

SUMMER 2014

Invention

THE MAGAZINE OF THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE

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Dear Alumni, Students and Friends,

Mahatma Gandhi said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

This issue of *Invention* focuses on a man who heads community investment and partnerships at the world's largest mass media company and who feels passionately about helping to build self-esteem in the nation's at-risk youths.

We are honored to bring you the story of Bill Black '98, vice president and executive director of Comcast Foundation and director of Community Investment for Comcast Corporation, parent company of NBCUniversal and Comcast Cable. Black shares his inspiration for completing his degree at Thomas Edison State College and how his education positioned him for professional growth throughout his career and eventually connected him to Comcast.

Also in this issue, we meet Tamarra Causley Robinson '05, diversity leader for PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, who talks about why she decided to earn a Master of Science in Management degree from Thomas Edison State College and how it helped expand her perspective, especially about corporate transitions.

We are also excited to share photos from the groundbreaking ceremony of our Nursing Education Center, which will be the new home to the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie participated in the event and said our project means a lot to him because it improves a key gateway to New Jersey's capital city.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Invention*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George A. Pruitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "P".

Dr. George A. Pruitt
President

W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing Earns Full CCNE Accreditation for 10 Years

The W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College was recently awarded full 10-year accreditation for its bachelor's and master's degree programs by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE).

The accreditation resulted from an onsite evaluation of the School's programs conducted in October 2013 and is valid through June 30, 2024.

"CCNE accreditation is a particularly validating endorsement," said Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College. "The Commission is the principal accrediting body for nursing schools and the only national accrediting agency dedicated exclusively to

evaluating bachelor- and graduate-level nursing education programs. We were grateful to have the support of the entire college community in this endeavor and look forward to our continued role in the advancement of nursing education."

The accreditation process also provided a forum for students and graduates of the program to share their experiences, as both learners and active practitioners, with CCNE evaluators. The CCNE determined that the College's nursing programs are in full compliance with all of its accreditation standards and offered no recommendations for improvement.

Recognized by the U.S. secretary of education, the CCNE is an autonomous



Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College.

accrediting agency contributing to the improvement of the public's health. CCNE ensures the quality and integrity of baccalaureate, graduate and residency programs in nursing. To find out more about the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing and its other accreditations, visit www.tesc.edu/nursing.

Foundation Grant Provides Educational Technology

The Investors Foundation, which supports nonprofit organizations that enrich the diverse communities served by Investors Bank, has awarded a \$37,500 grant to the Thomas Edison State College Foundation to support the development of an innovative virtual clinical simulation program in the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing.

"As part of this program, our more than 3,000 nursing students will have access to sophisticated digital representations of patients, integrated with advanced technology and software, which will enable them to practice vital assessment in an online learning environment," explained Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing. "This technology will supplement our students' onground nursing experience, enabling them to develop optimal critical-thinking and decision-making skills in an interactive environment at no risk to real patients."

The grant, which will be awarded over the course of three years, will enable the School to acquire simulation software as well as one patient avatar. The technology is used by a variety of industries, including not only healthcare but also engineering, architectural and special effects.

"We are enormously grateful for the generosity of the Investors Foundation," said John P. Thurber, vice president for



(from left) Amy Rouze, AVP/branch manager, Investors Bank; Linda Martin, senior market manager, Investors Bank; Misty Isak, director of Development, Thomas Edison State College; and Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean, W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing.

Public Affairs. "Their funding makes it possible for the College to respond to the needs of our students and provide an important technological component in their education. Their support, and that of all our donors and partners, is vital to the pursuit of our mission."

Vice Provost Honored by National University Technology Network

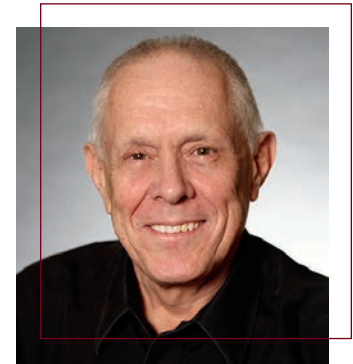
Dr. P. Henry van Zyl, vice provost of Academic Administration and dean of Graduate Programs at Thomas Edison State College, has been selected to receive the 2014 J. O. Grantham Leadership Award for his service by the National University Technology Network (NUTN). The network is a consortium of higher education institutions that serves as a networking and professional development arena for the advancement of teaching and learning.

The Grantham award, named for the founder of NUTN, is given to a person who represents strong leadership in the field of distance learning and technology. Van Zyl, who was nominated for the award by NUTN members based on his demonstrated leadership to both the network and the field of educational

technologies, will be recognized during an awards ceremony at the network's 2014 annual conference in San Antonio, Texas, in September.

"It is an honor to have been selected for this award by my peers on the Advisory Board," said van Zyl. "The National University Technology Network members represent a widely diverse group of innovative leaders in the advancement of teaching and learning. The organization provides member institutions the opportunity for networking and collaboration to face the challenges for successful implementation of emerging educational technologies."

Born and educated in South Africa, van Zyl earned his Doctor of Education degree from the University of South



Dr. P. Henry van Zyl, vice provost of Academic Administration and dean of Graduate Programs at Thomas Edison State College.

Africa in Pretoria, Gauteng Province, and his Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education and Master of Education degrees from the University of Port Elizabeth in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. He has been with Thomas Edison State College for 16 years.

Bringing the Online Proctored Exam to Students

Thomas Edison State College is partnering with the online proctoring service, ProctorU, to enable thousands of its students to take exams online in their homes or at a location of their choice at times that work around their schedules.

Seth Karl Goehring is one of them. ProctorU enables the busy father of three young children and active member of the Minnesota National Guard to take his final exams at his Crookston, Minn., home while completing his Associate in Applied Science degree.



The inspiration behind Seth Goehring's degree completion are (from left to right) his son, Christian; wife, Alicia; daughter Audrey; and son, Kolton.

"Online proctoring means I don't have to travel to a test site," said Goehring. "I already have a variety of day-to-day stresses. The ability to have my exams proctored online, seven days a week, alleviates one of them."

Online proctoring was introduced to Thomas Edison State College students in 2010 to allow them to take exams from the convenience of their home or office using any computer equipped with a webcam and high-speed Internet access. Since then, ProctorU has monitored nearly 50,000 exams for the College's students.

Students connect to a live proctor that they can see on their computer screen when it is time to take their exam. Students complete an ID authentication process and receive real-time assistance from the proctor if they encounter technical difficulties.

"At ProctorU, we offer flexible proctoring options to people that may not otherwise be able to complete their degrees," said ProctorU Executive Vice President Jarrod Morgan. "In our collaboration with Thomas Edison State College, we've seen active duty military take their exams along with thousands of other students who have been able to pursue their college education."

College Breaks Ground on Nursing Education Center on Former Glen Cairn Arms Site in Downtown Trenton

GOV. CHRIS CHRISTIE LAUDS PROJECT DURING CEREMONY

Thomas Edison State College broke ground on its new 34,000-square-foot Nursing Education Center on June 19, continuing the transformation of one of downtown Trenton's key gateway locations from an object of blight to an object of urban and economic renewal.

“What we’re going to see is an investment by the state and by this College and its supporters in trying to do something that will make the quality of life in this community and this state better.”

> New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie

The development of the Nursing Education Center will provide Trenton with its newest landmark building and redefine an important part of the historic State House section of the city. Approximately half of the cost of the project is being funded by the Building Our Future Bond Act, approved by New Jersey voters in 2012.



Architectural rendering of the College's new Nursing Education Center on W. State Street in Trenton.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie participated in the groundbreaking ceremony and told attendees that he was pleased to see the site being transformed from an eyesore to a building that will benefit the city for years to come.

“What we’re going to see is an investment by the state and by this College and its supporters in trying to do something that will make the quality of life in this community and this state better,” said Christie at the event. “I know that one of the particular moments of pride for me about what we’ve been able to accomplish during my time as governor will be seeing this building and knowing the good work that’s going on inside this building and the wonderful professionals that will be produced.”

The \$26.2 million project, which includes the recent demolition of the former Glen Cairn Arms apartment complex, will house the College’s W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing and include a new, state-of-the-art nursing simulation laboratory, lecture halls, conference rooms and a testing center. The building will also have a two-level, 44,828-square-foot parking garage to accommodate up to 98 vehicles.



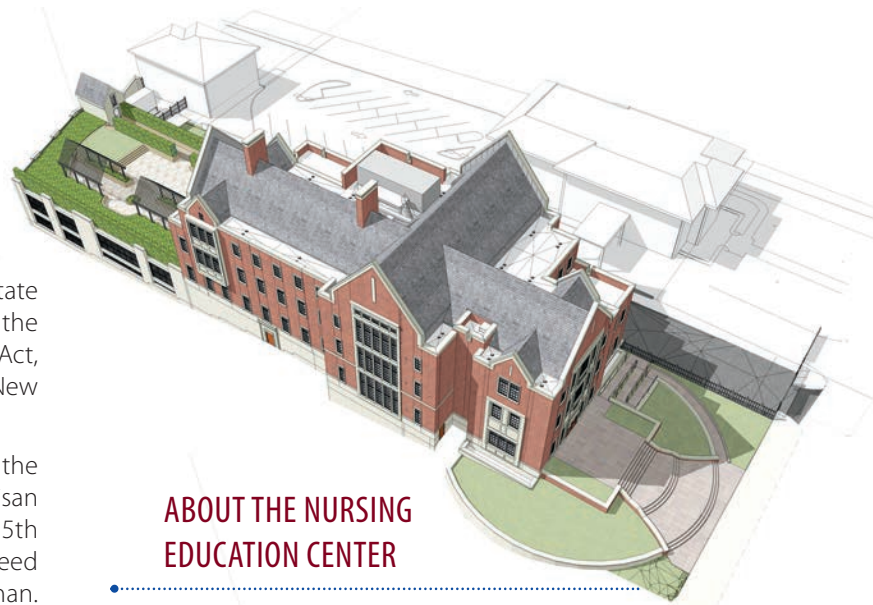
(from left) Brian Maloney, vice chair, Thomas Edison State College Board of Trustees; New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie; Thomas Edison State College President George A. Pruitt; and George Muschal, Trenton councilman, at the groundbreaking ceremony.

Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State College, thanked New Jersey voters, legislators and the governor for supporting the Building Our Future Bond Act, which is providing \$750 million in capital funding for New Jersey colleges and universities.

"I want to thank the voters of New Jersey for approving the Building Our Future Bond Act. I want to thank the bipartisan support we had in the legislature. I want to thank our 15th district delegation, Sen. Shirley Turner, Assemblyman Reed Gusciora and Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson Coleman. I want to thank Assemblyman Wayne DeAngelo and the labor community, who worked so hard for it," he said. "I want to thank a lot of people, but at the end of the day, none of this would have been possible without the leadership of our governor."

The building is designed by Clarke Caton Hintz, of Trenton, N.J. The construction manager of the project is Joseph Jingoli & Son, Inc., of Lawrenceville, N.J., and the general contractor of the project is Epic, of Piscataway, N.J.

To watch video of the groundbreaking ceremony and a virtual tour of the Nursing Education Center, visit www.tesc.edu/nec.



ABOUT THE NURSING EDUCATION CENTER

- > The building is designed to reflect the many former mansions that were located along West State Street near Calhoun Street in Trenton, N.J., and incorporates traditional and durable materials for the exterior, such as slate and composite slate roofing, brick walls and limestone accents.
- > The building's skin features robust insulation, thermal breaks, continuous air barriers and many details adapted from the National Institute of Building Sciences "best practice" design guides.
- > The building's windows will utilize high performing insulated glazing, which vastly exceed the code required minimums for glazing performance and provide ample light and views without the energy loss usually associated with larger windows.
- > The parking garage roof is designed to be a green roof that creates an outdoor space for students and College events while also reducing the flow of rainwater and mitigating the urban heat island effect.

First Floor:

- > Includes a testing center, meeting and conference space, a two-story student lounge featuring the reconstructed iconic entrance to the former Glen Cairn Arms and gallery space to display inventions, artifacts and memorabilia from Thomas Alva Edison donated to the Thomas Edison State College Foundation by John and Eileen Martinson.

Second Floor:

- > W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing, including the nursing simulation laboratory, lecture halls and classrooms.

Third Floor:

- > Additional meeting rooms and office space.
- > The building site was previously home to the Glen Cairn Mansion in the late 19th century and the recently demolished Glen Cairn Arms apartment complex.
- > The site is located at West State Street and Calhoun Street and features views of the Delaware River, the Calhoun Street Bridge and the Trenton skyline.
- > The total project cost is approximately \$26.2 million, including:
 - > \$1.5 million for demolition of the Glen Cairn Arms and site remediation and preparation.
 - > \$24.7 million for design and construction of the Nursing Education Center.
- > Approximately \$12.7 million of the project cost is being funded by the Building Our Futures Bond Act, approved by New Jersey voters in 2012.
- > Construction is scheduled to be completed by early 2016.



(from left) New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie greets Thomas Edison State College President George A. Pruitt at the groundbreaking ceremony of the College's Nursing Education Center in downtown Trenton.

Watson Institute Pilots Program Using iPads to Increase Childhood Literacy

The John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy of Thomas Edison State College is using iPads to increase language skills and math literacy in New Jersey preschools that serve children from homes where English is a second language.

The project, which is administered by the institute's English Language Learners (ELL) Summer Institute and Mentoring Program, is currently being piloted in Head Start programs in Trenton and Hunterdon County, N.J.

"The iPads we have distributed in this first wave will be used as an interactive digital resource by educators to enhance early childhood language mastery," said Ana I. Berdecia, senior fellow and director of the Watson Institute's Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children, who is managing the pilot and leads the ELL Summer Institute and Mentoring Program. "We are delighted to be partnering with the Hispanic Information and Telecommunication Network's Early Learning Collaborative (HITN-ELC) in providing these multimedia learning tools to classrooms."

According to Berdecia, teachers do not always have the resources to link technology with early childhood learning. The Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network teacher's guide, parent's guide and the accompanying materials are expected to provide a clear map to link technology with learning while promoting early childhood English language literacy and reinforcing the children's home language, Spanish.

"From my visits to the classrooms, I can see the pure enjoyment and engagement of children exposed to these interactive learning tools," said Berdecia.

The multimedia materials provided through the program focus on English language development, early literacy and early math. The collaborative is funded through a Ready to Learn grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement. Teachers participating in the program will be asked to record how the children are using the devices and document what learning has taken place under the auspices of ELL's Mentoring Program.



Ana I. Berdecia, senior fellow and director of the Watson Institute's Center for the Positive Development of Urban Children.

Jefferson Tejada, a Trenton Head Start preschool student, will sharpen his language skills with the help of an iPad containing child-centric software.



Helene Fuld Health Trust Awards College \$650,000

The W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College has received a three-year, \$650,000 grant from the Helene Fuld Health Trust to provide scholarships for students working to become registered nurses.

The grant will be used to provide scholarships for students enrolled in the College's Accelerated 2nd Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Program, which is designed for adults who possess a non-nursing bachelor's degree and are interested in becoming registered nurses. The intense, one-year program combines online and classroom-based courses at the College with clinical experiences at

Capital Health facilities in Trenton and Hopewell, N.J., to prepare graduates for the National Council Licensure Exam for RNs (NCLEX-RN).

"We are extremely honored and grateful to receive this grant from the Helene Fuld Health Trust, which will provide financial assistance to students who are interested in becoming registered nurses," said Dr. Filomela Marshall, dean of the W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing. "These scholarships will ultimately result in more students completing our accelerated BSN program and successfully entering the profession as RNs."

The grant will be awarded over the course of three years. Of the total, \$325,000 will be used to provide scholarships to students in 2014, 2015 and 2016. An additional \$325,000 will be used to create an endowment fund for scholarships to be awarded in future years.

The Helene Fuld Health Trust was established by Dr. Leonhard Felix Fuld in 1969 as a successor to the Helene Fuld Health Foundation, which he founded with his sister, Florentine, in 1935. Today, the Helene Fuld Health Trust is the nation's largest private funder devoted exclusively to nursing students and nursing education.

College Selected by RWJF *New Careers in Nursing* Program

The W. Cary Edwards School of Nursing at Thomas Edison State College is one of 52 schools from across the country to receive a grant from the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) *New Careers in Nursing Scholarship (NCIN)* Program that will support underrepresented students interested in becoming registered nurses.

For the 2014-2015 academic year, the school will receive \$50,000 to support five traditionally underrepresented students who plan to enter the nursing profession by earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree through the College's Accelerated 2nd Degree BSN Program.

"*New Careers in Nursing* (NCIN) has made amazing strides in helping schools of nursing recruit and retain diverse students in these competitive and rigorous accelerated degree programs," said David Krol, MD, MPH, FAAP, RWJF, senior program officer. "Through supporting these institutions, NCIN is working to increase the diversity of our nursing workforce, while also assisting schools of nursing in making their

institutions more inclusive. The leadership, mentoring and other support these institutions provide are helping to prepare a diverse nursing workforce able to meet the challenges associated with building a culture of health in our nation."

NCIN is a program of RWJF and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN). Each NCIN scholar has already earned a bachelor's degree in another field and is making a transition to nursing through an accelerated nursing degree program, which prepares students to assume the role of registered nurse in as little as 12-18 months.

In addition to a \$10,000 scholarship, NCIN scholars receive other support to help them meet the demands of an accelerated degree program. All NCIN grantee schools maintain a leadership and mentoring program for their scholars as well as a pre-entry immersion program to assist scholars in learning essential study, test-taking and other skills needed to succeed in their program of study.

"Nursing and nursing education are at a critical juncture right now, and NCIN's exemplary approach to supporting nursing schools is helping to strengthen both," said AACN President Eileen Breslin, PhD, RN, FAAN. "NCIN's creative, innovative and responsive approach to providing grantees with tools to ensure academic success will result in lasting changes at nursing schools nationwide. The NCIN program has truly raised the bar for recruitment, retention, mentoring and leadership development for nursing students from groups underrepresented in nursing."



Recent Grads Give College High Marks

In an era swirling with skepticism over the value of a college degree, the findings from a survey of recent graduates affirm Thomas Edison State College's reputation as a provider of high quality collegiate learning opportunities for self-directed adults.

“Of the graduates that completed our survey, 97 percent indicated that they would recommend the College to others.”

> Dr. Deborah Duffy

“Our Graduate Survey provides us with a valuable and comparative measurement of recent graduates' satisfaction with our programs and their perceptions of our impact on their educational, personal and career objectives,” said Dr. Deborah Duffy, senior research analyst with the College's Division of Planning and Research, which administers the survey.

“We are always thankful to those who take the time to complete our surveys. This is our way of capturing the voice of our students, which is essential to our ability to continue to meet their needs.”

A total of 2,936 undergraduate students who received their degrees between July 2012 and June 2013 were invited to participate in this year's survey, of which 378 responded, yielding a 13 percent response rate.

“Of the graduates that completed our survey, 97 percent indicated that they would recommend the College to others,” noted Duffy. “As an institution serving students already employed in positions across a multitude of sectors, the power of their positive recommendations cannot be underestimated. The quality of our academic programs and services are a matter of continuous focus for our staff,” Duffy added. “The survey's findings, together with other measures of student satisfaction and learning, are used to maintain our strengths and continually improve upon areas that impact students' overall experience.”

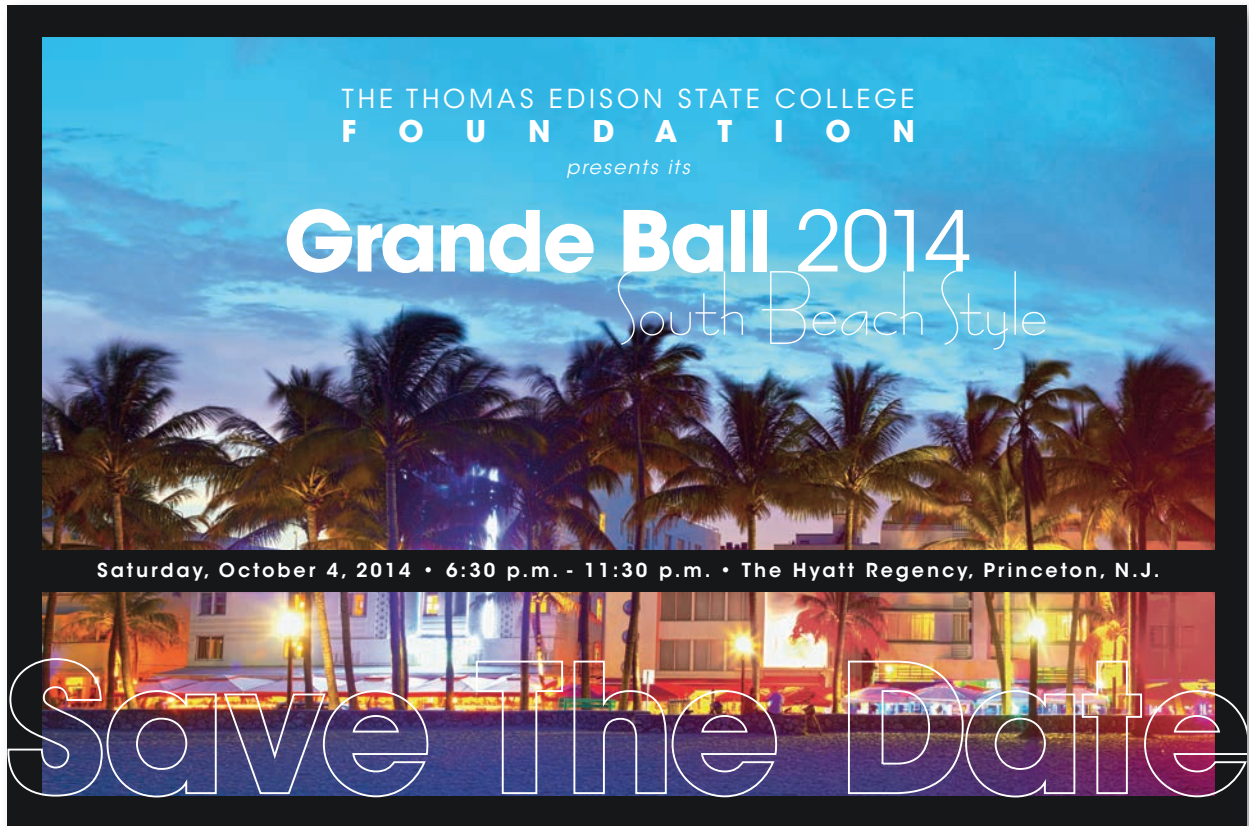


Dr. Deborah Duffy, senior research analyst at Thomas Edison State College.

GENERAL FINDINGS FROM THE FY 2013 GRADUATE SURVEY:

- > The College continued to receive high marks from graduates, with 96 percent of survey respondents giving the College an overall rating of “Good” or “Excellent.”
- > The College's degree programs and requirements continue to be well-regarded by graduates, as are the College's online courses, prior learning assessment options and TECEP® exams, all of which received overall satisfaction ratings of “Good” or “Excellent” by more than 90 percent of FY 2013 graduates.
- > The ease of transferring credits from other institutions continues to be a significant strength for the College, with nearly two-thirds of graduates taking advantage of this option and nine out of 10 rating the experience as either “Good” or “Excellent.”
- > Graduates also identified some areas that the College can improve upon, such as the timeliness of mentor feedback and the availability of technical support. Ratings for the timeliness and helpfulness of staff have increased over the past five years, reflecting positive changes that have taken place.





Streckewald Memorial Golf Classic Raises More Than \$66,000

Beautiful weather was the only thing that could compete with the grounds of TPC Jasna Polana in Princeton, N.J., which played host to the 2014 Thomas C. Streckewald Memorial Golf Classic on Monday, May 19, 2014.

The 20th annual golf tournament raised more than \$66,000 for the Thomas Edison State College Foundation. More than 130 golfers and guests participated in the event, which was held at the venue for a second consecutive year.

TOURNAMENT SPONSORS INCLUDED:

Bank of America Merrill Lynch (Eagle sponsor); Lear and Pannepacker, LLP (Golf Cart sponsor); UBS (Flag sponsor); Bank of Princeton, Children's Futures, Children's Specialized Hospital, Gitterman & Associates Wealth Management, Mass Mutual Financial Group, NJM Insurance Group, PSEG, Sparta Systems, Inc. and Stark & Stark (Corporate sponsors); Investors Bank (Beverage Cart sponsor); Bunker Hill Consultation Center (Boxed Lunch sponsor); Nexus Properties, Inc. (Hole in One sponsor); Deborah Hospital Foundation (Steven M. Honara '80), Ironworkers Local 68, PNC Bank, Spencer Ryan, LLC and St. Francis Medical Center (Deuce sponsors); Burlington County College, Clarke Caton Hintz, Digital Dog Direct, Hoisington Engineers, KPMG, Mercer County Community College, New Jersey State Library, Office Furniture Partnership, Princeton Packet, Inc., Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton - Center for Orthopedic and Spine Health, (Tee sponsors); and Richard Arndt, Jeffrey D. Dufour, Kevin K. Cheng, Bruce Dansbury and Morris Lewis (Friends).





BILL BLACK '98

Bill Black BSBA '98 (center), vice president and executive director of the Comcast Foundation and director of Community Investment for Comcast Corporation, confers with his colleagues, Rebecca Gadsden and Fred Maahs.

THE POWER IN CONNECTION

A man in a dark blue suit and patterned tie is seated in a wheelchair at a wooden desk. He is looking out a large window at a cityscape, with a prominent glass skyscraper (the Comcast Center) on the left. The background shows a dense urban area under a clear sky. The overall tone is professional and aspirational.

HOW THOMAS EDISON STATE COLLEGE
HELPED CONNECT BILL BLACK '98, TO THE
WORLD'S LARGEST MASS MEDIA COMPANY.

THE POWER IN CONNECTION

For a man whose past 14 years have been spent in management roles at the largest mass media company in the world, William "Bill" Black's reasons for returning to college may seem a bit homespun.

Black, vice president and executive director of Comcast Foundation and director of Community Investment for Comcast Corporation, points to the two people who influenced his decision the most: his children.

"This might seem funny, but part of my motivation was to earn a bachelor's degree before either of my two children or, at least, at the same time," said Black, who earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree from Thomas Edison State College in 1998. "My son was in college and my daughter was close to high school graduation. They unknowingly gave me a push."

Pockets of influence such as this are familiar territory for Black, whose re-

sponsibilities include community service collaborations, grant-making and operations, financial and in-kind corporate giving initiatives, charitable sponsorships and development of national partnerships at Comcast Corporation, which owns NBCUniversal and Comcast Cable.

NBCUniversal operates 30 news, entertainment and sports cable networks, the NBC and Telemundo broadcast networks, Universal Pictures and Universal Parks and Resorts. Comcast Cable is the largest video, high-speed Internet and phone provider to residential customers in the country.

"The collaborative aspect of my job is what appeals to me the most, and gives me an opportunity to work with almost everyone on Comcast's Community Investment team along with colleagues in many other departments," noted Black. "Our work with external partners often focuses on facilitating digital literacy, access to computer skills training and building

the next generation of leaders from within underserved communities."

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) and Easter Seals are among the community organizations with which Black works. Comcast supports BGCA's my.future initiative, which helps youth identify and develop digital interests as they progress through the program.

Comcast also provides nonprofits, like BGCA and the National Urban League, airtime for public service announcements.

"Comcast's assistive technology partnership with Easter Seals, for instance, includes a component of free airtime to the organization," said Black. "The centerpiece event of our community service endeavors occurs on Comcast Cares Day held on the last Saturday of every April. This year, we mobilized 95,000 Comcast and NBCUniversal employees, family members and friends who volunteered on more than 800 projects around the world."

"Our work with external partners often focuses on facilitating digital literacy, access to computer skills training and building the next generation of leaders from within underserved communities."

> Bill Black '98

“Two things that helped me choose TESC were the variety of options for coursework and the ability to demonstrate college-level knowledge for credit.”

> *Bill Black '98*

Comcast's ongoing collaborations in programs that help build self-esteem for the nation's at-risk youth are especially gratifying to Black because they show children that education is a true path out of poverty.

Somewhere along his own path, Black realized that his future would be positively influenced by education. He had gained managerial leadership experience by holding general management, corporate affairs and communications positions at Bresnan Communications, Continental Cablevision and MediaOne, but did not have many college credits to match that experience.

“I knew that not having a college degree would hold me back on the career path I had chosen,” he said.

That reality, and the desire for more course completion options, led him to Thomas Edison State College.

“Even in the late 90s, there were quite a few ‘distance learning’ options available and options to complete college programs part time in my home state

of Michigan,” said Black. “Two things that helped me choose TESC were the variety of options for course work and the ability to demonstrate college-level knowledge for credit. Having attended college years earlier and being comfortable with the typical classroom setting, I wasn't sure if distance learning was right for me. But I was able to stay disciplined and, more importantly, I received help and support from the TESC mentors and staff.”

He said that the course work, though grueling, conditioned him to be more persistent in his academic journey.

“Much of what I was learning in the BSBA program gave me a good foundation for management roles, and later, for master's-level work,” said Black. “Earning my degree at TESC convinced me that I could continue my studies online at Jones International University and that what online learning offered was both viable and valuable.”

Black went on to earn a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree in project management and a Master of Arts in Business Communication degree at Jones International University.

Off the clock, Black serves as a board member of the Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia, a trustee for the American Indian College Fund and on the corporate advisory council of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society.

Black and his wife, Karen, live in Philadelphia and have two adult children, Jaclyn and David, who live in Michigan.

“Most of our family resides in Michigan, but we're lucky enough to have a niece living near us in Philly,” said Black. “In addition to our son and daughter, we have two young granddaughters and, luckily, we get to see them all quite often.”





Tamarra Causley Robinson '05



As a diversity leader for a Big Four accounting firm and an executive coach, Tamarra Causley Robinson is focused on a key variable of her employer's balance sheet: its people.

If nearly 20 years working for PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP has taught her anything, it is that the business of human capital involves much more than metrics.

"The inclusive culture of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) is designed to help attract, develop and advance individual employees regardless of their dimensions of diversity so that they are able to grow personally and professionally," said Causley Robinson, a diversity leader-senior manager for the firm.

Working in PwC's New York City headquarters office, she is part of a national human resources (HR) team that supports 184,000 staff members in 158 countries who are vital to the firm's culture of diversity and inclusiveness. Prior to transitioning to HR, Causley Robinson served as

the director of IT Customer Support for the NY metro area.

The firm's services include auditing, tax services and accounting advisory services as well as consulting services in the areas of finance, innovation, operations, risk management, security, technology and human resource management for a myriad of industries.

Like her previous role in information technology, Causley Robinson's current position is centered on staff and client support and project management.

"I was able to thrive in my previous role and bridge that set of skills to my current position," she said. "In IT Field Services, I managed a regional 65-person group supporting more than 10,000 clients. You simply could

not do that without having interpersonal, organizational and relationship-building skills."

After working in IT, Causley Robinson was transitioned to her current role as a diversity leader and manager. It is an important role in a firm that often serves in a consulting capacity in the area of human resources for many other firms.

As a lifelong learner, Causley Robinson had already earned undergraduate degrees from Camden County College in Blackwood, N.J., and Montclair State University in Montclair, N.J. For her graduate degree, she selected Thomas Edison State College.

"When I was researching colleges, I saw that Thomas Edison State College had been a forerunner in

Human Capitalist

the field of distance learning," said Causley Robinson. "The types of course completion available also fit

Management (MSM) degree with a concentration in project management. While she said the

better to do," said Causley Robinson. "I genuinely wanted to accomplish that goal. PwC was not saying, 'you have to have a master's degree.' I just wanted to continue my learning. I took advantage of my employer's tuition reimbursement policy in the process, and much of what I learned was solidified with some of the things that I already knew. It also opened up avenues of thought that I hadn't previously considered."

"I love being a student, but I didn't necessarily have the ability to travel to, and sit in the classroom. After a while I finally said, 'why am I not doing this?'"

> Tamarra Causley Robinson '05

my lifestyle. I love being a student, but I didn't necessarily have the ability to travel to and sit in the classroom. After a while I finally said, 'why am I not doing this?'"

In 2005, Causley Robinson earned her Master of Science in

program undoubtedly augmented her role at PwC, she credited her sense of curiosity as the biggest reason for furthering her education.

"When you decide to pursue a master's degree as an adult, it's not because you don't have anything

She noted that completion of her MSM, specifically focused on organizational leadership, provided her the opportunity to translate her learning experience into one that she could apply directly to her career. Working with and leading groups of colleagues with one common goal in mind allowed her to take her education to new heights.

In addition to her current work with PwC, Causley Robinson also serves as an executive coach to help inspire and motivate those going through transitions or changes in their lives.

She lives in central New Jersey with her husband, Keith, and their dog, Misty. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, crocheting and gardening.

To find out more about Causley Robinson's individual coaching sessions or to read her blog, visit www.dare2doitnow.com.



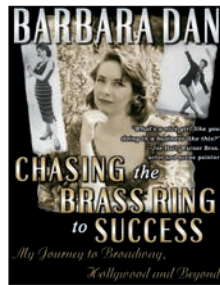
Tamarra Causley Robinson '05

John Aperans BSAST '94

John Aperans was recently recognized by the Health Physics Society for Chapter Volunteer Service to its East Tennessee Chapter.

Barbara Dan BA '86

Barbara Dan, who celebrated her 80th birthday in April and has worked more than 60 years as a professional writer, continues to use her knowledge of American theatre to enrich her historical novels. Her memoir, *Chasing the Brass Ring to Success*, which came out in fall 2013, is an account of her personal journey to Broadway and Hollywood. It is aimed at reaching today's aspiring actors, singers, dancers, musicians and artists as they make the pilgrimage to fame and glory via the bright lights of Broadway. In May 2014, she brought back her best-selling historical novels, *O'Rourke's Bride* and *MacGregor's Bride* for a second time in trade paperback (www.CreateSpace.com) and in ebook format via smashwords.com and Kindle.com. Her website (www.barbaradan.com) lists her many novels as well as the books on counseling and mental health by her late husband, John Dan.



Dr. Timothy O. Holcomb BA '91

Dr. Timothy O. Holcomb recently received The American Medical Association's Certificate of Recognition.

Stephen D. Jones BSAST '12

Stephen D. Jones was elected president of the International Code Council (ICC) in October 2013. ICC is a member-focused association dedicated to developing model codes and standards used in the design, build and compliance process to construct safe, sustainable, affordable and resilient structures. ICC promulgates the construction codes used in the United States and several foreign countries. Jones is employed as the construction official for the Township of Millburn/Short Hills and the Borough of Florham Park, N.J.



Mary Keller Olsen BSN '09

Mary Keller Olsen was recently promoted to the position of nurse educator of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Children's Hospital of New Jersey at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. She is certified in neonatal intensive care nursing and has worked in the NICU for 10 years as a staff nurse. Prior to that, she worked in the adult and pediatric emergency departments at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. Keller Olsen is in her final semester at Thomas Edison State College pursuing her Master of Science in Nursing degree.

Ryan Marks BA '14

Ryan Marks, who graduated from the College in March, published seven books last year while still in school. To date, Marks has published 48 mini-ebooks, 21 free ebooks and 20 paperback books.



Brewster Milton Robertson BA '85

Brewster Milton Robertson is a novelist, literary critic and ghost writer. Twice nominated for the Pushcart Prize and Best American Essays, he has been a longtime major weekly contributor to *Publishers Weekly* and many other periodicals. His Golden Eye Literary Prize-winning debut novel, *Rainy Days and Sundays*, is under option for film. Robertson's fourth novel, *Gone to Graveyards* – an epic novel of the Korean War was published in May 2011, and was lauded before the Alabama State Senate. Over the span of his career, Robertson has been a commercial artist, Army medical service officer, a pharmaceutical salesman, marketing director for a national service organization, teacher, photographer's model, film actor and consulting editor. Currently, Robertson is working on his fifth novel, *The Kilimanjaro Conundrum*.

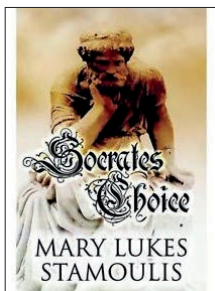


Rev. Dr. David S. Showalter BSAST '94

Rev. Dr. David S. Showalter received his Doctor of Ministry degree in youth, family and culture from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., on June 14, 2014. Showalter, who had previously earned a Master of Divinity degree from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., serves as youth pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Lusby, Md., and as Washington (D.C.) East District youth coordinator, providing adolescent development and discipleship training and ministry support to licensed pastors, youth ministers and youth over a 65-church area. After receiving his BSAST from Thomas Edison State College and being promoted to work group leader for Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Plant Technical Training Unit, Showalter resigned from Calvert Cliffs to begin a career in full-time youth and family ministry in 2000. "Attaining my bachelor's degree from Thomas Edison State College helped me see the advantages and benefits of persistence toward lifelong learning," he noted. "It showed me there are ways to attain higher education while continuing full-time work. I'll be forever grateful to TESC for the creativity and flexibility it provided that helped me begin this journey." Showalter's DMin degree comes 25 years to the month from when he first began as a volunteer youth advisor.

Mary Lukes Stamoulis BA '97

Mary Lukes Stamoulis recently published her book *Socrates Choice*. The novel follows Socrates, whose aim in life was to enlighten the public about morality and the good side of life. In his lectures at the "Agora" meeting place in Athens, he would plead ignorance in order to ferret out information from the spectators, which they didn't even know they possessed. His philosophy was "an unexamined life is not worth living." His personal "daimonion," whom he considered to be the god of Apollo, guided him as well as the inscription of stone on Apollo's temple at Delphi, which stated: "Know thyself." Most importantly, he examined what death was about and arrived at his own conclusions; radical for that time, but which have withstood the test of time.



Km! Ra BSBA '10

Km! Ra, since becoming purchasing director for the city of Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., in March 2012, has reworked procedures to make it easier for vendors to vie for contracts and to give the city a better shot at good prices and quality service for everything from paving to health insurance. Ra is in charge of the city's \$40 million budget, which encompasses its entire annual spending. During his tenure with the city, Ra has rewritten every policy and procedure as it relates to his role in the city's government and has personally trained all staff. Furthermore, Ra has published two books online: one, a novella he wrote when he was 14, *Brutal Octopus*; the other, a book of poems and free verse, *Inside My Head*.



Dora Zeno BSBA '91

Dora Zeno, business administrator (BA)/board secretary for Jefferson Township Public Schools, was recently honored by the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO) with a 2014 Distinguished Service Award for her long-term, continuous exemplary service. As part of the award, Zeno had the honor of presenting a \$1,000 scholarship from NJASBO to Sharissa Lakhicharran, a senior graduating from Jefferson Township High School who will pursue a financial career. Zeno, who was nominated because of her exemplified skills and dedication to her profession, serves as an adjunct professor at Kean University, teaching master's program courses in Business Administration/Business Office Operations. She also serves as a Field Study supervisor for SBA candidates.

Keep Us Posted!

Please send your news to invention@tesc.edu and be sure to include your first and last name, your address, your preferred phone, the year you graduated and what degree you earned. Updates can also be sent to: **Thomas Edison State College, Invention Editor, 101 W. State St., Trenton, NJ 08608-1176; Fax: (609) 777-1894.**

ALUMNI & STUDENT NETWORKING EVENTS

tesc.edu/alumnievents

SEPTEMBER

17 > King of Prussia, Pa.

OCTOBER

16 > Phoenix, Ariz.

28 > New York, N.Y.

29 > Cherry Hill, N.J.

NOVEMBER

7 > New Jersey Education Association,
Atlantic City, N.J.

20 > New Jersey League of Municipalities,
Atlantic City, N.J.



SAVE THE DATE

Thomas Edison State College Foundation's
Grande Ball 2014 – South Beach Style

> Saturday, October 4
The Hyatt Regency, Princeton, N. J.

CONNECT WITH US!



For more information about these events or having an event near you,
contact the Office of Alumni Affairs at (609) 633-8592 or alumni@tesc.edu.