

Partners

Spring 2017

CLARK COLLEGE FOUNDATION MAGAZINE

Not SUCH A
DIRTY JOB

PLUS:

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Hip-hop scene thriving

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PARTNERS



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Not such a dirty job

Few women chose trade jobs. Clark is changing the perception of the required skills and adjusting courses to fit diverse schedules.



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Cover: Sunshine Hill is raising children while working toward a degree in Machining. She's the only woman in the program.

Partners is published three times a year (spring, summer and winter). We welcome your comments by email at clarkcollegefoundation@clark.edu or by phone at 360.992.2301.

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[SPRING 2017]
Volume 18, Issue 1

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Printed by Journal Graphics, Portland, Ore.



Come to campus in April to enjoy our beautiful Shirofugen cherry blossoms and share in the legacy of international friendship and learning we have with Joyo, Japan, our sister city.

Clark College Theatre's winter musical production, "Urinetown" a Tony Award-winning dark comedy by Mark Hollmann and Greg Kotis, was a campus hit. It was produced by H. Gene Biby, directed by Dorinda Toner, vocal direction by April Brookins Duvic and choreography by Alicia Marie Turvin. Pictured left to right, Greg Shilling, Megan Smith, Breanna Kurth, Sterling Buck, Megan McDonnell, Chloe Payne and Robert Altieri.



Briefly AROUND CAMPUS



The 1968 baseball team is reunited in the halls of Clark and joined by current coach Mark Magdaleno, first row, center.

Penguins enter the Athletics Hall of Fame, preserve their place in history

The sixth annual Athletics Hall of Fame induction ceremony was held at Clark in February honoring two outstanding athletes and a championship team. Basketball standout Beth Hamrick Graves '95, track star Kalani Rodrigues '03 and the 1968 baseball team were honored. More than 100 people were in attendance swapping stories, praising the athletes and watching highlight videos. Hamrick Graves averaged 23 points per game and still holds the record during a NWAC tournament with 29 points. Rodrigues, who was recognized posthumously, was a four-time All-American, three-time NWAC champion and school-record holder. The 1968 baseball team was the Washington State community college champion and western division champion with a 16-10 season. Watch the videos at <http://bit.ly/2mJsaBX>

Food summit explores local food trends

On February 20, Clark College, in partnership with Clark County's Food System Council and Slow Food Southwest Washington, hosted Growing Our Future: The 2017 Food Summit. The conference brought together local business professionals, community members, and Clark faculty and staff to explore issues of food in our community as well as inform the college about the potential for future Ecology and Agronomy programs. The event attracted nearly 150 attendees who listened and engaged with food entrepreneurs, nutritionists, engineers and farmers. Those individuals provided learning opportunities for a variety of issues from the science of food to production and nutrition. In between workshops, attendees enjoyed a locavore lunch including locally sourced delicacies prepared by faculty from the Tod and Maxine McClaskey Culinary Institute. The summit provided Clark with a set of key themes to explore and discuss further with the broader community. Topics include the expansion of a new campus at Boschma Farms in Ridgefield, Wash., which could become the future location of farming and food production programs.



The 2017 Food Summit held in February was a partnership with Clark County's Food System Council and Slow Food Southwest Washington.

Gibert receives distinguished service award



Lisa Gibert accepts the Distinguished Service Award from Mark Koenig, CASE District VIII board chair. Photo by Vivian Cheadle Manning

Lisa Gibert, president and CEO of Clark College Foundation, received the Distinguished Service Award for her leadership and advocacy for community colleges at a Seattle conference in February. Gibert was recognized by her peers for her outstanding service in 2016 by Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District VIII. "Lisa has made a significant contribution to CASE, through her leadership, advocacy and commitment to enhance the engagement with and relevance of CASE to community colleges in our district," said Mark Koenig, CASE District VIII board chair. CASE District VIII comprises 152 member institutions in the Pacific Northwest and western Canada in support of professionals at educational and professional institutions.

Penguin athlete shatters 22-year-old record

Add another one to the books. For the first time in 22 years a record has changed hands for Clark College's men's cross country team. The record-breaking event took place on October 1, 2016, at the annual Charles Bowles Invitational at Willamette University in Salem, Ore. Sam Garvin competed fiercely and finished the eight kilometer foot race in 24:52, shattering the existing record of 25:11 set in 1994 by Eric Anderson. Garvin's time set a new all-time best cross country mark for the college. Later in the season, Garvin took home another major victory by winning the NWAC Men's Championship at Saint Martin's University in Lacey, Wash., on November 12. It was the second year in a row a Clark athlete claimed the NWAC title. James Breen was the 2015 champion. President Robert K. Knight presented Garvin with a challenge ring—a tradition he bestows on student-athletes who break Clark records.



Sam Garvin is the fastest runner ever at Clark College. Photo courtesy of Tracy Swisher, NWAC sports information.

Survey says!

Last fall, we surveyed nearly 10,000 alumni, asking questions about their time at Clark, if they would like to be involved and how they would like to be served. Here's what they said:

- 98% live and work in greater Vancouver
- 1/3 support local businesses and would use alumni perks
- 48% want to be a mentor or offer career guidance to Clark students
- 35% want to know what's happening on Clark's campus by mail or email

Read more about the results at www.clarkcollegefoundation.org/alumni-association or contact Kelsey Hukill, alumni relations director, at KHukill@clark.edu.



Not SUCH A DIRTY JOB

“The stigma that goes with this kind of work is still there, that it’s a dirty job. That’s not really true anymore; machining is very high-tech now.”

– Bruce Wells, Machine Technology

Clark is changing the perception of these jobs



In the machine shop one day this winter, student Sunshine Hill confessed—over the squeal of grinding metal—that she was having a rough week.

Hill, 34, had just weaned her youngest daughter, aged 2. She’d been up late each night, tending to the tearful toddler.

At first glance, it’s easy to overlook that Hill is the only woman among the 70 or so students in the Machining program. In the shop, she ties her long brown hair into a messy bun. She wears baggy coveralls that dwarf her petite frame and protective eyeglasses that shield her face. But no matter how you conceal the physical differences, the single mom of three is different from her classmates.

“It’s brutal being a mom... this is like a vacation,” she said, pointing to the hulking machine that whirled behind her.

In 2014, just 4.5 percent of machinists in the U.S. were women, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). In steel plants and coal mines, on construction sites and manufacturing lines, women are underrepresented. Women make up a tiny percentage of what are known as the skilled trades, such as electricians and plumbers (2 percent) and automotive mechanics (1 percent). Women are also outnumbered in the service trades, such as emergency medical technicians (26 percent), computer network administrators (19 percent) and commercial pilots (7 percent).

Nationwide, less than 3 percent of all tradespeople are women, but nearly 7 percent of Oregonians and Washingtonians in the trades are women. Recent efforts from Clark College aim to push that percentage even higher.

Connie Ashbrook is executive director of Oregon Tradeswomen, a nonprofit that helps women in Oregon and Washington find work in the trades. Beginning in the 1970s, Ashbrook worked as a dump truck driver, as a carpenter and then as an elevator constructor—the highest-paying construction trade.

Oregon Tradeswomen helps women find new career paths and land apprenticeships or other training opportunities in the trades. The group also manages an image library, to increase the visibility of women in the trades. They believe that if young girls regularly see women wearing hard hats, the girls will have an easier time envisioning themselves working in construction.

Hundreds of thousands of tradeswomen go to work each morning without recognition. According to 2014 data from the BLS, 97 percent of dental hygienists are women, and just 5 percent are construction workers. Yet the construction industry is so massive that more than twice as many women are construction workers (397,100) as dental hygienists (169,900).

When Hill and her husband separated she needed to find a job to support her three children. Previously, she had worked in food service and on road crews, but those jobs just didn’t provide her with enough money. She loves cars but has scoliosis and worries about the physical toll of lifting engines and scooting under chassis in an auto shop. Her father encouraged her to try machining instead. In looking for a new career, Hill said her gender didn’t factor into her thinking.

Bruce Wells, chair of the Machine Technology Department at Clark College, said machinist jobs start at \$16 to \$18 per hour, but experienced workers can make over \$40 per hour or \$83,200 a year.

By Lily Raff McCaulou

Large companies have an incentive to hire women—federal government contracts require companies to provide opportunities to women, veterans and minorities. Still, Wells said he isn't actively recruiting women into Clark's program because he isn't recruiting at all. For the last five years, the Machining program has been at capacity.

"If you're a machinist, you can go anywhere in the country and find a job. It's always been that way. We (machinists) have something to do with almost everything people touch all day," he said.

The molds for a plastic toothbrush. Food processing equipment. Truck parts that get products to stores. All of these items were made by machinists.

"It's the most misunderstood of the trades," Wells said.

"I think the stigma that goes with this kind of work is still there, that it's a dirty job," he said. "That's not really true anymore, machining is very high-tech now." He believes that's one reason why more women don't go into the industry.

Job opportunities are "wide open. Companies are just screaming for employees," Wells said.

Employee Kim Clements welds a rooster tail assembly at Gunderson Marine's Portland, Ore., facility.

Gunderson Marine

Gunderson Marine manufactures rail cars and ocean-going barges in its Portland facility. Mark Eitzen, general manager of Gunderson, said the company has 1,100 employees, 86 of whom are women, including 40 in the manufacturing shop—or about 4 percent in manufacturing.

Clark College Foundation's board member Brad Skinner is a retired employee of Greenbrier Companies. Gunderson Marine is a division of its business.

Nearly three years ago, the company went on a hiring spree to handle a backlog of orders for its heavy equipment. Of the 200 or so employees hired then, "a much higher percentage than usual" were women, Eitzen said.

Eitzen said he's not sure why that happened. The country was still clawing its way out of a recession, so perhaps there were more applicants than usual. Eitzen said the women told more women about the jobs and word spread. The company has since connected with Oregon Tradeswomen to find additional female workers, and its percentage of female employees has ticked upward.

The average Gunderson wage is approximately \$65,000 per year with full benefits, Eitzen said. Without many skilled



A bulkhead wall is being installed using a 200-ton crane (not pictured) to attach it to a wing wall of a barge at Gunderson Marine in Portland, Ore.

welders or a manufacturing base in the area, the company has developed its own training program, so most entry-level employees do not need prior experience.

"I think it's worked out well for us," Eitzen said of the increased percentage of women employees. The company values its diversity, according to Eitzen.

"We have 17 different languages spoken at our facility," he said. "The best day at Gunderson is Christmas Eve, because we have a potluck and people bring in all these ethnic foods that are their family specialties."

Ashbrook, of Oregon Tradeswomen, said countless studies have shown that when there's increased diversity in the workplace, productivity and creativity go up too.

Dwight Hughes, head of the Network Technology Department at Clark College, has a pragmatic reason for recruiting more women: they're excellent students.

"My female students tend to be in the top 10 percent of the class," he said.

Many have children and go back to school to brighten the future for the entire family. They take their schoolwork seriously and do whatever it takes to succeed. Hughes said



Do you work in the trades or know a tradeswoman?

Share your story on
www.facebook.com/ClarkCollegeAlumni

network technology jobs are great for moms—they're not physically demanding but bring in \$50,000 to \$80,000 per year.

"Pretty much every company, agency or organization that has a computer network needs someone to manage, maintain and protect that network," he said. Jobs include offering technical support to employees or working behind the scenes as a network administrator.

Of the roughly 90 students currently in Clark's network technology programs, only eight are women. The responsibilities that drive some mothers to succeed in school likely deter others from enrolling in the first place.

"A lot of our female applicants have scheduling issues—they have kids," Hughes said. "We don't have a dropout problem with our female population. The problem is getting them in to begin with."

Two years ago, Hughes began moving classes online. Using a webcam and headset from home, a student can have live interactions with his or her teacher and classmates. By meeting remotely and in small groups, students gain greater flexibility in their schedules. Hughes said in three years, the entire program should be online, and that the idea for the change came from feedback from alumni. He hopes the flexibility also allows him to recruit and retain female instructors—something that's been a struggle so far.

To Hughes, one important aspect of recruiting more women is showing them other women who are successful in the field, such as Shawn Cismar. The 49-year-old watched her husband go through the Network Technology program at Clark College after he was laid off from a manufacturing job. Excited by her husband's job prospects, Cismar, who was working in customer service at the time, decided to enroll. She found work in her new field immediately and has had new opportunities pop up each year since.

JOB AT LOCAL BUSINESSES



Photo by Columbia Machine

THE COLUMBIA GROUP of companies has manufacturing facilities on three continents with nearly 1,000 team members worldwide. There are currently jobs available at www.columbiamachine.com/about-us/employment.



GUNDERSON MARINE, a manufacturer of rail cars and ocean-going barges, also has a variety of job openings. Visit www.gbrx.com. Select Careers and enter Portland for a local list.

"I have actual money in my savings," she said. "When the Apple Watch came out, I just went out and got it. It's a \$300 purchase and I still have to be mindful of it, of course, but I didn't have to save for it."

She works as a network contractor, one of three females on a team of 13 people.

"It's the first career I've loved," she said. "It's nice on Sunday night to look forward to going to work."

Ashbrook, of Oregon Tradeswomen, said her nonprofit draws women from all walks of life into the trades.

"The one common thing among all of our students is the sense of adventure and willingness to challenge themselves," she said.

In a way, the lack of women in the trades offers a strange advantage.

"For a man to go into the trades, it's sometimes seen as coming in second to going to college," she said. "For a woman, it's seen as a challenge, it's seen as kind of cool."

Though she has raced motorcycles—a hobby in which she often found herself the only female—Cismar said she was at

first intimidated to go to work in a male-dominated industry. She found that her male coworkers weren't so different from her after all.

"I remember going into this thinking, 'What are they going to talk about all day?'" she recalled. "Food. They talk about food all day. It's universal."

Changing the perceptions of occupations in the trades—that the jobs are dirty—include introducing students to today's high-tech solutions such as high-precision technology, advanced robotics, automation and information technologies. Commonly referred to as advanced manufacturing or lean thinking, today's processes focus on building products with precise control using automation that reduces waste and costs. Clark College's Professional and Technical programs offer students these modern technologies, preparing them for regional and global jobs. Encouraging women to enroll in and complete the coursework is part of an ongoing strategy. 🧐

Lily Raff McCaulou is a journalist living in Portland, Ore. She is the author of "Call of the Mild: Learning to Hunt My Own Dinner," which the San Francisco Chronicle named one of the best books of 2012. She has written for The New York Times and The Atlantic.

TRADES NETWORK HAS YOUR BACK

By Lily Raff McCaulou

As a network technician, Shawn Cismar is accustomed to stress. When a computer network is down, everyone shifts into crisis mode. Some people take out their stress on the very workers who are trying to get the network back up and running. In such cases, Cismar said, being a woman can be an advantage.

"Sometimes a male will not yell at a female, so a male co-worker who's having a tough time with a client will say, 'Hey, can you take a shot at this?'" Cismar said.

It's a reminder why companies benefit from having a diverse staff.

In her current position, Cismar has a couple of female coworkers. They've become her friends, and their camaraderie makes work more enjoyable, she said. She knows that not everyone is so lucky.

There are a handful of groups that offer support to women working in male-dominated trades. Washington Women in Trades holds monthly meetings in the Seattle area. Sisters in the Building Trades is another group for Washington women.

Clark College officials recommend that alumni keep in touch with their instructors, who sometimes invite alumnae to speak to current and prospective students. Hearing from others who have been successful encourages women in the trades.

Alumni also offer valuable feedback. Exit interviews from alumnae led Clark's network technology program to begin offering courses online because faculty were asked to offer more scheduling flexibility.

Catharine Keane, associate director of Career Services at Clark College, said that even women who are happy with their careers should think about the future and consider

additional training. That's especially important in physically demanding careers such as welding and automotive mechanics, she added.

"I encourage them to be thinking ahead to five years, 10 years from now...and having the ability to be more diverse in terms of their training," Keane said.

Additional certifications and degrees can lead to opportunities in management, for example.

The nonprofit Oregon Tradeswomen, which works with women in Oregon and Washington, doesn't just work to get new individuals into the field, it also works to get women into leadership positions such as field managers or foremen. Connie Ashbrook, executive director of the group, said that having a woman in charge of a project means that more women are likely to get hired and stay on the job.

"Diversity is not just for entry-level jobs," Ashbrook said. 🧐



Alumni in the trades

Want to come to campus to speak to or mentor women who are training for the trades? Contact Kelsey Hukill, director of alumni relations at khukill@clark.edu or 360.992.2767.

FUNDING THE FUTURE

By Chato Hazelbaker



The Columbia River is where Clark County begins geographically and historically. It is impossible to imagine the region without the river. The waterway is a powerful force that touches every corner of our community, shaping history, commerce, transportation and culture. However, despite its omnipresence, it is easy to forget about it in our day-to-day lives. Likewise, Clark College is easily taken for granted.

For more than 80 years, Clark College has built momentum like the mighty Columbia; it shapes and is shaped by our community. The college graduates more than 2,000 students annually and there have been approximately 24,000 graduates over the past decade. Alumni move into family-wage jobs and build careers while employers reap the benefits of having a local, affordable education provider producing a qualified workforce.

Furthermore, Clark as an employer has an annual economic impact of more than \$507 million on the region. Spending by students, faculty, and staff, building projects and payroll for more than 1,000 employees pours resources into the local economy, according to a recent study by Economic Modeling Systems Inc. (EMSI).

However, a storm is brewing that has the potential to destabilize our community's future. It is the gale of the lack of state funding.

**GROWTH AND
STABILITY IN OUR
COMMUNITY
HINGES ON
BALANCED STATE
FUNDING**



An architectural rendering of the future campus in Ridgefield: Clark College at Boschma Farms over a 40-year or more period.

There are several funding options under review in the 2017 state of Washington Legislature budget process that will affect the college over the next two years. These decisions create a chain reaction that directly influence college operations and plans for the future. Specifically, what our legislative leaders decide determines the number of students the college is able to serve, the rate of growth for programs demanded by regional employers and the timeline for the building of a new campus—Clark College at Boschma Farms.

Capital budget

Funding from the state of Washington is only one funding source for Clark, but it provides the platform for the overall college budget. Each biennium, as part of the State Board of Community and Technical College system (SBCTC), Clark College watches closely as legislators set two budgets. The first is the operating budget, which provides funds for the basic operations of the college such as program funding, teaching activities, student services, and faculty and staff salaries. The second is the capital budget, which pays for the physical infrastructure—maintenance and creation of new buildings and facilities—that serves our students.

Each biennium, the SBCTC approaches the legislature to address the collective needs of the state's 34 community and technical colleges, including a list of capital project requests across the state. This year, Clark College at Boschma Farms was included in the \$338 million SBCTC capital project list. It is project number 20 on the list at a cost of \$5.2 million. The money will design the first building on the new Ridgefield campus. A cornerstone initiative, this campus could include advanced manufacturing, career and technical education. Moreover, it will spur other development in north Clark County and Ridgefield such as establishments in retail, and food and beverage.

However, right now state funding for Clark College at Boschma Farms is uncertain. The governor's initial budget funded the first 18 projects on the SBCTC's capital list, leaving off seven of the projects the state board had prioritized—including the request to begin building Clark College at Boschma Farms.

"If we can start design in the summer of 2017, we are confident we will see funds for construction in 2020. That means we could open a building in 2021. If those design funds

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Reach out to your local representatives to discuss your thoughts on the State Board of Community and Technical College (SBCTC) capital and operating budget requests in their entirety. Let them know why you value Clark College.

For more information about SBCTC's legislative agenda, budget requests and roster of legislators, visit www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/programs-services/legislative-outreach

don't come, the timeline would be pushed back at least two years," said Bob Williamson, vice president of Administrative Services at Clark. "Additionally, not being included in this biennium's capital project funding could potentially impact the funding for construction of the building in 2020, creating even greater delays in the project."

Operating budget

The SBCTC has also asked for an additional \$200 million in new money during the 2017-2019 biennium to support four priorities: funding stabilization, closing skill gaps to fill jobs, investing in teaching and learning, and creating a safe learning environment. All of the SBCTC colleges would get access to the funds based on enrollment. Clark College would receive over \$9 million additional dollars during the next biennium for these initiatives.

Funding stabilization is a key priority for colleges. SBCTC colleges have to find local money or reallocate state dollars regularly in order to cover costs not fully funded by the legislature. For example, during the previous biennium the legislature set aside funds for faculty and staff salary cost of living adjustments, but did not allocate enough for all faculty and staff. The request now before the legislature would provide retroactive funding for these types of costs. This funding also ensures Clark College can continue to attract and retain talented employees.

Closing skills gaps and filling jobs is part of Clark College's mission and commitment to our community. If funded, the additional resources would support new investments for student success programs and the addition of at least 15,000 more degrees and certificates over the next two years across all of the SBCTC colleges.

One of the student success initiatives supported by these funds is Guided Pathways. It is a research-based approach providing students with simple and clear choices to reach their educational goals. Grouped courses lead to specific career paths that funnel directly into jobs or transfer students to four-year institutions. The approach also integrates intensive and targeted advising that supports students from enrollment through completion of their degree.

Funding trends

Our requests for this biennium not only serve to meet new strategic goals and initiatives, but

to counterbalance trends in underfunding from past years. The makeup of funding for Clark has been shifting for over a decade with smaller portions coming from Washington taxpayers. For instance, during 2016-2017, \$31 million came from the state, while just under \$34 million came from tuition and fees. In other words, students now pay around half of the cost of their education, while the state kicks in half.

This is a significant change. Tuition has risen steadily at the same time that state support has declined. Between 2008 and 2016, Washington State cut funding for public higher education by 20 percent while tuition rose by 50 percent, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Likewise, funding for capital projects at two-year colleges has also decreased. During 2007-2009, spending on capital projects in the two-year system peaked at \$525 million. From 2015 to 2017, the total allocation was \$274 million, less than what was allocated in the 2001-2003 biennium. This year the system has asked for \$338 million to ease a backlog of projects that gives students access to modern and well-maintained buildings, as well as develops facilities to expand existing programs or offer new ones.

Supporting Clark

There are many ways community members can ensure Clark remains relevant and accessible to residents in southwest Washington.

"We have really appreciated how engaged our local community and our local legislators have been in supporting the college, but we need more," said Robert K. Knight, president of Clark College. Knight testified in Olympia about the combined importance of the operating funds and capital projects. He and others, including Ridgefield Mayor Ron Onslow, have testified before the House Higher Education Committee.

Knight suggests supporters of the college tell their own stories about how Clark College affects their lives when talking with others.

"I like to think about the students in the north part of Clark County who would have a place close by to get an education, and the manufacturers and others who will need to just go down the street in order to expand their workforce once the campus in Ridgefield opens," Knight said.

Supporters can also contact their legislators by writing letters, calling or emailing their local representatives. Getting involved on campus by volunteering, becoming a member of the alumni association or mentoring students are other ways to engage.

The future of Clark is in the hands of our elected officials. Their leadership will set the stage for access to education—and productivity in our region—for the next 100 years. The legislature has a chance to vote in favor of building the next rural college campus in Ridgefield, which will prepare residents for life-changing technical and professional jobs. They also have an obligation to fund Clark's operations so that we can fulfill our mission to our service district and continue our momentum alongside the mighty Columbia River. 🙌

Chato Hazelbaker, Ed.D., is Clark College's chief communication and information officer.

CLARK STUDENTS TAKE ACTION

Tackle the cost of textbooks

The Associated Students of Clark College (ASCC) is an active player in the legislative efforts of the college. In addition to supporting the college's legislative agenda, ASCC develops its own list of priorities. This year it's the cost of textbooks.

ASCC President Sarah Moe estimates the annual cost of textbooks for public, two-year colleges is nearly \$1,500 or about \$50 a week. This poses not only a financial burden, but forces students to make educational decisions based on what they can afford. An ASCC survey of Clark students found that some students opted to forgo buying textbooks in order to afford groceries or pay bills. Of the 67 survey respondents, 23 did not purchase a textbook or took fewer courses because of the expense.

ASCC has gathered support for Substitute House Bill 2686, which calls for an open-course library that would house a collection of shareable electronic course materials available for free or less than \$30.

"Through [this bill], we can better establish improved accessibility to education for all students by decreasing the cost of college," said Moe. "If we can attempt to remove the barrier of high textbook costs for students, we can improve our colleges and the lives of our college students."

Members of the Associated Students of Clark College.



REINVENTING HIMSELF

A life of crime or productivity?
Guess which one Mitchell S. Jackson '93 chose.

By Rhonda Morin

Photo by John Ricard

Mitchell S. Jackson '93 had an attitude. He had the moves. He was going to be a professional basketball player. Yet, he never made it past the first few games of his inaugural season playing for Clark College in 1993.

"I got benched after a poor play on the court early in the season. Then I was late for practice and had to do a drill called Penguin Pride. I didn't do the drill, so I was kicked off the team," said Jackson.

He temporarily shelved his basketball ambitions, but stuck to his studies at Clark for the rest of the academic year, managing a C grade in one course—English—that would ultimately play a major part in his career. Jackson transferred to Portland Community College the next year, picked up the ball again to compete and went on to get degrees at other institutions in the Northwest and Northeast.

Today, he's a professor and awarding-winner author of the autobiographical novel "The Residue Years." He's also in the first round of edits for a new book, "Survival Math."

Jackson's path has been anything but ordinary. His mother struggled with addiction that resulted in absences from his life during Jackson's formative years. He took to selling crack and powder cocaine to support himself and his family when he was a teenager and as a college student. During his junior year at Portland State University, the part-time gig landed him in Santiam Correctional Institute in Salem, Ore., for 16 months. He was released in 1998, committing to never returning as an inmate—a promise to himself he has kept.

Some of his family members are in prison and gangs. These influences and growing up in North and Northeast Portland in the late 1980s and early 1990s, profoundly affected Jackson and provided him with a deep creative pool to dip into for his later work.

Today, he reflects on his choices, missteps, reinvention and promise for his future. He considers the destiny of young people when he takes to the stage as a national speaker. In February, Jackson was in Dallas speaking at a Jewish youth group conference, B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO), now BBYO Inc. Later this year he has presentations at Columbia University and Sarah Lawrence College.

When not on the road, he's teaching creative nonfiction writing at New York University, as well as serving as an adjunct at Columbia University. His first nonfiction book, "Survival Math" is due to be published in the summer of 2018.

The book is about making immediate decisions in order to survive, something that Jackson and his family have experienced first-hand.

"Perseverance is what you need to make it. If you're trying to be a writer and want to be an overnight success, you picked the wrong profession."

—Mitchell S. Jackson '93

"I am telling it through stories of how my family and close friends have lived," he said. "There was an essay in "Salon" written by me about this (March 17, 2014). About a time when a guy in high school pulled a gun and threatened to kill me. I had to make on-the-spot calculations for him not to shoot me."

One of the constructive tenets of Jackson's path has been education. Learning about how to create memorable voice and exploring quality storytelling has been his life vest during threatening times.

"Had I not been in school, there would not have been anything to hold me back from becoming a full-fledged deviant. Being at Clark kept me feeling positive about myself when I really needed it," he said.

He shares that message when he speaks as he did when he visited Clark on a snowy day in January 2017.

He is also forthcoming about the realities of being a writer. It took him 15 years to write his first novel, and it was nearly a year and a half after "The Residue Years" was published before he received financial return for his labor.

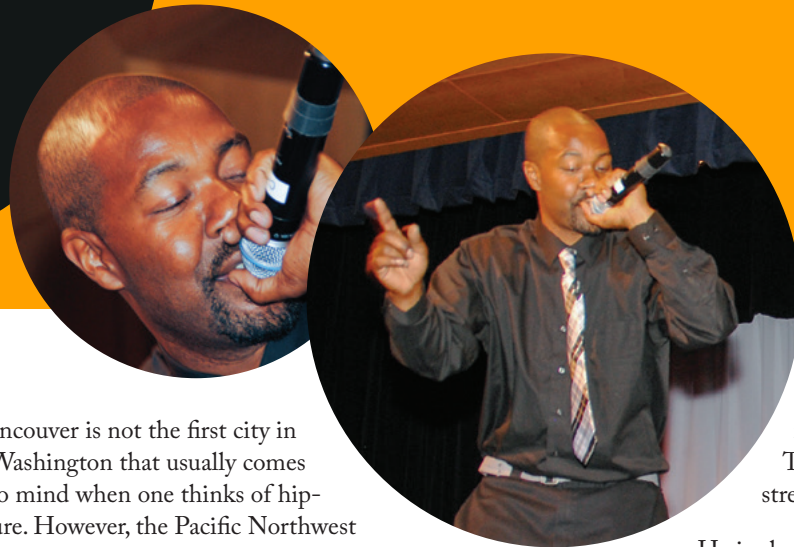
"Perseverance is what you need to make it. If you're trying to be a writer and want to be an overnight success, you picked the wrong profession," said Jackson. "Clarify your motivations and what you're willing to give to it before you (expect to) see results." 🙄

Have you written a book or publish regularly in a blog? Share your story on

www.facebook.com/ClarkcollegeAlumni

HIP-HOP *scene is thriving in Vancouver*

By Ryan Cunningham '14



Thomas Merfeld performing at the Savoring Excellence gala in 2015. He's a local producer and musician.

Vancouver is not the first city in Washington that usually comes to mind when one thinks of hip-hop culture. However, the Pacific Northwest has had a thriving underground hip-hop scene for 20 years and cannot be left out of the conversation. Vancouver native and Clark student Thomas Merfeld '17, known in the hip-hop community as Wizeguy, has been there since its early days in the 1990s.

Merfeld began connecting words that rhyme with music when he was in the fifth grade. He met a kid named Matt Cavinta and they often rapped to a Rob Bass karaoke instrumental. The popular bands Run DMC and the Fat Boys were two of his early musical influences. At age 13, he assisted DJ Too Heavy at school dances by pulling compact discs for him and freestyling at the end of the dances. Merfeld continued to do this until he was 18 when his new-found talent went from a hobby to a job and eventually became part of his social identity.

Today Merfeld, 39, owns a record company called Wizeguy Entertainment LLC and is a staple in Vancouver's hip-hop scene. He's in the Merchandising Management program at Clark College, honing his business skills. Specifically, he took a marketing class that helped him clarify his message in the marketplace, and understand other intricacies of advertising.

"I am a self-taught recording engineer and recording artist. Going to Clark has helped me identify my goals for my music and take my entertainment company Wizeguy Entertainment to the next level. I have a recording studio that markets local

musicians in various genres of music. The skills I've learned at Clark have strengthened my business," said Merfeld.

He is also an artist on his music label. His current music group, Raised by Wolves, includes rappers Benny Rooso and Terrell Carter, who is known as Tigo. Raised by Wolves denotes a pack of wolves that thins out the herd, removing fake hip-hop and returning what is real to the music genre, according to the group's website.

Remaining independent in the business is important to Merfeld, who has passed on signing to an industry music label. Instead, he is contemplating a possible distribution deal to enhance his budget to increase the label's exposure. For now Merfeld's solo project, "The W Album," is available in all major online stores.

When reflecting on local hip-hop's history and trends in the marketplace, Merfeld remembers when Portland and Vancouver rappers didn't get along and even had a rivalry. Now there is more collaboration and solidarity between the artists in the two cities. In the 1990s, many of Clark County's music venues wouldn't allow rap performances or support rap recordings. Where country, rock or classical music would be favored, rap would be scoffed at. Currently, there are many locations that support and welcome rap in Clark County. Merfeld is joyful that rap has come to be embraced and celebrated.

Merfeld sees the future of hip-hop expanding for Vancouver, as well as the entire Pacific Northwest as scenes thrive from Portland to Tacoma, and Seattle to Spokane. An example

is Portland, Ore., rapper Amine who has seen recent success in the mainstream industry with his song "Caroline." Merfeld sees this region as one that has been virtually untapped. With an increase of people moving to the Portland Metro area and the popularity of television shows like "Portlandia," Merfeld predicts that this will be the next big region to make noise on the hip-hop scene.

Vancouver's hip-hop scene is on the rise. With rappers like Merfeld and many others, hip-hop culture will continue to gain clout and popularity. Even if many do not think of Vancouver when imagining hip-hop, it is a place where talented rappers continue to create. Merfeld and many other local artists and fans believe "the best is yet to come." 🎧



Listen to Wizeguy's body of work.

- www.officialraisedbywolves.com
- <https://www.facebook.com/WizeguyENT/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/TIGO360/>

Ryan Cunningham '14 is a rap artist and spoken-word poet. He also works as an employment specialist at Clark County's WorkSource where he helps youth and adults secure employment, develop career goals and receive training to develop employable skills.

From the president



We're your neighbors. We welcome you to our campus to take a course so you can learn a new skill or indulge in a passion, watch Clark students put on a play, borrow a book from our library shelves or—by this fall—sample our baking in our remodeled kitchen.

Every day in our neighborhood, faculty and staff work with students to prepare them for the challenges and complexities they will face in their jobs and lives so that they may flourish and make a difference in their larger communities and the world.

Clark is the place where people with different backgrounds and vast life experiences are welcomed. We're proud of that because as your neighbors, we encourage a healthy, productive community.

I invite you to be our neighbor. Whether you live around the block, in another state or country, I ask you to get to know your community college. There are many ways to get to know Clark or get involved. You could attend one of our STEMinars, volunteer for the alumni board,

serve as an usher at a Decker Theatre production, watch our chorale group perform, attend the Latino Festival or serve on a committee remotely.

Visit clark.edu or clarkcollegefoundation.org to see what most interests you. I promise you'll find something here that you will enjoy and that will make you feel good about your community's college.

Lisa Gibert
President/CEO, Clark College Foundation

1950-1960

Frank Fornadley '54
James Gregg '56
Gary Lynk '58
Forrest Miller '50
Pat Nicholson '58

1961-1970

Lucinda "Cindy"
Ammeter '61
Larry Anderson '66
Beth Athay '63
Richard Bea '63
Esperanza Brillante '69
Willis Bross '70
Agnes Byrne '69
Gary Chumbley '68
Vern Dollar '66
Ella Fisher '70
Linda Goetz '66
Bradley Hoover '69
John Kumpula '69
Myles Lubinski '62
Majel Marvin '70
Ronnie Rose '70
Gene Smith '65
Bayard Solfermoser '70

In Memoriam**1971-1980**

Sue Bishop '76
Helen Bourcier '71
Carole Campbell '80
Carroll Glaus '75
Eileen Watkins Hoeft '75
Dorothy Kennedy '75
MaryLouise Lee '73
Carol Lyons '77
Peggy Muncey '75
James Rightenour '73
Luella "Lu" Shelstad '72
Martha Aspitarte
Wither '74

1981-1990

Robert Cruden '87
DeLoris Hoff '86
John Ritter '89

1991-2000

Janice Catt '91
Korey Cochran '00
Wayne Davisson '95
Markus Eckstein '00
Sandra Hawkins '96
Marie Hays '96
Ronald Huebner '91

Mark Kanooth '94
Marvin "Rick" Kennedy '98

2001-2010

Robert Josephson '10
Keegan Knutson '09
Mark Locey '03

2011-2016

Susan Ovall '12
Wilford "JR" Roberts '13

Class dates unknown

Robert Back
Ruth Beatty
Dorothy Boyea
Elaine Chenette
Larry Daniel
Esther Friberg
Bonnie Gilbert
Robert Hafner
Debra Haas
Mary Hiatt
Vivian Hungate
Marc Jones
Don Lillard
Bob Lindauer
Michael Locke
Mike Lorentz
Christopher Mettler
Bill Miller III
Ed Murray
Fred Olsen
Sheila O'Malley
Gordy Peters
Mike Pye
Vivian Scott
Jack Shaffer
Arvol Zschomler

Years are based on when alumni either graduated or last took a course at Clark College. Send submissions and corrections to foundation@clark.edu. Write In Memoriam in the subject line of the email.

1960-1970

Members of the 1968 baseball team were inducted into the Clark College Athletics Hall of Fame on February 4, 2017. They won the state community college baseball championship in 1968 and held the western champion record in that year too.



George Welsh Jr. '67 received a presidential coin from Clark College President Robert K. Knight at the 2017 State of the College address on January 20, 2017, for his dedicated service to the college.

1991-2000

Sheryl Bateman '95 joined the board of directors of the Humane Society for Southwest Washington. Bateman is owner and president of Allied Fastening Supply Inc., a Vancouver-based distributor of construction and industrial supplies.



Basketball stand-out **Beth Hamrick Graves '95** was inducted into the Clark College Athletics Hall of Fame on February 4, 2017.

ClassNotes

Katherine Garrett '91 director of Share Housing First retired after 15 years of dedicated service to the homeless community in Vancouver.

Mitchell Jackson '93 author of "The Residue Years," read and discussed his work at Clark College's Columbia Writers Series on January 17, 2017.

Michael Harvey '93 was promoted to Lt. Col. in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps on July 10, 2016. He received an associate degree in Nursing and licensed practical nurse (LPN) at Clark.

2001-2010

Nancy Boyce '08 made the Alaska Journal of Commerce's 2017 Top Forty Under 40 list. She'll be honored at an official dinner on April 28, 2017, at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage, Alaska. Also, she was one of three finalists for the Association of Equipment Management Professionals (AEMP) Foundation's Technician of the Year Award for 2016. She

was recognized during an AEMP conference in March 2017.

Mechanical engineer **Melissa Covell '07**, who is the holder of three U.S. patents, joined the Sigma Design team in December 2016.

Alex Mickle '08 and **Kylan Johnson '14** are opening Columbia Food Park, with multiple cuisine and beer options, in April 2017.

Four-time All American **Kalani Rodrigues '03** was posthumously inducted into the Clark College Athletics Hall of Fame on February 4, 2017.

2011-2016

The National Organization of the Model UN selected a position paper written by **Michael Cordes '16** as their nationwide template. Cordes was a Model UN student delegate while at Clark. As a result, Cordes and Clark College will be attributed for all National Model UN student delegates learning to write position papers. Cordes represented Russia at the 2016 National Conference; the subject of his paper was human rights. He was awarded the Distinguished Delegate Award for the paper. He is currently attending the University of Washington.

Justin Jenks '14 was hired to the accounting staff of Geffen Mesher & Co.

Kylan Johnson '14 and **Alex Mickle '08** are opening Columbia Food Park, with multiple cuisine and beer options, in April 2017.

Melanie Shelton '16, together with classmates from Washington State University Vancouver, founded Strategic U, a professional student organization that helps nonprofits build brands.

Class dates unknown

Sierra Eckman was promoted to senior manager at Opsahl Dawson, a Vancouver-based CPA firm.

Julia Houle and **Niko Niko**, of Vancouver, welcomed a baby girl, Bunnie Wynne Siatua Houle-Niko, on January 24, 2017. She weighed 7 pounds, 7 ounces.

Tracy Malone was appointed to Camas School Board's District 5 position on February 2, 2017.

Joél Nehm and **Joseph Nutting**, owners of Foodē and LUXE, are expanding their business to a new location in Riverview Tower.

Glenn Piekstra recently joined the Sigma Design team. He brings 20 years of experience as a technician in both production and research and development.

Carmen Roman received the Clark College Classified Staff Excellence Award for her work in fall 2016.

Judge James Swanger retired after serving in the U.S. District Court since 2005.

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THE \$1 MILLION MOVEMENT

Retired Clark STEM Professor Bill Wheeler with scholarship recipients Andria Hedgepeth, left, and Samantha Wendland, right.

Clark College Foundation
will distribute \$1 million
in scholarships this
academic year!

JOIN THE MOVEMENT.

Contact Shirley Schwartz at
sschwartz@clark.edu or 360.992.2379.





CLARK COLLEGE FOUNDATION
1933 Fort Vancouver Way
Vancouver, WA 98663-3598

LAST GLANCE

An art exhibition in February featured the combined talent of Clark's alumni. The Frost Art Center's gallery featured "The Next Step," a collection of ceramics from 10 artists. Read more at news.clark.edu/2017/02/molded-at-clark.

