennial alumni awards celebration in April. Two graduates, James G. Muir III '75 and Paola Moya '05, received the Milton F. Clogg Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award, the College's highest honor recognizing former students.



COURTESY JIM MUIR

MUIR is vice president of Hughes Network Systems, LLC. He has held a variety of management positions supporting Hughes's domestic and international locations. He helped start the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce Montgomery College Scholarship Committee. He is vice chair of the Hercules Pinkney Innovation Complex for Science and Technology at MC (PIC MC).



COURTESY PAOLA MOYA

MOYA is founder and chief executive officer of Moya Design Partners, where she oversees the studio's operations, strategic planning, and executive responsibilities, playing an active role in each project. Previously, she led another firm's expansion into new architectural markets, diversified the firm's portfolio, oversaw operations, and elevated its profile—winning some of the most influential and renowned projects in the region.

GENE THOMAS '89 earned honors as NJCAA All-American and All-Region 20 in football and baseball, as well as first team All-Coastal Conference in football. After further two-sport play at Maryland, he went on to play for the Chicago Bears, the Minnesota Vikings, and the San Francisco Giants' AAA affiliate.

MELISSA WEITHMAN '08 captained the women's basketball team to the national championship tournament in her sophomore year, leading the country in scoring with 24 points a game, and was named first-team NJCAA All-American. She later returned to MC as an assistant coach.

To view photos from the April 21 event, visit montgomerycollege.edu/insights.

IN MEMORIAM

EPHRAIM G. SALINS

March 9, 2018

He taught mathematics at Takoma Park from 1963 until his retirement in 1985.

HELEN FRIEDKIN

February 1, 2018

She was administrative aide in the Rockville Speech, Dance, and Theatre department from 1976 until her retirement in 2013.

WILLIAM EZRA "BILL" BOWERS BLISS '41

October 14, 2017

He published *Memoirs of a World War II Destroyer Escort Sailor* in 2013, recounting his service as a radar operator on the USS Lee Fox.

JAMES T. HAN '11

June 17, 2017

VIOLA S. MUSER '88

February 7, 2017

ARLIN V. "STUB" STEVENS BLISS '49

January 4, 2017

He joined the Navy at age 17 and was an electrician's mate aboard ship in the Pacific during World War II. He returned to finish high school and then graduated from Bliss Electrical School.



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SUMMER DINNER THEATRE

1 SEASON 2 SHOWS 12 PERFORMANCES



SISTER ACT

June 22, 23, 24 and June 29, 30, and July 1

Music by Alan Menken // Lyrics by Glenn Slater
Book by Cheri and Bill Steinkellner
Based on the Touchstone Pictures Motion
Picture "Sister Act"



WEST SIDE STORY

July 20, 21, 22 and July 27, 28, 29

Music by Leonard Bernstein
Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
Book by Arthur Laurents

ABOUT SUMMER DINNER THEATRE

Every June and July, Summer Dinner Theatre features aspiring performers, artists, and theatre technicians from the community and the College's music and theatre departments. Students serve as wait staff at each performance, while theatre-goers enjoy a buffet dinner before the show. **Alumni association members SAVE 10%.**

For more performing arts events and information, visit
montgomerycollege.edu/reppac (Rockville) and
montgomerycollege.edu/arts-tpss (Takoma Park/Silver Spring).

