

CLARK

Partners



SPRING 2023

Celebrating
our
COMMUNITY

PLUS

- 90 years of Clark College
- Campus treasures
- Clark's crystal ball
- Live from New York

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“What I love about it are the moments that I know are really affecting the audience. Either it brings them extreme joy, or it makes them feel profound feelings.”

– Mark Owsley '79, Clark College's stage manager for 35 years

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CAMPUS TREASURES

A lot has happened in Clark's 90 years. Take a look at some of the spaces and faces that make our community college special.

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LIVE FROM NEW YORK, IT'S RILEY DONAHUE

From Clark to 30 Rock, Riley Donahue '14 creates digital art and animation for "Saturday Night Live" and works with mega stars.

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THE DRAMATIC EFFECT OF 90 YEARS

With 90 years of history, Clark knows all about drama. Clark's theatre department produced an Oscar-nominated actor, saw the department shut down, then resurrected it and, more recently, is redefining it for the modern era.

Clark Partners is published two times a year (spring and fall). We welcome your comments at foundation@supportclark.org or 360.992.2301.

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CLARK PARTNERS PRODUCTION

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Cover: Illustration of Clark College's campus by ©Kelsey Davis, i2iart.com. There's a penguin hiding in the cover. Can you find it?

B.A.S.T.E. program gets a boost

Photo by Jenny Shadley

Clark's Bachelor of Applied Science in teacher education (B.A.S.T.E.) program got a boost in what it can offer students. In January 2023, Washington's Professional Educator Standards Board approved endorsements in elementary education, special education and early childhood special education that can apply to a teaching certificate, according to Meghan Crozier, B.A.S.T.E. department chair. This is in addition to Clark's offerings of early childhood education and bilingual education. These extra endorsements apply to teaching preschool through 8th grade.



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS, 1973-2023

For 50 years, Clark College Foundation has made educational opportunities accessible to all who seek them at Clark College. The nonprofit was founded on November 27, 1973 and Clark faculty member Dr. Alfred Apsler was voted in as the first board president for Clark Community College District No. 14 Foundation. Since that day, the foundation has worked tirelessly to assist students on their educational paths and advance the good work of faculty and staff. In fact, Clark College has received more than \$82 million in college-related support from the foundation over those five decades. Students are directly affected by the foundation each year as it awards \$1.3 million in scholarships, special awards and other financial support. During Clark's 90th year, the foundation joins the college to celebrate its past, plan for the future and thank the thousands of community members, businesses and organizations who have made this success possible.

CLARK
COLLEGE
FOUNDATION



Celebrating 50 Years | 1973-2023

90 YEARS OF CLARK COLLEGE CELEBRATION SET FOR JUNE 29

Amid the Great Depression, a group of educators embraced a dream of higher education for Southwest Washington. In 1933, that dream became reality when Clark College was founded as a private junior college, opening its doors at Vancouver, Wash.'s Hidden House. Three more locations followed until 1951, when the college launched an evening program at the first building on Clark's current 101-acre campus in Vancouver's Central Park. Since its first accreditation in 1937, Clark has remained accredited throughout its history. Today, Clark College is one of 34 Washington community and technical colleges, and serves residents of Clark, Skamania and west Klickitat counties, enrolling thousands each academic year from across the region. The foundation will celebrate Clark College during an evening event on June 29, 2023. During the event, called 90 Years of Clark College: A Celebration of Community, we'll return briefly to the past, while unveiling plans guaranteed to take Clark to greater heights.



The Hidden House was where Clark College held its first classes in 1933. It continued to be its campus location through 1937. Photo from Clark's archives

Calling on Clark College alumni to get involved



With more than 66,000 alumni employed in a variety of industries, Clark College's alumni network is a valuable resource for current students looking to gain insights into career paths. Clark College has an exceptional alumni network to help alumni stay engaged, led by the recently appointed Alumni Relations Director Chandra Chase '02. When you sign up to become an official alumnus,

you'll receive access to the Penguin Passport, a digital membership card providing you with instant access to the benefits of being part of this network—for free. It's also free to join our alumni network; that way when you donate during PenguinsGive your contribution goes directly toward helping Clark students succeed.



THE DRAMATIC EFFECT OF 90 YEARS

by LILY RAFF MCCAULOU
photos by WEI ZHUANG

HERMINE DECKER SET THE STAGE,
WHILE TODAY'S DIRECTORS
AND PERFORMERS CONTINUE
TO SHOWCASE EXCELLENCE

Clark student Priya Oetmann, left, stands with Mark Owsley '79, center, Clark's stage manager for 35 years, and Gene Biby, professor of drama, on the set of Clark's March 2023 production, "The Great American Trailer Park Musical."



he history of Clark College is not one tale but countless stories of thousands of people whose paths have crossed here. Clark's theatre department has long been a home for creative people, each with their own backstories, to make—and perform—new stories together.

The department has weathered highs and lows, from churning

out an Oscar-nominated actor to closing the department altogether to resurrecting it and, more recently, redefining it for the modern era. Today, the program is re-emerging from the COVID pandemic to flourish thanks to new and old faces.

The namesake of Clark's theatre, Hermine Decker, was no stranger to drama herself. Decker turned down a marriage proposal from her college sweetheart, Edward R. Murrow, who became a famous broadcast journalist.



According to an oral history recorded by the Clark County Historical Society, Decker didn't think Murrow would make a good husband. Decker told Murrow's biographers that she burned his letters to her, but 28 letters and two telegraphs were discovered after her death in 1996.

Decker forged her own path to success, becoming an award-winning playwright before accepting a newly created position teaching in a nascent theatre department at Clark in the 1950s.

In the 1960s, she rallied to save the historic Slocum House in downtown Vancouver. It was the last Victorian home standing on a block that had been razed for redevelopment. Decker saved the house and got it moved one block to 605 Esther Street, where it was used as a theater for 50 years before closing abruptly in 2012. Today, the house is a wedding venue and event space.



Bottom, left, Gene Biby, professor of drama on the set of "The Great American Trailer Park Musical" during its March 2023 production.

Top, right, Mark Owsley '79, Clark's stage manager for 35 years, working the soundboard for "The Great American Trailer Park Musical."

One of Decker's students was Sam Elliott '65, who graduated a few months before the Slocum theater opened. Elliott studied theater and ran track at Clark. He was cast as Big Jule in "Guys and Dolls," and a Columbia review of the production suggested he become a professional actor. He did. Elliott is a character actor known for his full mustache and deep voice. He has enjoyed a long career in Hollywood, appearing in "Tombstone," "The Big Lebowski" and many other films. He was nominated for an Academy Award for his supporting role in the 2018 version of "A Star is Born."

Decker was a well-known task master, producing two plays each quarter and requiring her students to act in one and work on the production crew of the other. She drove around campus in her bright red Opel Kadett, a compact and stylish German car.

CAREER AND LOVE LAUNCHED

When Mark Owsley '79 enrolled at Clark College in the late 1970s, Decker had retired, the theater was shuttered, and the drama program had been eliminated. Owsley went to look at the building and found a woman hauling old costumes out of it and stuffing them into her hatchback.

"I introduced myself because I was a young, gregarious person at the time," Owsley said. The woman was Decker.

A self-proclaimed drama nerd, Owsley was six feet tall and weighed 200 pounds by the time he was 12 years old. He was cast as Santa Claus in a kindergarten play. In fifth grade, he was cast as the captain in Gilbert and Sullivan's musical, "H.M.S. Pinafore." During this production, Owsley made two discoveries: first, he suffered from stage fright. Second, he could work backstage and earn the satisfaction he did from acting without being fearful.

"I made the conscious decision that was what I wanted to do with my life," he said.

While Owsley attended Clark, the college revived the theatre department by hiring part-time professor Dan Anderson. Owsley worked on several shows before graduating and transferring to Portland State University. Clark's

productions were funded by ticket sales at the time, so popular titles were usually selected.

In 1979, Owsley worked on "Arsenic and Old Lace," a murderous farce, alongside Decker, who played one of the old ladies. Owsley said she had a distinctive, teacherly voice and strong opinions about the show.

After graduating from PSU, where he majored in theater, Clark contracted with Owsley to design scenery and lighting for a show. He has been an employee of the college for more than 35 years and in the last decade has directed several Clark productions.

In 1984, Owsley designed and built the set for "Little Mary Sunshine," a parody of old-fashioned musical theater. During auditions, Anderson approached him.

"We were short on men," Owsley said, "which happens."

Anderson asked him to join the chorus. Owsley was paired with a female dance partner. They hit it off.

"It's not exactly a theater moment," Owsley said, "but it's probably the most important moment of my life."

The couple married and have been together for more than three decades.

Anderson helmed the department for 33 years before retiring in 2011. Gene Biby replaced him. Biby then became the department's first full-time faculty member. It was the start of a new age.

“

I'M NOT TRAINING STUDENTS TO BECOME ACTORS. I'M TRAINING THEM TO STAND UP STRAIGHT AND WALK WITH CONFIDENCE, TO SPEAK IN A MEETING, TO GIVE A TOAST, TO GO THROUGH THE WORLD BEING COMFORTABLE EXPRESSING THEMSELVES.

— Gene Biby, professor of drama

”

Continued on page 19

CAMPUS TREASURES

Photos courtesy of Clark College's archives

by RHONDA MORIN



For Clark's 50th anniversary, physics instructor Mike Pick suggested Clark build a sundial and circular plaza surrounding it. The sundial job went to welding instructor and metal sculptor Carlton Bell (left), who fabricated the 14-foot anodized aluminum structure. The sundial is said to be accurate within two or three minutes throughout the year.

For 90 years, Clark College has been a place of learning, networking, exploring and transforming. Here are a few snapshots in time of the people and places that have made this place special.

In 1983, to celebrate Clark's 50th anniversary, a 9-foot tall, 4,200-pound cake was crafted to feed 2,500 people. The sweet confection was topped with a four-foot penguin made of laminated styrofoam and colorful icing.



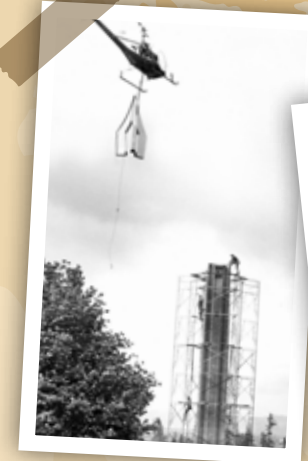
Clark alumni from the 1940s.



Remember when phone booth stuffing was a thing? Legend has it that it started in 1959 in Durban, South Africa, when a group of 25 students crammed into a phone booth and sent a picture to the "Guinness Book of World Records." The competition spread to the U.S., and Clark's campus as seen in this undated photo.



Students in class in the 1980s.



A gift from the former Clark College Alumni Association, the Chime tower was dedicated on September 30, 1964. Today, it is a college and community landmark.

CLARK'S CAMPUSES OVER THE YEARS



Hidden House 1933-1937



Salvation Army building 1937-1941



Old Franklin School 1941-1942



Ogden Meadows 1947-1958



Since 1950, students have been coming to the college's main campus, which sits on 101 acres in Vancouver Central Park in Vancouver, Wash. The Applied Arts Center was the first building. Students commuted between Ogden Meadows and Central Park until 1957. In 1958, Hanna Hall, Gaiser Hall and the art, science, home economics and gym buildings were completed.

HISTORY *is* *rooted in* CLARK

by LILY RAFF MCCAULOU

photos by JENNY SHADLEY
AND WEI ZHUANG

Campus is a 90-acre arboretum



Clark College is not just a place of higher education, it's also a 90-acre arboretum. Some trees on campus have identifying plaques or tags around their trunks. Every tree has a story.

John Kageyama, president of America Kotobuki Electronics, Inc., presented 100 Shirofugen cherry trees to the City of Vancouver in 1990 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Washington's

formally proposed by Skip Jimerson, a longtime grounds manager, now retired. But the informal initiative probably dates to former biology professor Anna Pechanec, the namesake of one of Clark's science buildings.

Pechanec is believed to have planted many of Clark's trees. At night. Without permission.

GUERRILLA PLANTING

Jerry Franklin '55 studied under Pechanec and said she had a profound influence on his career. Franklin went on to become a world-renowned forest ecologist whose research helped spark the Pacific Northwest timber wars over old growth logging and its effects on the northern spotted owl.

Franklin didn't help Pechanec plant trees. He attended Clark before most classes were moved to the current 101-acre Vancouver Central Park location. But Franklin said he's not surprised to learn of Pechanec's guerilla planting operation.

"I could believe that she might do some unscheduled planting," Franklin said.

Franklin said he's also not surprised that Pechanec planted a wide array of trees that are not normally found in Southwest Washington.

"As someone who's teaching, that gives her a resource," Franklin



Top, Clark's campus is adored by more than 100 Shirofugen cherry trees, thanks to a gift from the late John Kageyama, former president of America Kotobuki Electronics.

Middle, a majestic Turkish black fir tree was dedicated in March 2023 as a Vietnam War Witness Tree commemorating the 50th anniversary of the end of U.S. involvement in the war.

Bottom, an Oregon white oak near the SE corner of Foster Hall was damaged in a storm in 2022 and was cut down.

statehood. They were planted on Clark's campus to honor the friendship between Vancouver and its sister city, Jyo, Japan. All those trees provide a showy pink backdrop to Clark's annual Sakura festival and many photos.

Clark's campus houses the state tree—or a close relative that is suited for Vancouver's climate—for 48 of the nation's 50 states. The state tree project was

said. "She can take her students right out the door and go around and show them ... identification. And when she needed fresh material for them to look at, she had it right there."

Clark's treescape continues to grow and change. In October 2022, a beloved Oregon white oak near the southeast corner of Foster Hall was damaged in a storm and had to be cut down. The tree was thought to have been planted in the 1970s, perhaps by Pechanec.

Dr. Steven Clark, a Clark biology professor, said trees are biological philanthropists, supporting a variety of species from insects to birds to mosses. Just as the campus is home to Clark's community, each tree is home to another, smaller community. Researchers have counted the number of living species known to have mutualistic relationships with different varieties of trees.

"There is no plant in the Pacific Northwest that offers more habitat value than Oregon oak," Clark said.

Insects lay eggs on leaves, birds nest in trunk cavities and mammals feast on acorns. Clark said he was heartened by the community response to news that the oak tree was being removed.

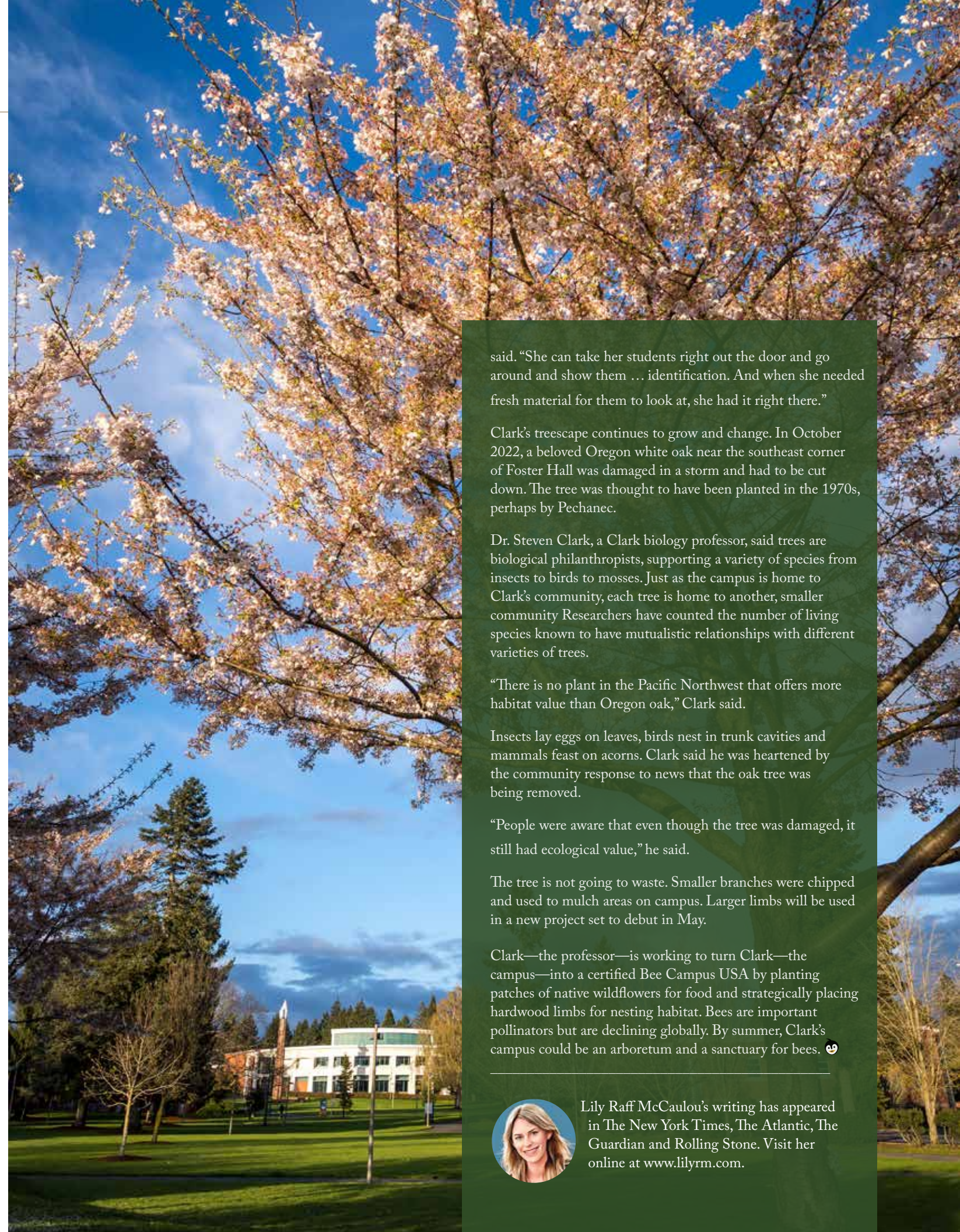
"People were aware that even though the tree was damaged, it still had ecological value," he said.

The tree is not going to waste. Smaller branches were chipped and used to mulch areas on campus. Larger limbs will be used in a new project set to debut in May.

Clark—the professor—is working to turn Clark—the campus—into a certified Bee Campus USA by planting patches of native wildflowers for food and strategically placing hardwood limbs for nesting habitat. Bees are important pollinators but are declining globally. By summer, Clark's campus could be an arboretum and a sanctuary for bees. 🐝



Lily Raff McCaulou's writing has appeared in The New York Times, The Atlantic, The Guardian and Rolling Stone. Visit her online at www.lilyrm.com.



by LILY RAFF MCCAULOU

CLARK'S CRYSTAL

Sharpened
focus on
how to
succeed in
a fast-
changing
world

BALL



In its 90th year, Clark College is looking to the future. Like other colleges and universities, Clark faces unprecedented challenges including an economy that discourages college enrollment, shifting student demographics and the aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic. But each challenge brings with it an opportunity.

In gearing up for the future, Clark has sharpened its focus on equity. When Clark's president, Dr. Karin Edwards, took the helm in 2020, she committed to closing disparities and using an "equity lens" to review college policies from hiring practices to curricula to student services.

Today, 35% to 40% of Clark students belong to groups that are non-dominant. In other words, Clark's student body is diversifying.

Clark is an engine of transformation. When one person earns a college degree and begins their career, it elevates the whole family's income and opens doors for the next generation. That means making Clark a more equitable college—and helping historically underserved communities—will make Southwest Washington a more equitable community.

Clark College's Board of Trustees and executive cabinet members are finalizing an equity centered strategic plan to guide the institution through 2027. Here are four individuals whose stories and experiences connect to the four tenets of that plan.



EQUITABLE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Sarah Jones, Welding

Sarah Jones, 18, is one of a handful of female welding students at Clark who are studying to enter a traditionally male-dominated industry. When she completes her certificate of proficiency in June, Jones will apply for an apprenticeship with the local pipe fitters' union.



Jones did her research and discovered that, within the welding industry, pipefitting is "where the money's at." According to Washington's Office of Financial Management, union pipefitters hired by the state in 2022 earned an annual salary of \$57,324 to \$71,520.

Jones was diagnosed with dyslexia in third grade and knew by the end of high school that she was best suited for the trades.

"Working with my hands is just something I excel at, rather than learning from a book," she said. She researched the construction trades and liked the idea of welding because she has "a really good attention for detail."

”
I would like to find a way for direct care nurses to become adjunct faculty or clinical faculty, so they have a way to impart their knowledge on students earlier.

– Adrienne Watson, PeaceHealth system director

”

BOOMING ECONOMY

Welders are in demand now and Sarah Jones, 18, expects to find a manufacturing job upon completion of her certificate and while she waits for an apprenticeship. She said she looks forward to changing people’s perceptions of what a welder looks like.

Despite the unmet demand, Clark has vacancies in its welding program. Community colleges generally see enrollment rise during a recession and drop when the economy is booming. The current economy is an unusual mix of the two.

“For younger people, it’s a pretty booming economy right now,” said Paul Speer, chair of Clark College’s Board of Trustees. “Someone right out of high school can make \$25 an hour as a barista.”

Clark is preparing for a slightly older student body in the coming years, as high school graduates eschew college and enter the workforce before realizing that they need more training to earn more in the future. Older student cohorts have different needs and interests than younger ones. More students could be balancing college while raising families, for example.

Clark is also reckoning with a future that could include fewer students overall. From the 1970s until 2007, the birth rate in the United States was relatively stable. Then it started dropping, which was an aftereffect of the Great Recession. As babies born during that era turn college age, experts in higher education brace for what they call “the enrollment cliff.” This puts even more pressure on college leadership to spend limited resources wisely.

Speer said Clark has reinvented itself many times in its 90-year history. The college once suspended operations when enrollment plummeted during World War II. When the war ended, students re-enrolled and courses resumed.

“Clark,” Speer said, “will always be this community’s college.”



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Professor Alejandra Maciulewicz-Herring



Alejandra Maciulewicz-Herring ’13 started her first teaching job at Clark’s medical assisting program in 2020. It was a seismic shift for her to go from a clinical setting to the novelty of working remotely.

Maciulewicz-Herring suspected that some of her co-workers had been her teachers when she attended Clark’s certified nursing assistant program years earlier. But the two programs have different faculty and without bumping into people in the halls and seeing them in person, Maciulewicz-Herring couldn’t be sure.

The pandemic exacerbated disparities in Southwest Washington and beyond. While some students thrived as education switched online, others faltered. Educators themselves experienced varied responses to the new modes of teaching and learning. More recently, the return to in-person learning was rough for some faculty and staff.

Some longer-term faculty are experiencing burnout. Clark, like other community colleges, has struggled to hire and retain faculty. Health care, trades and cybersecurity are a few industries where people with skills and experience easily earn more than community college instructors, whose salaries are set by the state.

Under the new strategic plan, Clark will measure its progress toward specific goals, such as fostering “employee engagement through open communication, transparency and involvement in key decisions.”

For Alejandra Maciulewicz-Herring ’13, it has been rewarding to train people to work in the community.

“There is huge demand for [medical assistants] right now,” she said. Partner organizations hire graduates right away. Wages are up and new jobs such as a traveling medical assistant are available.

Medical assistants have clinical and administrative responsibilities. They administer injections, take blood pressure readings and draw blood as well as keep care providers on schedule and call insurance companies with billing questions. Medical assisting can also be a stepping stone to other careers such as nursing or hospital administration.

In early 2021, Maciulewicz-Herring and other Clark faculty volunteered at PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center to vaccinate patients against COVID-19. A former vaccine coordinator, she saw the mass vaccination event as a massive logistical feat.

“It was really exciting to see Clark supporting the local community,” she added. She worked alongside her colleagues in person and was filled with hope that the new vaccine was the beginning of the end of the pandemic.

Maciulewicz-Herring said her students are entering the profession because they want to make a positive difference.

“I tell them, in order to make a huge impact, you have to make the time to volunteer in your community,” she said. These opportunities provide real-life work experiences that benefit students, promote Clark’s allied health programs and strengthen the health of the community.

Although the new strategic plan guides only the college, Clark College Foundation CEO Calen Ouellette said it also provides the foundation with an opportunity to better achieve its own mission.

“As the college sharpens its own goals and priorities, we can become a more effective partner institution,” Ouellette said. “A clear plan for Clark’s future helps us determine how we can best support the college and its students.”



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Adrienne Watson, PeaceHealth



Adrienne Watson had a medical procedure when she was 14 and remembers coming out of anesthesia in a recovery room. A nurse in the room didn’t say much, Watson said, but “I thought, ‘okay, I am safe.’ There is an art to nursing ... and that was someone who had mastered the art.”

Years later, as she considered her career choices, Watson recalled that nurse and thought, “I want to make people feel safe.”

Watson worked as a clinical nurse for 18 years before switching to administration for the next 18 years. Today, she is a system director of clinical education at PeaceHealth.

In the classroom, nursing students learn job skills. But it takes a clinical rotation, Watson said, to learn how their skills and knowledge apply in the real world.

Being a nurse is “like being a conductor of all of these different roles involved in a patient’s care,” Watson said. “You don’t see that in a classroom; you experience it in a clinical rotation.”

Watson is responsible for PeaceHealth’s clinical affiliation agreements with institutions like Clark. PeaceHealth is the single largest employer of Clark College graduates.

“Clark is really a pipeline to bring nurses into [PeaceHealth]. We try to stay well connected,” PeaceHealth’s Adrienne Watson said.

As a member of Clark’s nursing program advisory board, Watson reviews curricula and asks questions to ensure faculty are teaching the most up-to-date practices. She sees room for

Clark and PeaceHealth to work together even more closely.

“I would like to find more ways for direct care nurses to become adjunct faculty or clinical faculty, so they have a way to impart their knowledge on students earlier,” she said.

More nurses would teach if it didn’t require quitting their clinical jobs and taking pay cuts, Watson said.

Hospitals that host simulation events for nursing students offer another potential area for growth. Watson wants clinicians to be part of the grading, coaching and training for these assignments, to make them more realistic.

Speer, the trustee, said the college sees opportunities for other departments to partner with private businesses, too. These relationships are essential, he said, to ensure that Clark is teaching the skills the community needs.

INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND EQUITY

Alex Herrboldt ’16, PAX Learning Center

When Alex Herrboldt ’16 graduated from high school, he didn’t know what he wanted to do. He enrolled at Clark to explore his interests. Rather than rush his education, he enrolled as a part-time student and took his time. He earned his associate degree in four years rather than the usual two.

To pay for his education, he got a work-study job tutoring adult GED students in Clark’s transitional studies tutoring department. Herrboldt worked there all four years while he was at Clark, eventually serving as a program coordinator. It was that experience—not the academic courses—that led to Herrboldt’s passion and career.

Today, Alex Herrboldt ’16 is co-founder and executive director of the PAX Learning Center, a nonprofit tutoring resource that helps people earn their GED certificates or high school diploma equivalents. Clark still offers GED testing and preparation classes but some of the community support services it used to offer are now provided by organizations such as PAX.

Standard GED curricula prescribe specific materials at a specific pace. The foundational belief of PAX is that students should learn at their own pace.

“It allows them to take hold of their own education. If they run into something they know well and they can demonstrate it, they don’t have to spend a week on it,” he said. “If they need extra practice, they take their time and aren’t made to feel like they’re slow.”

PAX provides a supportive and encouraging learning environment, a low ratio of volunteer tutors to students and varied locations and hours, including online options.

As Clark reviews its own equitable and sustainable use of resources, it may rely more on community organizations like PAX to prepare students for college. Then, when they are ready for Clark, the college will be ready for them.

While four-year universities offer increasingly expensive—and often debt-laden—degrees, Clark is well positioned as an affordable alternative.

PAX has helped hundreds of people in Southwest Washington earn their GED certificates since opening in 2019. Herrboldt said that many have gone on to attend Clark.

“A GED is life-changing,” Herrboldt said. And watching the students gain self-confidence as they inch closer to new pathways has been equally rewarding for Herrboldt. 🧡



Lily Raff McCaulou’s writing has appeared in The New York Times, The Atlantic, The Guardian and Rolling Stone. Visit her online at www.lilyrm.com.

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“I was asked to refocus and think about the fact that it was a college theater, and we were there to serve students,” Biby said. “Which I was excited about because, ultimately, I was not thrilled about redoing classics from the canon. I’m more excited about what’s currently happening in the theater world.”

During the pandemic, Clark’s theatre productions halted. Even Broadway shut down and many small theater companies around the country permanently closed. At first, Biby wasn’t interested in streaming productions online.

“Theater is a live event,” Biby said. The magic depends on audience members being in the same room as the cast, watching events in real time.

The pandemic dragged on and Biby relented. He directed a one-act radio play, written years ago by a friend, that he felt was suited to a remote production.

“It’s still up on YouTube, actually,” Biby said, “it’s called ‘The Churning Skies.’”

In spring of 2022, the department produced a collection of one-act comedic plays called “All in the Timing.” Biby invited a mix of current and former students to direct and act in the short pieces. It was so successful that he selected a similar title for spring of 2023, a contemporary play written during the pandemic called “Technical Difficulties.”

“It’s going to be live but there will be a mix of media as well, with screens and some actors who will be remote,” Biby said. Again, Biby has invited former students to direct.

Biby sometimes worries about the future of theater. He asks his students’ opinions about the art form and its current relevance.

“I just wonder how long it’s going to remain viable,” he said. “Most students don’t think theater will die out altogether, but one of the criticisms is that you have to go at a certain time to a certain place and it tends to be expensive.”

Clark’s theatre program holds an advantage—tickets are free for students and just \$15 for members of the general public.

“If we can continue to keep it affordable,” Biby said, “that will continue to open up new audience members for us.”

Today, student activity fees pay for Clark’s theater productions rather than ticket sales. The department reports on its participation and proposes a yearly budget to the ASCC.

“With the declining enrollment, I’m wondering how that’s going to affect our budget in the future,” Biby said.



Top, the namesake of Clark’s theatre program, Hermine Decker, taught at Clark in the 1950s and 1960s.

Left, actors perform in “The Last Step” directed by Hermine Decker in an undated photo. Photos courtesy of Clark County Historical Museum and Washington State University Vancouver Library.

Owsley said the funding shift has resulted in more interesting plays.

“Instead of having to choose shows that we know are very popular and well-known and can bring in revenue, we can choose shows that are more reflective of our student body, of young, new thinking, that are more inclusive.”

Clark practices colorblind casting and encourages diversity. During a recent production, Owsley said a student was transitioning genders. The student’s audition was so good, according to Owsley, that they could have played a male or female role in the play. Owsley let them choose.

“I was able to support what they were going through in their life and that helped them move forward,” said Owsley. “They knew that they could be a part of the program and have an equal part. They belonged.”

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RILEY ANDREW DONAHUE '14
 CREATES MOTION AND GRAPHIC
 DESIGN FOR “SATURDAY NIGHT
 LIVE” AND A SHORT FILM
 FEATURING ALICE COOPER,
 JOHNNY DEPP AND JOE PERRY

LIVE FROM NEW YORK,

IT'S Riley Donahue

Artist Riley Donahue '14 stands on the set of “Saturday Night Live,” where a guest host delivers a live monologue each weekend. Donahue landed his dream job—designing animation and digital content for SNL and several other NBC shows—by seizing opportunities to create art at Clark College and beyond.

Photo by Carly Walsh

by SUSAN PARRISH

W

hen he was in fourth grade, Riley Andrew Donahue '14 spent so much time drawing in class that his teacher told him to pay attention, or he would end up working a dead-end job. But the shy young artist proved her wrong. He leaned into his art with focus, determination and a willingness to kick down metaphorical doors.

Today Donahue is a motion and graphic designer for NBCUniversal Media at 30 Rockefeller Plaza in Manhattan. He produces digital content for “Saturday Night Live” and “Late Night with Seth Meyers.” He also acts as the digital design lead for “Saturday Night Live” and intern manager on the “Late Night” digital marketing team.

When Donahue was a Clark College art student, “SNL” was his favorite TV show, and he hoped to someday sit in the audience. Although he never achieved that goal, he said, “I’ve worked over 100 shows now, so I’d say that’s much better.”

At “SNL” Donahue focuses on design for all content on digital and social media.

“My job is to maintain the show’s branding across all the digital platforms, whether it be Instagram, TikTok, all the streaming apps, YouTube, basically everywhere the show goes that isn’t on air,” he said. “I primarily focus on motion graphics, but the job covers a lot of ground, so I am also editing videos, shooting video, making logos, editing photos, creating brand style guides.”

Donahue started drawing at such a young age that he doesn’t remember the first time he picked up a pencil.

His mother, Traci Donahue, an artist and art teacher, said, “Art was a big part of his life. We

were always doing art here. We put chalkboard paint on his bedroom walls so he could draw on his walls.”

Riley Donahue filled sketchbooks with his drawings—from insects and snakes he found



in the backyard to skeletons, after he watched Tim Burton’s “Nightmare Before Christmas.” One morning in church, he drew the priest as a skeleton. Some parishioners were not amused.

“It definitely put my parents on the receiving end of some nasty looks,” Donahue said, “but they let me do it.”

He spent his formative years at Sixth Street Gallery in downtown Vancouver where his mother was president of the artists’ cooperative. At the gallery he created art, talked with artists,

Scan the code below to see more samples of Riley Donahue’s work including an intense animated music video for the heavy metal band Crossbone Skully, helmed by Tommy Henriksen, the lead guitarist for Alice Cooper. Illustrations by Riley Donahue.



attended First Friday art shows and eventually showed his own art.

“Growing up in that setting really solidified art as a way of life early on,” he said. “I’m not on the SNL set very often, but when I am and see celebrities, it reminds me of the First Friday

show openings at the gallery. When I was a kid, the artists that were part of the show were celebrities to me, so being around people that the whole world recognizes brings me back to those days.”

Donahue enrolled at Clark College as a Running Start student and earned his associate degree and high school diploma concurrently.

Donahue found a mentor in Grant Hottle, professor of painting and foundations and chair of Clark’s art department. Donahue’s first art class was color

theory taught by Hottle. He was so inspired that he took all Hottle’s classes.

“I came to Clark feeling fairly comfortable with drawing, but he helped me see art as a potential career and lifestyle versus an interest,” Donahue said. “I was on the fence about pursuing a career in art because I knew it was competitive. But he told me, ‘If you work hard, you’ll find your way.’”

Donahue credits the work ethic he learned at Clark for molding him into who he is today.

“If you slack off on an assignment, it’s going to show up. Slacking off isn’t part of my vocabulary because of my time at Clark,” he said.

Hottle said Donahue’s success is “astounding, but not surprising. Riley’s talent was apparent, but what stands out is his incredible work ethic. He made an assignment his personal enterprise. He had big ideas and was never afraid to work hard to achieve them.”

Hottle recently showed his students Donahue’s animation work.

“I told them, ‘Here’s an example of a successful animator who started at Clark, moved to New York and now has what you’d consider a dream job.’ I saw their eyes get big,” Hottle said.

After Donahue graduated from Clark, he transferred to Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y., which Hottle said is “one of the best design programs in the world.”

During the summer when he was studying at Pratt, Donahue worked as a design intern at The Columbian, his hometown newspaper.

“Riley did fantastic work for us,” said News Editor Merridee Hanson, who supervised him at the Vancouver, Wash., newspaper. “Hand-drawn illustrations were his forte at the time. Everything he did was so different from what we had done before.”

Along the way, Donahue’s art garnered accolades. At 17, he won an honorable mention from the National YoungArts Foundation. While at Clark, Donahue’s piece in “The Phoenix” literary magazine won “best digital illustration” from the American Scholastic Press Association. Graphic Design USA featured Donahue as a “student to watch” while he was at Pratt.

KICKING DOORS OPEN

Donahue believes that being curious and seeking opportunities has opened doors for him.

“I’ve never had anything bad come from asking. The worse they can say is no.”

During his senior year at Pratt, Donahue secured a coveted internship at NBC. As a new intern, he heard that “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon” wanted someone to take jokes from a thank-you note segment and create an illustrated version.

“They wanted a comic-looking thing they could post on social (media). I said I would take a shot at it. It’s the first thing I did and that got me in the door. Getting the internship was the door opening just a sliver, but kicking the door open was that Fallon piece,” Donahue said.

TELL US YOUR STORY

We want to hear what you have been up to since graduating or leaving Clark College. Got an interesting job? Started a business? Working daily to make a difference in the lives of others? Let us know and maybe you too will be featured in Clark Partners magazine.

Contact the alumni office at alumni@supportclark.org or 360.992.2301.

That first art he created for Fallon has led to many more opportunities for Donahue to create works seen by millions around the world.

After Donahue completed his internship and earned his bachelor’s degree from Pratt, NBCUniversal hired him full time for his dream job. Part of his job is managing interns.

“That’s been a full circle experience,” he said. “I tell interns, ‘If the door opens for you just a little bit, kick the door off the frame.’”

As a side gig, Donahue does freelance design and animation. Recently Donahue directed and animated a short film featuring musician Alice Cooper, Nikki Sixx of Mötley Crüe, Joe Perry of Aerosmith, actor Johnny Depp and others, set to music by Tommy Henriksen, the lead guitarist for Alice Cooper. It was a big job and an even bigger opportunity. He was up for the challenge.

“The door opened a sliver, and I kicked the door down.” 🚪



Susan Parrish has been writing about education for a decade. While reporting stories, she has hiked on Mount St. Helens with students and scientists, observed live brain surgery and snowshoed alongside Special Olympics athletes. Read her stories at clippings.me/users/susanparrish/.



Listen to a Penguin Chats podcast with Riley Donahue.



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Lyle D. Leach '48, passed away in January 2023 at the age of 97. Leach grew up in Vancouver, Wash., joined the U.S. Marines and served in combat during World War II. He returned home with one eye, shrapnel in his body and a Purple Heart. He entered Clark College and soon met, and then married, Alice Marie. Her first husband died in the war, leaving her with two young daughters. She and Leach raised the children together. He worked for the commercial building company now called Kiewit. The Leaches were staunch believers in a Clark College education. Through Clark College Foundation, they established the Leach Engineering Scholarship Endowment to assist generations of students.

THE 50S

Earl "Joe" Bork '59
Gaylon Dacus '52
Charles Day '54
Paul DeLong '52
Joyce Kilpatrick '59
David Morris '57
Charles "Lee" Pio '53
Rex Pruitt '53
Robert "Bob" Steel '59

THE 60S

Charles "Chuck" Conaway '67
Garvin Grider '64
John Horn '65
Richard Kishimoto '61
Mary Lackaff '67
Earl Meininger '68
Theodore "Ted" Page '65
Peter Parkinson '65
Ronald "Ron" Porterfield '69
Janet Ritter '62
Kent Vaughters '66
Jerry Wilson '62

THE 70S

Carl Asch '76
Margaret "Maggie" Bauer '74
Janora Bayot '71
Albert "Al" Browning '70
Juanita Calvert '71
Thomas "Tom" Chimenti '72
Karen Cole '72
Theresa Filla '71
Rodney "Rod" Hergert '71
Mary Nettles-Moye '71
Beverly Osieck '75
Danny Raphael '76
Douglas "Doug" Swanson '74
John "JT" Thomas '70

THE 80S

Sue Doyle '82
Linda Peterman '81

THE 90S

Thomas "Tom" Gaynor '94
Heather Bushnell '96
Karen Smith '91

THE OOS

Jane Perkins '07

CLASS DATES UNKNOWN

Carol Alice
Patricia "Pat" Brown
Lucille "Lucy" Campbell
Shirley Clark
Clifford "Cliff" Conner
Anita Correy
Jo Ann Donovan
Bruce Ettling
Brendon Fleming
Dolores Fuerstenau
Vera Hoover
Sheryl "Bill" Kerner
Gene Kuechmann
Robert "Bob" Lanphere
Sharell Martin
Nancy Prager



Dona Marshall worked at Columbia River High School and Fort Vancouver High School as an English teacher and administrator before serving as director of English and language arts for Vancouver Public Schools. She retired in 1991 and remembered her students' names well into her 90s. She passed away in December 2022 at age 95. She is survived by her husband of 43 years, John Marshall, who is a Clark College alumnus. The Marshalls funded a scholarship through Clark College Foundation to support students in creative writing, English, graphic design, music and early education.



Virginia Mickelwait Weiler taught high school home economics in Vancouver, Wash., while her husband, Jack Mickelwait, served in WWII. When

the war ended, the couple raised two daughters together. They funded a Clark College Foundation scholarship. Mickelwait Weiler never lost her love of learning, taking continuing education courses at Clark and deciding at age 80 to learn about computers. She passed away in September 2022 at age 103.

Larry Raley
Sara Randol
Carl Roberts
Fred Ryan
Jon Schilling
Curtis Shipman
Gary Shull
James "Jim" Troxel
John Walters
Frank Wastradowski
Gordon Wehner
George Wetzell
Kathleen Williams
Joan Wilson

FORMER FACULTY

Doris Jubeck

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Frank "Larry" Cassidy
Katherine "Katie" Foehl
Guy Kohler
Donald "Don" Krein
Kathy Leyva
Ernest "Ernie" Nicholson
Margaret Pollard
Joan Renner
Shirley Seifert
Dan Tresch
Jack Wojnowski



Photo is courtesy of Janet James

James "Jim" Moeller

Former Washington legislator, Vancouver city councilor and Clark alumnus, died in March 2023 at age 67 following a battle with progressive supranuclear palsy. One of the first openly gay lawmakers in the state, Moeller was a trailblazer for the gay community and helped found Clark County Pride and Hands Off Washington. He also worked as an addiction counselor at Kaiser Permanente for 27 years. In Olympia, he was known for his warm sense of humor and signature colorful bowties.



Charles "Chuck" Epton taught philosophy, logic, psychology and computer science during his long career at Clark College. On the first day of his first class, in 1969, he sat at a desk at

the back of the room and pretended to be a student until it was clear the professor was late. He then stood up and introduced himself. Epton taught at Clark for 43 years. He passed away in August 2022 at age 76, due to complications from dementia.

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Priya Oetmann is a current Clark student whose cousin is a choreographer on Broadway. Oetmann says attending one of his shows in New York City sparked her interest in theater at a young age.

Oetmann has participated in school plays since elementary school. Clark's theater program helped inspire her to enroll in Running Start, a community college preparatory program for 11th and 12th grade students.

"I wanted something more than what my high school offered," she said, and Clark productions are much more professional. "It's just night and day difference," she added.

Oetmann took an acting class at Clark and performed in her first Clark production, "The Great American Trailer Park Musical," in March 2023. Oetmann, who is Latina, said the Clark production was more racially diverse than any at her high school.

Tim Busch '17 said his most memorable show at Clark was "Avenue Q," a raunchy Tony-award winning musical comedy that features puppets and human actors. Busch was cast as the main character, or rather the puppeteer of the main character, Princeton. In the play, Princeton moves to New York City with big dreams and little money. The hardest part of the show was learning to maneuver a puppet while acting, including speaking, singing and hitting his marks.

"It was tough," Busch said of the play. "That one definitely pushed me to another level. After that show, I was like, 'Huh. I did that. I can do more.'"

For Biby, who also teaches speech communication at Clark, that kind of realization is what makes theater so valuable.

"I always say, I'm not training students to become actors. I'm training them to stand up straight and walk with confidence, to speak in a meeting, to give a toast, to go through the world being comfortable expressing themselves."

For Busch, the training has done exactly that in his life.

"I don't even have to think about speaking in front of people now," he said. "Doing theater took away any fears that I had. I don't get nervous about big bosses because I know I can stand up on stage with 50 to 100 people just staring at me." 🤖



Lily Raff McCaulou's writing has appeared in The New York Times, The Atlantic, The Guardian and Rolling Stone. Visit her online at www.lilyrm.com.



THE 50S

The business leaders group Identity Clark County extended an honorary directorship its longest serving board member, **Paul Christensen '53**, who has served continuously since the nonprofit was formed in 1993. In 1969, Christensen founded the apartment development and management company Realvest Corporation, which still operates across the Pacific Northwest.

THE 60S

Actor **Sam Elliott '65** reached a milestone at the SAG Awards 2023 by winning best male actor in a television movie or limited series. Elliott, 78, took home the award for his role as Shea Brennan in "1883," a spin-off of the hit drama "Yellowstone."

The Vancouver Bridge Club's longest-living member, 95-year-old **Bill Mauck '69**, joined the club in 1956 and credits the game with keeping his mental abilities sharp. Bridge gained popularity in the 1930s but has been losing players in recent years. The club is recruiting younger members to learn the game.

THE 80S

Eric Johnson '88 coached Jemtegaard Middle School's seventh-grade girls basketball team to a 6-3 record despite playing most of the season with just five players. The lack

of substitutes put the team at a disadvantage against opponents who could swap out players for injury, sickness or needed rest. Johnson credited the players' positive attitudes and growth mindset. After earning a master's from City University, Johnson began working for the Washougal School District in 2009. He teaches language arts at the middle school and was named 2013 teacher of the year by the Camas-Washougal Chamber of Commerce.

Chinook Indian Nation Vice Chairman **Sam Robinson '83** was featured in The Columbian for his aim to reunify and strengthen the tribe that's been denied and dispersed by unfair government practices and intertribal competition for close to two centuries. Robinson was also the cover story of the 2022 winter Clark Partners magazine.

Pacific Lifestyle Homes was named Builder of the Year by the Building Industry Association of Clark County. **Kevin Wann '89** founded the business in 1996. The company has built more than 3,000 homes in the greater Portland-Vancouver area.

THE 90S

Amy Davis, senior vice president banking team lead for Umpqua Bank, was one of 10 finalists for the 2023 Iris Award. Since its inception in 1985, the Iris Award has celebrated the

exceptional achievements of Clark County women who embody outstanding leadership, philanthropy, and public service.

THE OOS

Elba Benzler '01 organized the North Clark County Run Club's 10th annual Thanksgiving River Run in Battle Ground, Wash. The event netted 175 pounds of food and more than \$200 in donations during the no-registration cost run along the banks of the East Fork Lewis River.

Modular homebuilder Wolf Industries, co-owned by **Derek Huegel '07**, teamed up with nonprofit tiny homes developer Community Roots Collaborative to propose a cluster of cottage homes in Vancouver, Wash. The development of 15 affordable single-family homes is expected to be complete in spring of 2024.

Clark College Alumni Board member **Melissa Williams '00** was highlighted in The Columbian for her historical

research of Black families in Clark County. Williams finished her master's degree thesis on African American housing in postwar Vancouver at Washington State University where Southwest Washington's story of Black housing had never been fully researched prior to her 2007 paper.

THE IOS

After spending 10 years in the military, **Chris Baldwin '16** found himself with a host of problems until turning to a healthier lifestyle, including drinking tea. In 2021, Baldwin merged his newfound love of tea with his passion for helping soldiers and started a tea company that supports military reintegration programs across the U.S.

Eileen Cowen '12 is passionate about foraging for edible and medicinal plants in Clark County, Wash. After leaving Clark College, Cowen received her bachelor's degree in history

Photo by Jenny Shadley



Steve Kenny, retired president of Columbia Credit Union, and Taryn Evans, a mechanical engineering alumna, testing a STEM vehicle in 2019 at Clark College.

Steve Kenny, longtime president and chief executive of Columbia Credit Union, has retired. The Vancouver, Wash., financial institution announced that Kenny stepped down from the leadership position on Jan. 9, 2023, concluding more than 13 years at the helm and more than 35 years with the credit union overall.



Amy Waite, Clark College Library staff from 1999 to 2019, traveled with flat Oswald, an easily packable version of Clark's beloved penguin mascot, to Costa Rica in December 2022. Oswald visited the Curi-Cancha reserve in Monteverde and was listed as one of the species spotted that day. Alumni and friends of Clark College are encouraged to submit their own photos with Oswald to alumni@supportclark.org with "flat Owsald" in the subject line.

from Washington State University Vancouver and holds an associate degree in herbalism from the American College of Healthcare Sciences.

Alan Hwang '13 recently joined Riff Creative Studio as the chief growth officer. Hwang will develop new business and community partnerships, support the agency's strategic impact in key geographic markets and enhance service offerings for Riff's clients.

Justin Jenks '14 was selected as a member of the Vancouver Business Journal's Accomplished & Under 40 Class of 2022. Jenks is a senior manager at Opsahl Dawson & Company, a Vancouver, Wash. accounting firm. Aside from his professional work, he is a member of the Washington Society of Certified Public Accountants, supervisory committee chair for the Pacific Northwest Federal Credit Union and a mentor for the Carson Coaching Program at the WSU Carson College of Business.

CLASS DATES UNKNOWN

Jean Avery joined a group of volunteers to clear weeds and debris from the garden outside the Water Resources Education Center in Vancouver, Wash. in February 2023. Avery leads a hiking group for ages 50 and

older called Forever Young. In July, the group plans to hike 5 miles along the Columbia River Renaissance Trail in Vancouver.

Harley Hall II took the ride of a lifetime with the Blue Angels in honor of his father, Harley H. Hall '57, a Navy pilot from Vancouver, Wash., who once led the flight group before disappearing in combat toward the end of the Vietnam War 50 years ago. Hall Sr. received the 2004 Clark College Outstanding Alumni Award for his military contributions.

Teen Talk, a program that supports the mental health of Clark County teens, is celebrating its 20th year in 2023. Program coordinator **Kris Henriksen** trains youth to offer anonymous, confidential and nonjudgmental peer support through a telephone hotline.

Chief Criminal Deputy **John Horch** replaced retiring Clark County Sheriff Chuck Atkins as a result of the Nov. 8, 2022, general election. Horch garnered 55% of the vote, while Vancouver Police Capt. Rey Reynolds got 45%.

Clark County Auditor **Greg Kimsey** was re-elected in the Nov. 8, 2022, general election. Kimsey, who has been auditor for nearly 24 years, received 67% of votes cast, to challenger Brett Simpson's 33%.

Camas, Wash., Police Chief **Mitch Lackey** agreed to push back his retirement date to provide support to the city while they continue the process of hiring his replacement.

Bob Prinz, a volunteer at historic Fort Vancouver, helped prepare an 1840s-inspired meal for an annual holiday event in December 2022. Prinz and other volunteers prepared a seven-course feast similar to what may have been served as a Christmas meal for the aristocratic society. The menu included cabbage soup, bread and butter, pickled vegetables, smoked salmon, roasted duck, apple and cranberry galette and more. Prinz has volunteered with the Vancouver, Wash., fort for over a decade.

Linda Reid, relationship banking officer for Heritage Bank, was one of 10 finalists for the 2023 Iris Award. Since its inception in 1985, the Iris Award has celebrated the

exceptional achievements of Clark County women who embody outstanding leadership, philanthropy, and public service.

Daddy D's Southern Style Barbeque teamed up with Dream For Life, a service organization, to host a free Thanksgiving meal for any community members in need. Daddy D's is owned by the Vercher family, with Clark alumnus **Isaiah Vercher** serving as restaurant manager. The restaurant has served a free holiday meal for 10 years, most recently handing out more than 150 turkeys, hams and side dishes—enough to feed 5,000 people.

One year into Russia's war on Ukraine, retired journalist **Sonya Zalubowski** sat down with The Columbian in March 2023 to share her story of living in Poland, another Eastern European nation struggling to break free from Russia's stronghold, in the 1980s.

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90 years | 1933-2023



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