Dr. Robert Rose’s First Year: Vitality, Growth, Student Success

After 18 months as MCCC president, Dr. Robert Rose’s many new initiatives are bearing fruit. Numerous and visible changes have brought a renewed sense of excitement and progress to the campus. The first thing a visitor will notice is the abundance of students. Full-time enrollment for fall was the largest in the college’s history, up 12% from last year; credit-hour enrollment was up by 11%.

Rose said an increased emphasis on “getting the word out” is partly responsible for the student increase. “One of my challenges was to try and get more directly involved in the community and to increase the college’s visibility,” he said. Rose has spearheaded increased outreach through radio, cable television, print advertising and other publicity. Mercer is now more visible as an advertiser at area movie houses and has sponsored events at Waterfront Park and the Sovereign Bank Arena in Trenton.

Marketing the college has taken many forms. President Rose has developed creative partnerships to bring MCCC closer to community groups and leaders of government and business. This year the college hosted community breakfasts at the James Kerney Campus (see page 3), and participated in many other forums to gather opinions and assess new directions. “I have addressed a wide array of community groups,” Rose said. “Part of my role is to let them know who we are and what we are doing.” Rose continues to extend invitations to speak. “If there are community groups that would like to have me come and speak, I would be happy to participate,” he said.

As part of spreading the word, Rose has put an emphasis on rebuilding the MCCC Alumni Association. A new committee of enthusiastic Alumni and Friends has been meeting and planning new projects. “As we market the college we have to look to the thousands of people who have taken courses here – people who are aware of our programs and appreciate of what the college has provided them,” Rose said.

With lifelong learning so characteristic of today’s society, Rose sees MCCC’s credit and noncredit courses as benefiting alumni as well as their children and grandchildren. He also wants alumni and friends to know the value of a community college education. “With the escalating costs of higher education in the four-year schools,” Rose said, “the benefit today of starting here and transferring may be even greater than it was in the past.” Mercer alumni can also play a role in helping the college generate financial support, Rose said.

In the ever-changing realm of technology, MCCC has been undergoing a major renewal. “We have installed 400 new desktop computers in our student labs and have upgraded the technology capabilities in many classrooms,” Rose said. “We have provided faculty members with laptops so they can work at home and then dock the computers in the classroom for demonstrations.” As faculty member Mitch Canter said, “The flexibility of having the laptop — so everything is done on one machine — is wonderful. It has already made me more productive and efficient.”

To better serve all its constituents, the college launched a completely restructured website in late November. Designed with a consultant, many college staffers, and focus groups, the new site is colorful and easy to use. Online registration for credit and noncredit courses has become increasingly popular. Registered students can even check their
Drexel Partnership for Nursing Grads

MCCC nursing graduates have a new opportunity to transfer their credits and complete a bachelor’s degree in nursing at Drexel University entirely through on-line courses. Students entering the Drexel program must meet the same academic standards as students who attend classes on campus. They need only a PC and Internet connection to enroll; Drexel provides the software. Although visits to the campus are typically not required, there may be an occasional need to attend a class on campus.

For additional information, contact Eric Hagan, senior program manager at Drexel, at 215-895-0500 or visit Drexel's website at www.drexel.com/nursing. Information about MCCC’s Nursing program is available online at www.mccc.edu or through Admissions at 609-586-0505.

Medical Lab Tech Program Addresses Shortages

While the shortage of nurses often makes the news, the critical shortage of medical laboratory technologists is not as widely known. To help address the need, MCCC has joined forces with its affiliate hospitals in the region to revamp its Medical Laboratory Technology program.

Beginning in summer 2003, students who already have two years of college with a science or medical background can complete the associate degree in just one year. Those without the required courses can complete the degree in two years. “We have consolidated the professional courses to accommodate people with a science background,” said Jane O’Reilly, program coordinator. “We expect it will appeal to people looking for a career that will use their biology or chemistry training.”

The new program is a collaborative effort involving the five hospitals in the Mercer County region that provide clinical training and other support for students in the program. Joe Bonnano, vice president of the Medical Center at Princeton said “Our expanded partnership with the college comes at exactly the right time to meet the anticipated need for highly trained clinical laboratory workers.”

According to O’Reilly, medical laboratory technicians provide information about the condition of the human body through the analysis of body fluid and tissue samples. Course work includes anatomy and physiology, immunology, immunohematology, microbiology, diagnostic microbiology and chemistry.

The job market is very promising. “I get calls often from private laboratories and clinical trial labs looking to hire our graduates,” O’Reilly said. Recently the State Department of Health has been looking for people to work on bioterrorism issues.

While the program is designed to launch a career, many MCCC graduates transfer their credits and continue their education. The program is accredited by the National Accreditation Association of Clinical Laboratory Science. Contact Jane O’Reilly at 609-586-4800 ext. 3387 or e-mail oreilly@mccc.edu.

Delaware Valley College Offers Transfer Opportunity

Under a new agreement, MCCC associate degree graduates who meet the requirements will be guaranteed admission to Delaware Valley College (DVC) in Doylestown, PA, with junior status. DVC is a comprehensive, four-year college located at the Philadelphia border. To qualify, students must take the course equivalents agreed upon by MCCC and DVC, and

grades and course history online.

One classroom innovation has been the introduction of six computer-driven “Smart Boards,” which may someday make chalk and blackboards a thing of the past. The boards can be controlled with finger or pointer commands (see article on page 3 for more details).

Perhaps the most noticeable recent changes on campus have been in facilities. “One of the things that struck me when I first came to Mercer was that we had a 30-year-old facility that looked 30 years old,” Rose said. “One of my goals was to try and refurbish it.” Changes are now greeting students daily. Old desks and chairs are being replaced. In the Student Center cafeteria, new flooring, ceilings and furniture have transformed a dull area into a bright and friendly environment that draws greater numbers of students. In other areas, existing space has been converted into classrooms to help accommodate the increase in student population. Upgrades are nearly complete in all 82 campus laboratories.

More changes are planned for the near future, Rose said. “Our lecture halls are not very attractive or comfortable for seating students of all ages, so we will be dropping ceilings, painting, and putting in new and more comfortable furniture.” College heating and air conditioning systems are also being assessed for better comfort levels in classrooms.

As he looks forward to a bright future for MCCC, Rose said “In whatever we do, we always put student success at the fore-
New Utility Technology Program Offered with PSE&G

MCCC President Robert Rose, left, with PSE&G Senior Vice President Dr. Ralph Izzo, County Executive Robert Prunetti and Freeholder Keith Hamilton at a recent press conference announcing a new Utility Technology program.

Over 55 Trenton community leaders came together in November at MCCC’s downtown Trenton James Kerney Campus to learn about the college’s initiatives since the group first met in February. Participants were asked for their creative approaches to addressing the community’s educational needs. President Rose said those suggestions have in large measure been included in the college’s new strategic plan.

According to Provost Beverly Richardson, “We are all stakeholders in Trenton’s future, and we as a community must address the educational needs of our people together.”

A highlight of the event was the full-course hot breakfast prepared and served by students in the James Kerney Campus’ Culinary Arts program.

At left, President Robert Rose and Dr. Beverly Richardson, provost of the James Kerney Campus, with representatives at a recent community breakfast. They are Dr. James Lytle, superintendent of the Trenton Schools, Melinda Green, vice president of Children’s Futures, and Freeholder Keith Hamilton.

Nearly $1 Million Available to Transferring Students

There is good news for community college students who plan to continue their education, reports Lawrence A. Nespoli, president of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges. The council is coordinating a state-wide scholarship program. “New Jersey’s 19 community college presidents have raised nearly $1 million in transfer scholarships from New Jersey’s senior colleges and universities,” Nespoli said.

“These scholarships are available to deserving community college students who plan to pursue their bachelor’s degree in New Jersey.” For more information contact the MCCC Financial Aid office or call Jacob Farbman at the council, 1-800-334-NJCC, e-mail info@njccc.org or visit www.njccc.org/ptkschlr.htm.

High Schoolers Get a Flying Start

High school students can now get a flying start on a career in aviation. The Tech Prep program, a partnership between MCCC, the Mercer County Technical Schools and area high schools, has added the Aviation program’s nonflight courses to its list of offerings available to high school seniors.

“With technician shortages at PSE&G predicted for the future, the company has joined with MCCC to design a new Associate in Applied Science degree program in Utility Technology. The first of its kind in New Jersey, the program may be expanded to other community colleges within the state. Students will study math, science, utility technology, electrical construction and utility installations in MCCC classes and, during the summer, will receive apprenticeship training from PSE&G. Those completing the apprenticeship could earn more than $13 an hour in PSE&G summer internships.

Aviation faculty member Jerry Kuhl puts the new “Smart Board” technology to use during a lecture.
A time when bottom-line concerns have nearly eliminated radio’s classical music format in the New York and Philadelphia markets, Mercer County Community College’s WWFM - The Classical Network is filling the musical void. Celebrating its 20th anniversary on the air, WWFM is the only full-time broadcaster in the region providing classical music programming 24 hours a day.

According to Program Director Alice Weiss, listener enthusiasm for an all-classical music format has flourished. “WWFM responds to listeners with the kind of music they want,” she said. “We offer a wide variety of classical music including complete symphonies, concertos, choral works, operas, even classic scores from Broadway and film added for color, and people appreciate that.” Weiss said the station’s announcers all have music backgrounds. “You can’t fool the listeners,” she said. “They know a lot about the music we play.”

After the early years of combining classical and jazz formats, WWFM’s programming gradually changed to become fully classical. “By the time we were ten years old, we knew exactly what we needed to be as we grew,” said Walt Gradzki, General Manager and Chief Engineer. “Our goal was to be the best classical FM station!”

As other regional classical stations went out of business, WWFM continued to expand its network. Four full-service stations are located in Trenton (89.1), Toms River (91.1), Cape May (89.1) and Pen Argyl, PA (89.5). Translator stations are located in Atlantic City (93.9), Harmony Township (96.9), Lebanon Township (105.7), and Chatsworth (107.9). New Jersey, and in Pennsylvania in Allentown (92.7), Easton (93.1) and Philadelphia (107.9). WWFM even has translator stations as far away as Colorado. “Listeners there had no outlet for classical music,” Weiss said. “We were contacted about the possibility of sending our broadcasts via satellite, and now WWFM can be heard on five frequencies in Colorado. Listeners there love us,” said Alice Weiss, Assistant Program Director.

Gradzki, who began working at the college in 1977 as chief engineer, was instrumental in establishing WWFM’s broadcast facility. Originally hired to build radio and TV studios for a new academic program, he subsequently had the idea to start a professional listener-supported radio station. Then Assistant Dean of Telecommunications George Schwartz took up the cause and the two applied for grants and approvals.

The programming at WWFM draws from an extensive music library and includes some news and public affairs programming. The station plans to resume live webcasting in the near future. Visit www.wwfm.org for further information.

Around the same time the radio station began, the college’s cable television network was born. “It was a time when the cable companies were starting to come into the county and to negotiate for franchises,” said Ron Spych, coordinator of cable TV and distribution at MCCC since 1975. Through all municipal cable systems in Mercer County, MCCC transmits telecourses, bulletin board announcements, and special programs including the college’s annual commencement ceremonies.

“Despite Mercer County being one of the last counties in the state to get cable television,” said Tony Bruzaitis, director of telecommunications, “we were the first community college to get on every cable franchise in our county. It made us a role model for other community colleges.” Bruzaitis, who has been with the college since 1980, said the original telecourses were the beginning of distance learning at MCCC and continue today through “The Virtual Campus,” which now serves nearly 2,700 students a year with both telecourses and computer courses. “The number of student enrollments in telecourses has consistently averaged 1,000 a year,” Bruzaitis said.

WWFM - The Classical Network

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Clubs and Organizations Enrich Student Life

It was lunch hour on a typical Tuesday at the Mercer Student Center. The Student Activities Board (SAB) was hosting pumpkin painting. The Cheer Dance Team and the African American Student Organization were holding bake sales. The Criminal Justice Club was selling candy as a fundraiser for the Sunshine Foundation. And representatives from four-year New Jersey colleges were on hand for Transfer Day. In short, it was a bustling, dynamic scene that challenges any preconceptions about life at a commuter college.

According to Danielle Garruba, acting director of Student Activities, hundreds of students participate in one or more of the 40 clubs and organizations at Mercer. Their participation helps develop every aspect of their college lives – social, educational, in service to the community and in helping them develop as students and as people. Tobia Buckle, SAB president, attended Mercer for over two years before she decided to get involved. “My friends pushed me to run for office and I won. I really enjoy organizing events. Being active has made my experience at Mercer much more fun.”

There are a number of campus organizations that have formal missions. The Student Government Association (SGA) is the governing body for all students. “It has a constitution and elected officers and representatives,” said Garruba. “It is issues oriented and gives Mercer students a voice on campus.” This year’s SGA president is Erlen Feria.

The Student Activities Board is recreation-oriented, but it has more than fun on its agenda. “The events organized by SAB raise money for good causes,” explained Garruba. This year, SAB has selected Angel’s Wings, which provides temporary foster care for children, as its annual charity.

Other student organizations include the college radio station (WMCC), the student newspaper (The College Voice), and Phi Theta Kappa (for honors students). Every fall, Mercer hosts a conference at Chauncey Conference Center where selected student leaders attend two days of workshops that focus on team building, communication skills, values, and personal development.

Of the many clubs, some are academic – in areas such as art, architecture, aviation, horticulture and graphic design. Others promote ethnic identity and culture, including the Fuerza Latina Club (West Windsor Campus) and Hispanic Club (James Kerney Campus). The African-American Student Organization, and the International Student Organization. Still others are recreationally focused, such as the ski, chess and yoga clubs. Each club has a faculty or staff advisor.

The newest of the academic clubs is the Future Teachers Club, which has already invited several guest speakers who have supplemented classroom learning in special areas. “Last year the ‘Open Mind Society’ was born out of the Sept. 11 tragedy,” she continued. Students had a chance to talk about their emotions and reactions to world events. Some clubs have five or ten members; others may include 60 or 70. The James Kerney Campus has its own clubs and uses the Mercer shuttle to send representatives to SGA meetings.

Garruba notes that students must have at least a 2.0 GPA to join any club and a 2.5 to hold elected office. “You’re here to get an education above and beyond everything else. If you can’t get the grades, you really don’t have time for the extras.”

Brian Russo, vice president of the Criminal Justice Club, one of Mercer’s most popular clubs, said the 38,000-square-foot facility offers a 219-seat conference-style auditorium with individual laptop ports, five most technologically advanced committee rooms, and so are their kids,” said Garruba. “It’s especially important at a commuter school. We give students a place to socialize, but more importantly, we provide a way for them to enrich their college experience on every level.”
Alumni and Community Homecoming

Mercer’s newly invigorated Alumni & Friends Association held a Homecoming celebration on September 14 to commemorate the college’s 30th anniversary at the West Windsor Campus. The beautiful sunny day kicked off with a 5K run. Vikings fans watched Mercer men’s and women’s soccer games and men’s baseball exhibition games. A barbecue lunch on the central quadrangle drew old and new friends, who met with President Rose, faculty, staff and students.

“One Homecoming Day was the first major alumni event in several years, and the Alumni & Friends Association will be planning more activities for the future,” said Bill Mate, Dean of College Advancement. “It was great to see so many staff and alumni board members volunteering their services for registration, cooking and serving.”

Calling All Alumni for Special Event at Kelsey Theatre

On Friday, April 11, all MCCC alumni and friends are invited to Kelsey Theatre for “Alumni Night” and business card exchange. From 7 to 8 p.m. a “meet and greet” with refreshments will be held in the MCCC Gallery, Communications Building, 2nd floor. Then guests will enjoy “Damn Yankees” presented by Playful Theatre Company. This fanciful homage to baseball features a middle-aged fan who sells his soul to the devil in order to become a hitter for his favorite team. The show boasts many hit tunes, such as “Whatever Lola Wants” and “You’ve Got to Have Heart.” Call 609-586-4800 ext. 3601 for more information or to register. A modest fee will be charged.

MCCC Marketing Wins Gold & Bronze

In front of a “Your Best Choice” sign are staff members whose work won Gold and Bronze awards from the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations District I for 2002. Mercer competed against two-year colleges from 12 states and five Canadian provinces. From left are Director of Marketing Lynn Holl, Graphic Designer Francis Paixao, Public Information Coordinator Saveria Symons, and Athletics Director John Simone, who contributed the “Your Best Choice” theme.
September 11 Commemoration
(above) Hundreds of MCCC students, staff, faculty and community members remembered those who died in the terrorist attacks, including 29 from Mercer County.

(right) County Executive Robert Prunetti speaks at MCCC during a commemoration marking the one-year anniversary of September 11. Co-hosted by MCCC and Mercer County, the event featured Brigadier General Thomas Sullivan of the New Jersey National Guard, the West Windsor Color Guard, and many elected officials. MCCC’s talented Don Jones sang a beautiful rendition of “God Bless America.”

You’re Invited!
Join Us for the Scholarship Dinner Dance

Happy days will be here again as MCCC hosts its 2003 Scholarship Dinner Dance on March 8, featuring the “Golden Oldies” of the 1950s. The “Fabulous Grease Band,” a very popular area group, is ready to “Shake, Rattle and Roll” with a blast from the past, so put on your wing tips and your zoot suit and come out to Princeton’s Hyatt Regency for an evening of cool food and lots of jitterbug. After all “Memories are Made of This!”

Chairperson Jamil Faridy of MCCC’s Foundation Board has “Got That Magic Touch.” A long-time supporter of MCCC, he is now asking for the help of Mercer alumni. “We’d love to see our alumni make this event a mini college reunion by getting their friends together and filling some tables,” he said. Faridy, of the Faridy Veisz Fraytak architectural firm, has endowed his own scholarship for architecture students.

This year’s Distinguished Alumnus Award will be presented to Scott Kent, director of cash management, credit and point of sale at Wawa. The Distinguished Corporate Friend Award will go to PSE&G’s Al Koepp, President and COO, and Donald Tretola, Regional Public Affairs Manager.

Each year, proceeds from the dinner dance enable Mercer to offer a variety of scholarships, including those for full-time entering students from Mercer County high schools, achievement awards for academic excellence, grant funds for high-risk students and funds for emergency student loans. Proceeds from the art auction will go toward scholarships for fine arts students.

Faridy and the Dinner Dance Committee are looking for lots of “Earth Angels” to be corporate sponsors and to purchase ads and tickets. Ticket prices are $175 each, or $1,750 for a table. Corporations may participate as sponsors for $10,000, silver sponsors $5,000, bronze sponsors for $5,000, corporate sponsors for $2,500. Use of a generous underwriter, every advertising dollar goes directly to scholarships.

Committee members giving much of their time to make the event a success include Peter Dawson of Leigh Photo, Terri Galaro of the Hyatt Regency, E. Karen Kennedy of Dow Jones, Richard Kisco of the Princeton Flower Shop, Timothy J. Losch of Yardville National Bank, Nina D. Melker of Yardville National Bank, Marie A. Puca of the N.J. Division of Health, Rafael Sharon of Princeton, Amy Smith of Westminster Wallpaper & Printing and Marsha Stoltman of Mercerville. Many members of MCCC’s staff are participating, led by Dean of College Advancement Bill Mate.

“Only You” can help us make this event a success. Please call our Foundation Office at 609-586-4800 ext. 3607 or 3601.
McClister had more than college on her plate at the time, juggling her energies between schoolwork and the demands of raising her four children. “I never felt as a non-traditional student that I was any less prepared or deserving of my medal for the work I did,” she said. “I need and enjoy the pace of the academic journey, starting at age of 26 by taking courses in the sciences under the tutelage of professors Carlo Alfare, Bruce Chorba, Ronald Gindler and faculty. The faculty was very flexible in accommodating my needs as a part-time student. I was dating my needs as a part-time student. I was thankful for their willingness to put me on a path to home, its attractive campus and its excellent program,” McClister said. “I feel like I’ve really Appreciated my education and my job even more.”

Dr. McClister is engaged to Albert Lang, manager of Chemsampco Inc. in Trenton, a company that specializes in fine organic chemicals. Lang also studied the sciences at Rider University.

For ten consecutive Octobers Mercer Prof. Barbara Behrens attended the “Balloon Ascension,” a major hot air balloon festival held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. But since arriving at Mercer in 1996, she’s had to skip it. “She’s just been too darned busy.”

Behrens came to Mercer to develop and implement the Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA) program, now thriving with a solid job placement record and some 70 students who are either PTA majors or considering the field. She also published a book in 1996, Physical Agents: Theory and Practice for the Physical Therapist Assistant, with F.A. Davis. It has become the standard textbook for PTA programs, utilized by approximately 85 percent of PTA programs nationwide. Two years later, Behrens published Physical Agents Laboratory Manual, a companion to the book that can also be used on its own.

“A text like this had been needed for many years,” said Behrens. “There were no books that addressed physical agents comprehensively with an emphasis on patient outcome.” Among the topics covered are the safe and effective use of treatment modalities such as electrical stimulation, heat/cold therapy and ultrasound. The accompanying lab manual offers exercises that help students put theory into practice.

Behrens is currently at work on the second edition of her book, due out in December 2003, which will use one of her photos from the “Balloon Ascension” on the cover. “I’m really excited about that. The physics behind hot air balloons relate to the field of physical therapy, so the photo truly fits the topic area,” said Behrens.

The revised edition will include an additional chapter on manual techniques and massage. “We rely on our hands tremendously. It’s not generally deemed a ‘modality,’ but it’s central to what we do,” she said. The second edition will also incorporate standardized language that has been adopted by the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) to promote unity in the profession. Mercer grad Larry Petraccaro will do illustrations for the book.

“When she’s not teaching and writing, Behrens is involved in numerous professional organizations. She is New Jersey’s PTA representative to the American Physical Therapy Association and an active member of the state legislative committee. She regularly lectures on physical therapy topics at conferences in the United States and abroad. She was the recipient of the APTA Award for Outstanding Physical Therapist Educator in 2000. Behrens was recently appointed to the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy and, in August 2002, was one of 12 professionals to review the national licensure exam.

Behrens notes that nationwide there are only ten instructors trained as physical therapy assistants, not physical therapists, who coordinate training programs. “As physical therapist assistants, we function as role models for PTA students,” she said. “It’s important for students to recognize the distinct role of PTAs and how their efforts contribute to patients’ positive outcomes.”

That Behrens functions as a mentor for her students is clear from her accomplishments. One graduate of the program, noting the lack of books about children with disabilities, wrote her own version of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, which features Goldilocks in a wheelchair. Another grad came back to campus and conducted a seminar on strategies for taking the licensure exam. A third alum teaches aquatics to Behrens’ students.

Even with all this energy focused on her profession and her students, Behrens still managed to earn a master’s degree in adult education in 2001, pursuing her degree through Capella University’s online graduate program. Her experience encouraged her to set up her own online course, Introduction to Physical Therapy, offered for the first time this fall. “My students are generally older than the average undergrad. I truly understand that they have many demands on their time. I hope to make it easier for them to pursue their degree.”

Bliss McClister, M.D., and Fiance Albert Lang Thank Mercer for a Good Start

Emergency room physician Bliss McClister began her educational journey at Mercer in 1981. She had never planned to attend college and had even taken the SATs in high school. “I had been working full-time for a veterinarian since high school graduation and had grown up on a dairy farm, where education was not stressed,” she recalled. A plate at the veterinarian who convinced Bliss that she had a good mind and could succeed in school. And so she began her educational journey, starting at age of 26 by taking basic math and English classes. Her academic potential quickly became apparent as she pursued courses in the sciences under the tutelage of professors Carlo Alfare, Bruce Chorba, Ron Slezak and Naomi Rose.

“I enjoyed everything about Mercer,” said McClister, “from its affordability and close proximity to the easy accessibility of the staff and faculty. I found the faculty overwhelmingly supportive in helping me achieve my goals.” McClister had more than college on her plate at the time, juggling her energies between schoolwork and the demands of raising four children. During her Mercer years McClister began to formulate the ambitious plan of becoming a doctor. Graduating from Mercer with high honors in 1991 and bolstered by awards in chemistry and letters of recommendation from her Mercer mentors, she received a scholarship to continue her education at Rider University. She graduated from Rider in 1994 with a B.S. in Biochemistry. Five years later she earned her medical degree from the University of Medicine and Dentistry. She completed a three-year residency in emergency medicine at Morristown Memorial Hospital in June, 2002.

Since June, McClister has worked at Capital Health Systems in Trenton. She took her medical boards in October. On a typical shift at the hospital, she’ll treat everything from ear infections and sore throats to congestive heart failure and cardiac arrests. “I love the variety, the team atmosphere among the physicians, nurses and technicians, and the ability to have an instant impact on a patient’s condition,” said McClister. “I need and enjoy the pace of emergency medicine.”

McClister sees Mercer as a pivotal experience in her life. “When I graduated from MCCCC at the age of 31, it was one of my biggest accomplishments up to that time. I realized I had worked very hard to earn this degree as a mother of four children. It was the first major stepping stone to obtaining my goal,” she said. “Though the majority of my colleagues graduated from big-name, four-year schools, I never felt as a non-traditional student that I was any less prepared or deserving of my medical degree. If anything, some life experience and putting myself through school have made me appreciate my education and my job even more.”

McClister is engaged to Albert Lang, manager of Chemsampco Inc. in Trenton, a company that specializes in fine organic chemicals. Lang also studied the sciences at Mercer, completing his B.S. degree at Rider in 1993. “I chose Mercer for its proximity to home, its attractive campus and its excellent reputation for transferring to a four-year school,” he said. Lang was intent on earning his degree in chemistry, but was working full-time. “At that time, my primary responsibility was my job. The faculty was very flexible in accommodating my needs as a part-time student. I was very happy with the college. My best memories are of the many great people I met at Mercer, both students and faculty.”
Robert Burger ’74, an award-winning illustrator and computer graphic designer, has joined the arts and humanities department at Penn State University's Abington Campus. Burger is a graduate of Pratt Institute and a recipient of a design arts fellowship for illustration from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Col. Robert E. Watson ’74 has assumed command of the 254th Regiment (Combat Arms), training non-commissioned and commissioned reserve officers. He graduated from Officer Candidate School as a Second Lieutenant in 1977. His most recent assignment was as chief of military support at the N.J. National Guard headquarters at Fort Dix. Watson has a bachelor's degree from The College of New Jersey and a master's from Rutgers in Public Administration. He also holds a graduate degree in Law and Justice from Trenton State College and a master's degree in Public Administration from the State Department of Human Services.

Yvonne LaMons ’78, ’81 retired as Camden County’s trial court administrator in June. She is currently working for the East Brunswick law firm of Clara Smit, which specializes in the legal problems of the hearing impaired. LaMons earned her B.S. degree in Business Administration from The College of New Jersey, a master's degree from Rutgers University’s Graduate Program for Administrators, and a law degree from Rutgers University School of Law. In previous jobs LaMons was administrative aide for two State Supreme Court chief justices, family division manager in Middlesex County, and civil division manager in Passaic County.

Diane Wargo ’83 was recently honored for 15 years of service by the Parent-Teacher Association of Notre Dame High School. An English teacher, Wargo is a graduate of The College of New Jersey and Villanova University. She has directed several recent productions at Mercer’s Kelsey Theatre.

Jeff Daniel ’84 and Sharon Bush Daniel ’85 met while studying aviation at Mercer. Jeff became a commercial pilot and Sharon was a flight instructor after they got married. Both pilots have enthusiastically launched a second career growing and marketing high quality cranberries at their farm, the American Cranberry Co., in Pemberton. This fall the Daniels had their fourth commercial harvest, selling thousands of pounds of high quality white and red berries to local specialty markets. Jeff continues to fly as a commercial pilot, while Sharon primarily minds the farm. The couple are third generation berry growers.

David Biddle ’86 recently exhibited dozens of paintings in a show entitled “Heaven Explained” at the Queenston Gallery in Pennington. Five of his large works were recently on display at a branch of the Mercer County library, including one entitled “The Construction Site” that was part of an exhibit that traveled to the Soviet Union in 1990. Biddle had been a history teacher for many years before coming to Mercer at age 56, when he decided to change his career path and develop his talent for drawing and painting.

John C. Brown Jr. ’91, funeral director for the Christy Funeral Home of Millville, has been re-elected president of the West Jersey Funeral Directors’ Association. As part of his duties, he serves on the board of the state association.

Donna Lere ’91, a professional photographer, recently received the Milt Techmer Humanitarian Award for Outstanding Service in the Photographic Industry from the Guild of Professional Photographers of Delaware Valley. Lere has a studio in Upper Makefield, where she specializes in family photojournaling. She has worked as a photojournalist for the Bucks County Courier Times.

George Wagner ’91 is warden of the Hunterdon County Department of Corrections. Employed with the county since 1980, Wagner has served as warden since 1994. He is a board member of the American Jail Association, vice president of the New Jersey County Jail Warders’ Association and a board member of the New Jersey chapter of the American Correctional Association (ACA). Wagner is a certified jail manager, a certified public manager and an accreditation auditor for ACA. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Law and Justice from Trenton State College and a master’s degree in Public Administration from Rutgers University. This fall he was a guest speaker at MCCC as part of the college’s Distinguished Lecture Series.

Sherry Estevés ’95 has been promoted to assistant vice president of marketing for the New Jersey Business and Industry Association. She has been a member of the staff since 1982. Currently she coordinates the association’s numerous seminars, major events and publications. She is a member of Meeting Professionals International.

Jennie Sconzo ’95 took both nursing and acting classes at Mercer. Following graduation from the Nursing program, she worked for MeriStar Hotels and Resorts as a hemodialysis nurse, for New Horizon Treatment Services as a rehabilitation nurse, and for Capital Health Systems on the medical/surgical unit. She is now studying theater and hopes to continue her studies in Manhattan.

Erica Garrett ’97 has been promoted to senior sales manager at the Sheraton Rittenhouse Square Hotel, where she is responsible for sales of all leisure and noncorporate business while also assisting with day-to-day hotel operations and marketing. Before the Sheraton, Garrett worked as a national accounts manager for MeriStar Hotels and Resorts at the Embassy Suites Hotels in Center City and Philadelphia International Airport. Her HRI career began as a catering and sales assistant with the Holiday Inn in Jamesburg.

Thomas Kelly ’97 was part of a three-artist exhibition at the Trenton City Museum at Emilie The Viking House in the fall. Fall of his paintings were selected for the show. Kelly has also exhibited at other venues in the region and was the subject of a feature article in the Home News Tribune in July.

Jacques Chancy ’99 is the new music teacher at Rogers Elementary School in Highstown. Chancy, who was student speaker at Mercer’s 1999 commencement, completed his B.A. in music at The College of New Jersey. In addition to teaching music classes at Rogers, he gives group lessons on a variety of instruments and leads the school band and chorus. Chancy plays saxophone and is a well-known recording artist in Haiti.

Laura Lingenfelter ’99 already had her B.A. in sociology from Juniata College when she returned to school at Mercer in 1995 to earn her A.S. in art history. After retiring earlier this year from the State Department of Human Services, she joined the teaching staff of the Pennington School, where she teaches communication skills and writing. She is pursuing a master’s degree in humanities from California State University.

Kimberly Steinagel ’01 has joined Burgdorf ERA’s Princeton office as a sales associate. Previously she was an administrator of the Mercer chapter of ARC, where she supervised staff and managed daily operations. She volunteers as service unit director of the Princeton Girl Scouts and is the program coordinator of the outreach program with the Clay Street Learning Center.

Laurie Sullivan ’01 is pursuing her bachelor’s degree at NJIT, where she is majoring in construction technology. She plans to get her professional engineering license. “Mercer opened so many opportunities for me. I am really pleased with the education I got,” said Sullivan. “I say go to a community college, especially if you don’t know what you really want to do. You will get a well-rounded education and you will save lots of money. If I could do it all over again, I would go to Mercer.”
Under the leadership of Head Coach Charlie Inverso, completing his 17th season with the Vikings, was looking for a more intense, composed and courageous team that plays soccer the way it should be played: with intensity, composure and courage.

Their stellar effort against Gloucester Co. College was not quite enough to give the Mercer women the Region 19 title for the second consecutive year. Still, they had much to be proud of during their 10-6-1 season.

Under the leadership of Head Coach Shelly Dearden, now in her seventh year with the Vikings, the team had many gratifying wins, including routs of Morris County College 2-1, Ocean County College 8-2, Essex County College 11-1 and Sussex 6-1. Top scorers for Mercer were forwards Melanie Pollack, Courtney Williams, and Nikki Carr, and midfielders Ayessa Fitchett and Michelle MacInnes.

Other key players included Christina Gutch, Kristen O’Donnell, Jackie Lewin and Jen Brokaw. Defensive strength came from Dina Palmieri, Jazmin Fuschini, Heather Anderson and Suzanne Larson with Michelle Brown doing a great job in goal.

Fitchett and Palmieri were ranked among the top five players in Region 19 and were named to the All-Region 19 First Team along with Nikki Carr.

Mercer built on its solid nucleus of six returning sophomores and had a number of freshmen stand-outs. They are likely to serve Mercer well when next year’s soccer season rolls around. Shelly Dearden was assisted this season by Cindy Astore, Krissy Bucchino and Chelsea Dixon.

Men’s Soccer Coach Charlie Inverso is congratulated by Mercer President Robert Rose at a special ceremony with the MCCC Board celebrating Inverso’s 300th win.
The women enter the regional tournament. "I was predicting we'd finish second, given our season," said Vecchiolla. "At a two-year school, there is a big turnover," said Vecchiolla, now in his sixth year as head coach. "With only two second-year players, Ya-ting Hsu and Mai Fujita, we really felt it this season. This was clearly a rebuilding year."

The team got a late start in order to give the new players additional practice time. The women lost their opener against Gloucester Co. College 6-3 on Oct. 3, their toughest competition in the region. They followed that match with two wins, beating Brookdale 9-0 and Ocean 6-3. Poor weather resulted in the cancellation of two matches and then the women lost their opener against Gloucester 5-4.

With no time for make-ups and just four matches under their belts, the women entered the regional tournament. "I was predicting that the players would have a good time. I wasn't willing to predict beyond that," said Vecchiolla.

The tournament's winner was not decided until the last match was finished. "Every point counted," said Vecchiolla. "At the end we were tied with Gloucester 10-10, but the rule states that the team that advances the most players to the finals of their respective flights is the winner. We advanced seven, Gloucester advanced six." The Vikings took the first two flights in singles competition and finished second in three other flights. Landry Shelley won first singles and Ya-ting Hsu won second singles. Jana Sulerova, Mai Fujita, and Desiree Noel finished second in fourth, fifth and sixth singles.

At the no. 1 position, Shelley was a consistent stand-out on this year's team, losing only one match during the season. The other players, Hsu (#2), Maureen Haggerty (#3), Suleroval, Fujita (#5), Noel (#6), Casey Stout (#7) and Kim Carella (#8) all contributed to the team's success.

"The improvement I saw in this year's squad with just two months of playing together makes me optimistic about what we can accomplish at the nationals," said Vecchiolla. "At the no. 1 position, Shelley was a consistent stand-out on this year's team, losing only one match during the season. The other players, Hsu (#2), Maureen Haggerty (#3), Sulerova, Fujita (#5), Noel (#6), Casey Stout (#7) and Kim Carella (#8) all contributed to the team's success.

Since the women's tennis program began in 1997, Mercer teams have earned three national championships, two second-place finishes at the nationals, and six straight regional titles. "It's been hard work and great chemistry. We've also had some good fortune with things going our way when it counted most," said Vecchiolla. "The players are so close. They really help each other. I think it's a big part of our success."

The MCCC Board of Trustees honored the 2001 - 2002 Women's Tennis Team with championship rings for athletic excellence. The women were winners of the NJCAA National Tournament in College Station, TX, in May, 2002. Pictured from left to right are: Mercer Athletic Director John Simone, Assistant Coach Ralph Bencivengo, Janine Hicks, Assistant Coach Barbara Pleva, Barbara Pal, Sarah Bucon, Jill Matasovsky, Ya-ting Hsu, Mai Fujita, and Head Coach Marc Vecchiolla.

The strength of this year's Women's Basketball Team lies in a guard-oriented attack from the returning backcourt of sophomores Ayesha Fitchett and Kamiya Harden. Lacking in size, the Lady Vikes look for contributions from every player, especially the team's tallest starter, 5'10" freshman center Alison Werkman. The only other returning player is guard Michelle MacInnes. Strong freshmen players include forwards Vicki Jenkins and Katy McCormack, and guard Courtney Williams, who starred with Fitchett on the women's soccer team.

Last year Mercer finished 18-13 and, against expectations, captured the regional title for the fifth consecutive year. Head Coach Mike Tenaglia is hoping that the Lady Vikes' ability to run, press and distribute the ball will wear out their opponents and give Mercer another Region 19 championship. He is assisted by Tameka Turner and Kim Webber, manager.
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