

# Welcome Back, Dr. Burke

His high school teachers said Bob Burke would never amount to anything. But he had other ideas.



Dr. Robert Burke '70 with Biology Professor Donna-Marie Gardner '00 (left) and Anissa Bousellam '14. Dr. Burke toured the new South Hall Science building at its ribbon-cutting and marveled at MCC's growth. See page 8.

This issue includes MCC's 2015-2016 Annual Report.

# Student Speaks on NASA Research at Regional Conference

Danielle Caruso, an MCC student and recipient of a NASA Space Grant Fellowship award, was selected as the student speaker at the Mid-Atlantic Space Grant Directors meeting Sept. 29-Oct. 1 at Johns Hopkins University's Mount Washington Conference Center in Baltimore.

Her presentation was titled: "A Look at TLR4 and MyD88 in Glioblastoma Using Immunohistochemistry."

"I wanted to test for antigens in tissue samples to see if they are present," Ms. Caruso said. "The tissue samples were taken from patients over 20 years ago who had died from a cancer called Glioblastoma. This cancer is a type of brain cancer, and it forms in the astrocytes (star-like cells that make up supportive tissue) in the brain. The cancer is very aggressive and deadly. The antigens I tested for are called TLR4 (a receptor protein in immune cells) and MyD88 (an adaptor protein in the TLR4 signaling pathway). These proteins work together to get rid of any foreign invaders in your body and they are found in many different other cancers, such as colorectal, esophageal and breast cancer. But when cancer forms, these proteins will promote cancer, preventing your body from becoming healthier.

"In order to see if TLR4 and MyD88 are in Glioblastoma, I performed a laboratory test called Immunohistochemistry, which is a technique used to test for antigens using their respective antibodies in samples of tissues. I performed Immunohistochemistry in the JFK Neuroscience Institute lab. My results showed 100 percent of the tissues used had positive results for TLR4 and MyD88 antigens. This means that they do in fact play a



Danielle Caruso

role in cancer formation and also immunosuppression, which in essence means your immune system is shutting down."

Ms. Caruso was one of six MCC students who received a \$5,000 grant from NASA to perform scientific research with their professors.

She said the experience of making the presentation was "amazing"

"Everyone seemed attentive and interested in the work I was presenting," she said. "Although I was nervous, I feel the presentation went quite well and it was an incredible experience that I will remember forever."

Ms. Caruso plans to attend Rutgers University after she graduates from MCC, and become a cancer researcher.



## Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders

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"Middlesex Now" is published for alumni and friends of Middlesex County College by the Marketing Communications Department. Correspondence should be sent to:

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MCC celebrated Veterans Day with a flag raising, a speech by College Board member George Lisicki, who is also a former national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a service project. The College community and other volunteers packed boxes of food and hygiene items to be shipped to service members overseas. The program was organized by Operation Shoebox NJ. From left, MCC student Mike Gada, an Army veteran; Middlesex County Sheriff's Officer Matthew Michals; and MCC student Lasha Otiuridze, a Marine Corps veteran.



## MCC Again Named Veteran-Friendly by Media Companies

Once again, Middlesex County College has been named as one of the most veteran-friendly colleges in the United States, receiving recognition for its service to student-veterans, according to lists developed by three media companies: Military Times, Military Advanced Education, and Victory Media. This is the third year MCC has been named to the Military Times list, the fourth time for Military Advanced Education, and the fifth year for Victory Media. In addition, MCC was named as the number 4 two-year school

in the nation for veterans by Online College Plan, a college search service for prospective students and their parents.

MCC President Joann La Perla-Morales credited the Veterans Services Center for the rankings. Established in 2011 with support from the Willard T.C. Johnson Foundation, the center's mission is to assist with quality education and comprehensive support services.

"The center has done a great job in assisting military veterans as they transition to civilian life," she said. "They make sure veterans receive all the entitlements for which they are eligible, coordinate services they need to be successful, and create an environment where they can socialize with other military veterans."

One such veteran is Mike Gada, who was in the Army and is now a Computer Science major.

"The Veterans Center has been a focal point for making sure I'm on the correct path to achieve my full potential," he said.

Richard Feldman, the coordinator of the Veterans Center, said he was grateful for the generous support of the Willard T.C. Johnson Foundation.

"The Foundation has allowed us to make a real

difference in the lives of these men and women," he said. "I love watching these students prosper in their transition back into civilian life."



One of my favorite days of the year is Commencement, where I can watch with pride as our veterans graduate."

Military Times publishes magazines for members in the branches of military service. Its survey, called "Best for Vets," is an editorially independent news project that evaluates the many factors that help make colleges and universities a good fit for service members, military veterans and their families. More than 500 colleges took part in this year's detailed survey. Middlesex was ranked 10th in the nation among two-year colleges; it was the only community college in New Jersey to make the list.

"We limit our list to encourage competition, and we genuinely hope this helps raise the bar for veterans on

*Continued on page 10*

# Amazing Growth: MCC Opens 2 New Buildings

MCC officially opened two new buildings this fall. West Hall, which combines enrollment services into one building, was dedicated in late September; South Hall, a state-of-the-art science building, was christened in October.

West Hall houses the offices of Admissions, Academic Advising, Career Services, Financial Aid, Registration, Student Account Services, Veterans Services, and the deans of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs.

“Today we celebrate the opening of our newest building – one to be used by all current and future students

for enrollment services,” said College President Joann La Perla-Morales at the ribbon-cutting. “When the founders of the College welcomed the first class, there were 760 students. Today we have 12,000 students in credit classes and an additional 10,000 in noncredit classes. We have grown and we have had to change with the times. Our new West Hall will help us change and improve services for our students and bring together the staff to provide these services supported by new technology.

“We are most grateful to both the County of Middlesex and the State of New Jersey for making the funding available for this construction,” she added.

Kenneth Armwood, Freeholder liaison to MCC, said West Hall will become a hub of the campus.

“In a short time from now, students will be running around, checking off their to-do lists for registration, enrollment and financial aid,” he said. “They’ll meet with their advisors and take advantage of the Career Services Center. They’ll probably stop and talk to one another and their professors. This will be the services hub of the College, easing stress and freeing up time for students to focus on their studies and contribute to Middlesex County College’s legacy of achievement.”

West Hall, which cost \$12.7 million, was built through Chapter 12 funding, the traditional way that county colleges in New Jersey are able to construct buildings. The County sells bonds, and the State and County then split the debt service.

It is 30,000 square feet and is nearby two large parking lots.

“We’re very excited about this new building because we will serve students in a more efficient manner,” said Brian Clemmons, dean of enrollment management. “Students can sign in from anywhere – home, their mobile phone,

or inside West Hall. They will then go to one terminal to get assistance with any type of enrollment issue. Most of them will only need to see just one MCC representative. Wait times should improve dramatically.”

After the ribbon-cutting, College retirees held a reunion in the new building, 50 years to the week after the first classes began. More than 100 retirees attended, including

some from the founding of the College all the way to those who retired this spring. See page 6.

South Hall was formally opened with a ribbon-cutting in October, but will not see students in classes there until the spring semester.

The two-story, 36,000-square-foot facility includes 14 science labs dedicated to general biology, chemistry, organic chemistry, genetics, microbiology and general science.

“We’re all excited about the new facility,” said Parag Muley, chair of Natural Sciences. “It looks spacious and inviting. Students and faculty are going to find it to be state-of-the-art, and a really good educational space. It’s going to be equipped with the latest and the greatest equipment for training. We are eager to get started. We can’t wait.”

South Hall, which cost \$18.2 million, was funded through the State of New Jersey’s Building Our Future Bond Act, along with a 25 percent match from the County.

“It took many steps to complete this project and to arrive at this day,” said Middlesex County Freeholder Director Ronald Rios, who spoke at the ribbon-cutting. “South Hall has been designed as a facility where students can experience in-depth, hands-on training in a wide range of scientific studies. It illustrates our shared dedication to offering quality education in state-of-the-art facilities to prepare our students for growing and in-demand fields.”

South Hall sits on land that held two smaller buildings, South 1 and 2, which predated MCC when the site was an Army Arsenal. South 1 was used as a maintenance shop for the Arsenal and South 2 was a tank repair shop. When the College took them over, they became classrooms and student support offices. Most recently, they were the temporary home for the James Monroe Elementary School when a fire destroyed its building in 2014.

Dorothy K. Power, chairman of the MCC Board of Trustees, recalled the history.

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*Celebrating two new buildings  
that will change the face of MCC*

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*Continued on page 5*

## South Hall Ribbon-Cutting

Front row, from left, holding scissors: Yasmin E. Hernandez-Manno, MCC trustee; Blanquita Valenti, freeholder; Ronald Rios, freeholder director; Dorothy K. Power, MCC board chairman; College President Joann La Perla-Morales; Robert Burke, a science major from the class of 1970 who became a pediatrician; Anissa Bousellam '14; Mark McCormick, MCC's vice president for academic and student affairs; and Linda Scherr, dean of arts and sciences. They are surrounded by other County and College officials, as well as faculty and staff in the Natural Sciences Department. Classes begin in the building this spring.



## College Dedicates 2 New Buildings for Enrollment and Science

*Continued from page 4*

“What a difference from the old Arsenal that once occupied this space, and in the interim, provided classrooms for our young James Monroe Elementary School students and teachers in grades 1-5 starting on a cold windy day in March 2014,” she said. “The change that has taken place on this plot of land over the last six decades is remarkable.”

Both buildings were constructed to be environmentally friendly. Donald Drost, executive director of facilities

management, said the College will submit the two buildings for LEED certification. LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is an internationally recognized mark of excellence that provides building owners and operators with a framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions. Crabiell Hall, which was completed in 2011, received a Silver ranking and Mr. Drost expects West Hall and South Hall to earn a Silver or Gold mark.



A student club, called Middlesex, Math & the Mouse, heard from a best-selling author in November about how to apply mathematics and data to saving time. The lecture, by Len Testa, was titled “The Traveling Salesman Problem for Fun and Profit.” Mr. Testa is a best-selling author, computer scientist and data guru. He holds a U.S. patent on the programming methods used to solve the problem of how to save up to four hours waiting on lines at Walt Disney World. He is also the president of Touring Plans and leads the researchers for all of The Unofficial Guides travel book series. He explained how he applied academic research on the time-dependent traveling salesman problem to figure out how to avoid the lines at Walt Disney World, Disneyland and Universal Studios Orlando. Before his speech, he talked with club members, from left, Shayne Judge, club president; Lauren Sutphen, secretary; Alyssa Capone, treasurer; and mathematics professor Patty Kiernan, club advisor.



# Laughter & Hugs: Retirees Return to Celebrate and Remember

By Kim Silva-Martinez

“Welcome back, welcome home!” said College President Joann La Perla-Morales as she greeted MCC faculty and staff retirees, who had gathered for a luncheon after the ribbon-cutting for West Hall, the new enrollment services building. It was a rainy Thursday, September 29, as they gathered to witness another milestone in MCC’s history. Fifty years ago, almost to the day, the first classes in MCC’s history began.

Several of them were there on that day in 1966, including David Tyrell, who traveled from Virginia for the reunion to reconnect with his colleagues. He had quite a few responsibilities that included designing an Electrical Technology curriculum, as well as finding the instructors dedicated to the mission of MCC. Also attending was former President John Bakum, who was Dr. La Perla-Morales’ immediate predecessor, and a tireless advocate of grants and funds for academic programs, many which were secured personally through his efforts.

Dr. La Perla-Morales spoke of these connections to the past; she explained the buildings’ architectural style – most salient in the brick facades – honoring the original motif, which dates back to the site’s earlier use as a major military arsenal.

After lunch, the retirees continued to mingle and reminisce. Many enjoyed looking at old black and white photos on the monitors located throughout West Hall.

Mary Lynch, who recently retired, worked for the College for 37 years. She graduated with a degree in Secretarial Science as a member of the first MCC class in 1968. After earning a Bachelor’s Degree from Montclair State University and a Master’s from Kean, she taught in a public school system, but her life changed when the chairperson of the Secretarial Science Program, Mary Reilly, invited her to join the faculty.

“I love the people and the students,” Professor Lynch

said. “It was wonderful, here, like a family.” She also recalled founding President Frank Chambers, his Administrative Assistant Alice Lake, and Vernon Wanty, who was dean of faculty and chief academic officer in 1966. As a student, Professor Lynch worked in the administrative offices. “They were amazing people, and Mrs. Lake gave me so much responsibility,” she said. “I even took the minutes at my own graduation!”

Jerome Shindelman worked at the College for 41 years. He started in 1967, and mentioned that a founding faculty member, Natural Sciences Professor Bob Coburn, still teaches here.

Professor Shindelman recalled his time at MCC: “It was a great place to work. I enjoyed it – the kids, everybody, the administration, and the beautiful campus.”

That was heard a lot – the natural beauty of the College campus, with its mature trees left over from the Raritan Arsenal, and the large tracts of grass that provided a home for the resident deer at night (and the squirrels in the first few years.)

Secretarial Science was a popular major, and Professor Reilly recalled that when she first started in 1966, she had to order all the new equipment, and the company sent manual instead of electric typewriters. They all had to be returned. The program required all the students to dress professionally, as if they were going to work, and she recalled speaking to parents who were so grateful that their children had the opportunity to attend MCC.

“We prepared them to enter the world,” she said.

Professor Reilly also remembered her colleagues from the early days of MCC.

“Working with Frank Chambers was wonderful,” she said. “He had a wonderful family and great foresight.” She fondly remembered the picnics Dr. Chambers would host.

“It was such a wonderful faculty,” she said.





### Scenes from the Reunion

Opposite page: Genevieve Romanczuk greets Bob Buzard.

This page, clockwise from upper left (all left to right): Elaine Turk, Mary Reilly, Joann La Perla-Morales, Carol Pam.

Trace Gerow, David Beyer.

Mary Lynch, Carol Pam, Ethel Reid.

Lynn Davis, Bob Colburn, Bob Zifchak.

Paul Bhatia, Rosemary Cwalinski, Mary Hricko, Genevieve Romanczuk.

To view more photos, video and the slideshow of old yearbook pictures shown at the reunion, go to [www.middlesexcc.edu/reunion](http://www.middlesexcc.edu/reunion).



# Welcome Back Dr. Burke



*Bob Burke barely escaped high school, got serious about education at MCC and went to medical school. Now a pediatrician, he's specializing in helping children with disabilities.*

By Chuck O'Donnell '91

**K**enny Perez's face broke into a big, toothy grin as he cruised down the hallway.

This kind of whoosh-of-wind freedom is something new to this 5-year-old who was born with a damaged spine and other medical complications. His walker, however,

does more than afford him newfound mobility and all the unbridled joy that comes with racing down hospital corridors.

It makes him feel good about himself.

Robert Burke has never lost sight of this in his decades as a pediatrician specializing in children with severe disabilities and conditions. Whether he was caring for kids with birth defects, autism, spinal injuries, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome or other conditions, Dr. Burke has always sought to, as he puts it, treat the whole kid.

In other words, Kenny isn't a spina bifida kid. He's a kid with spina bifida. Big difference.

"We were taking pictures and he wanted to go down the hall," said Dr. Burke, Class of 1970, who now lives in Rhode Island. "So he was with us and I was walking with his mom (Kenia) and he took off. He wants to show off what he can do. He can run around. The disability doesn't define him. Even at this age, he doesn't define himself that way."

There have surely been countless other cases such as these over Dr. Burke's career. He estimates he's treated tens of thousands of children. In fact, he took a break from his rounds at Women & Infants Hospital of Rhode Island and the Tavares Pediatric Center in Providence to visit MCC as a special guest at the unveiling of South Hall on October 21.

Sitting in this 36,000-square-foot building with 14 laboratories devoted to biology, chemistry and general sciences as well as an instrumentation room for student research projects, Dr. Burke recalled the confluence of coincidences and circumstances that resulted in him becoming a pediatrician. He calls it The Miracle.

It's nothing short of a miracle when you consider how far he's come. His father died of cancer when he was 8 months old, and his mother was forced to take in laundry to help supplement the family's welfare check.





He was a poor student, and he's pretty certain he was grappling with a learning disability at St. Mary's in Perth Amboy. He's not even sure he got past the five times tables. He was placed in the back row with the other struggling students. The nuns told him they allowed him to graduate "because to do otherwise would kill your sainted mother."

Middlesex County College played a big part in The Miracle. After getting out of the Army in Dec. 1966, he found that MCC welcomed him with open arms and an open mind. Gone were the days when his work would be ripped up in front of him or dismissed because of a misspelled word or two.

"I don't know if I ever struggled here," Dr. Burke said. "The faculty had a real good idea of what they were doing. They had people who had academic challenges and they worked with that. I took basic math. They spent time afterwards. Their office hours weren't a make-believe thing. They really were there."

He wasn't only imbued with confidence, his thirst for learning was whet by courses such as chemistry. When he took a similar course at another school after graduating from MCC, he discovered the class was used merely to weed out serious medical school candidates from the others.

"When I had it here," Dr. Burke said, surveying one of the South Hall classrooms, "that wasn't the attitude. They were going to make sure we learned it and didn't play any games. The same thing with physics."

The Miracle continued to take many shapes over the years. For instance, he happened to be at his mom's house when the call came from Rutgers Medical School offering him a place in the upcoming class.

"If I hadn't been there," Dr. Burke said, "they would



have just skipped to the next name on the list."

That evening he wrote himself a note: "I promise to take care of poor kids and kids with disabilities."

So even at 73, he's still making good on his promises. He says he comes to feel parental over his patients. It's understandable since he might treat them over decades, from newborn to young adulthood. But no matter the severity of their condition, Dr. Burke has no time for sympathy. It wouldn't serve any purpose. Rather there's a healthy dose of respect and dignity – maybe even a little playfulness – to his bedside manner.

His wife, Pat, says the kids come to adore her husband. And the parents are only too thankful for someone who can look past what meets the eye and also treat the kid inside.

"I have met a lot of his families, and they just all say, 'We love Dr. Burke. We love Dr. Burke,'" she said. "He's always there for them. My husband just had a young adult die with muscular dystrophy. My husband had him as a patient when he was really young and through his life and the mom wanted him to sign the death certificate even though he wasn't there because he was part of his life."

Opposite page and above: Dr. Robert Burke with Kenny Perez (photos courtesy of Robert Burke). At left, Dr. Burke fondly remembers the late Frank Spano, chair and chemistry professor. He spoke with Dr. Spano's son, MCC Professor Mat Spano, at the South Hall ribbon-cutting.



# College Named Veteran-Friendly by National Organizations

*Continued from page 3*

campus,” said Amanda Miller, editor of Best for Vets.

The rankings are published in full in the issues of Army Times, Navy Times, Air Force Times and Marine Corps Times.

Military Advanced Education (MAE) named MCC a Top School in its 2017 MAE Guide to Colleges & Universities, measuring best practices in military and veteran education. It was released in the December issue of MAE, and is available online at [www.mae-kmi.com](http://www.mae-kmi.com).

The guide presents results of a questionnaire of military-supportive policies enacted at more than 600 institutions including private, public, for-profit, not-for-profit, four-year, and two-year colleges. From community colleges to state universities, online universities and nationally known centers of higher learning, MAE’s 2017 Guide to Colleges & Universities arms students with information about institutions that go out of their way to give back to the men and women in uniform.

Victory Media has named MCC to the coveted Military

Friendly Schools® list. The list honors the top 20 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools that are doing the most to embrace America’s military service members, veterans and spouses and ensure their success on campus.

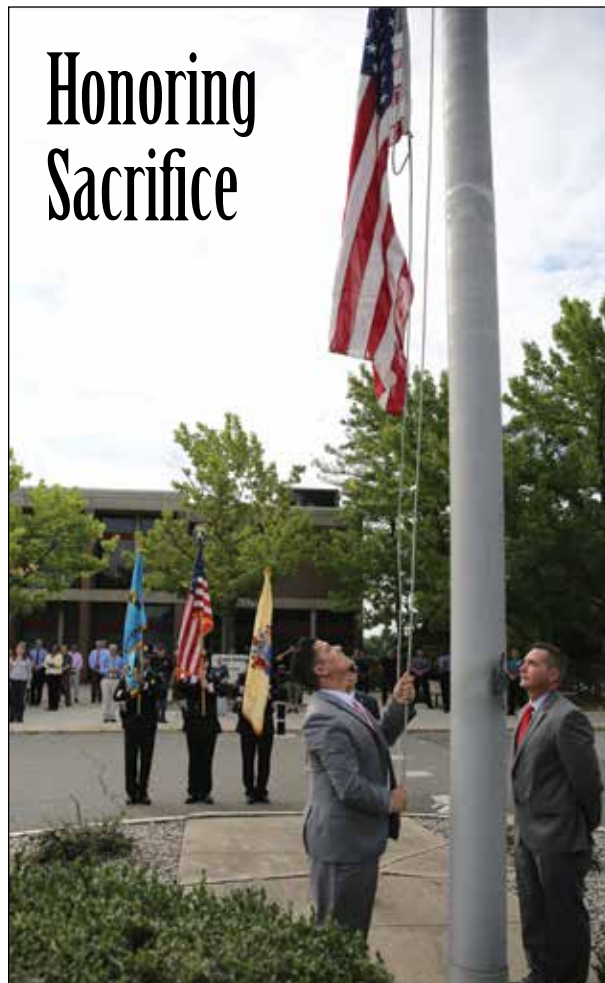
“Our ability to apply a clear, consistent standard to the majority of colleges gives veterans a comprehensive view of which schools are striving to provide the best opportunities and conditions for our nation’s student veterans,” said Daniel Nichols, a Navy Reserve veteran and chief product officer at Victory Media. “Military Friendly helps military families make the best use of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and other federal benefits while allowing us to further our goal of assisting them in finding success in their chosen career fields.”

The Military Friendly Schools website, [www.militaryfriendlyschools.com](http://www.militaryfriendlyschools.com), also features interactive and search tools to help military students find the best school to suit their unique needs and preferences.

George Lisicki, a member of the MCC Board of Trustees, was the national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars when the Post 9/11 GI Bill was signed in 2008. President George Bush was reluctant to sign it, because his advisors told him service members would leave the military en masse. “I told him this bill would actually encourage young men and women to join,” Mr. Lisicki said. “As I was leaving the Oval Office, he winked at me and said ‘You’ll have your G.I. Bill.’”

Mr. Lisicki said he was very proud of Middlesex County College and the work of the Veterans Center.

“They’re doing a wonderful job,” he said. “And that’s proven by all these awards. They help these young people transition from military to civilian life.”



MCC honored those killed on 9-11, as well as first responders, military veterans and service members on the 15th anniversary of the tragedy. The program included raising of the flag, assisted by the Middlesex County Sheriff’s Department Honor Guard, as well as speeches from Sam Olesinski (left), a veteran and MCC student; and Luke Agojo, veteran and president of the Student Government Association. Student Maurice Easter played a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem on his saxophone.





Eva Wiener was a passenger on the St. Louis, which left Europe in 1939 attempting to flee Nazi Europe. Denied entry by multiple countries, the ship was forced to return to Europe where hundreds of passengers were eventually killed in the Holocaust. The ship has become a symbol of the plight of European Jewry on the eve of the Holocaust. Ms. Wiener spoke in November in a program sponsored by the MCC Holocaust and Human Rights Center. Chatting before her speech are, from left, Linda Scherr, dean of Arts and Sciences; Shirley Wachtel, English professor who arraigned the visit; History Professor Terrence Corrigan, who is also director of the Center; and Ms. Wiener.



Brian Clemmons, dean of enrollment management, received an honorary membership into Phi Theta Kappa at its Fall induction. He was presented with his stole by Sara Chirco, PTK secretary.

## The Addams Family, A New Musical Comedy

The Addams Family features an original story, and it's every father's nightmare. Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man from a respectable family – a man her parents have never met. And if that weren't upsetting enough, Wednesday confides in her

father and begs him not to tell her mother. Now, Gomez Addams must do something he's never done before – keep a secret from his beloved wife, Morticia. Everything will change for the whole family on the fateful night they host a dinner for Wednesday's 'normal' boyfriend and his parents.



Feb 23 at 2 and 7 p.m. • Feb 24 and Feb 25 at 7 p.m.  
Feb 26 at 2 p.m.

Performing Arts Center

Directed by Moggie Davis • Musical Director Joe Lesko  
Choreographed by Michelle Mossay

All Tickets \$10 • Students Free with ID

For information call 732.906.2612 or visit  
[Middlesexcc.edu/theatre](http://Middlesexcc.edu/theatre)

# Notables

**Tom Peterson**, director of Marketing Communications, was presented the Spirit of the Arc Award at the Arc of New Jersey's annual dinner in December. He has been a volunteer and a member of the Board of Directors of Camp Jaycee, a summer camp for children and adults with developmental disabilities, for 10 years.

Professor **Louis Dell'Omo** from the Visual, Performing and Media Arts Department spent his third summer broadcasting live on the boardwalk in Asbury Park for 94.3 The Point (WJLK-FM) a Townsquare Media station in partnership with New Jersey Natural Gas and the Asbury Park Chamber of Commerce. He conducted interviews and promoted festivals and other community events. The season concluded Labor Day Weekend

with an exclusive interview with Danny DeVito. Mr. DeVito was taping footage for the television show Take Me Home, where celebrities give viewers tours of their home states. Mr. DeVito was selected for New Jersey and he chose his favorite town, Asbury Park. You can view a clip of the interview on Twitter @BlueColtRadio1.



Louis Dell'Omo with Danny DeVito

Faculty and students in the Dental Hygiene program attended an Oral Cancer Walk/Run and Screening in Andover, NJ. It was educational, as oral cancer survivors spoke about their treatment and long-term consequences of their head and neck cancer diagnosis. The MCC group raised the most money and was awarded a Velscope, a diagnostic tool used to detect suspicious lesions on oral soft tissues. From left: Olivia Grimes, June Somma, Andrea Cuenca, Kali Capunay, Marilyn Rangel, Crismery Guerra-Breton, Ricardo Zapata, Lynn Tobin and Molly Tobin, the team mascot.



Jed Baker, director of the Social Skills Training Project, an organization serving individuals with autism and social communication problems, spoke at Disability Awareness Day in October. He is the author of eight books, including "Preparing for Life: The Complete Handbook for the Transition to Adulthood for Those with Autism and Asperger's Syndrome" and "Overcoming Anxiety in Children and Teens." Dr. Baker writes, lectures and provides training on the topic of social skills and managing challenging behaviors. He is speaking with Cheryl Kolber, director of Project Connections, MCC's program for college-able students with learning disabilities, and Elaine Daidone, counselor for students with disabilities.



# Of Campus & Commerce

By Nick DeMatteo



**R**anked among the nation's largest independent electrical and industrial distributors, Turtle & Hughes is a fourth generation, family-owned business that employs over 850 professionals. Operating worldwide, Turtle & Hughes maintains multiple locations in New Jersey, with more than 350 employees in the state. With corporate offices in Linden and a major distribution center in Bridgewater, Turtle & Hughes utilizes the diverse corporate education and training programs offered at Middlesex

continuing education courses in all aspects of supply chain management on-site for Turtle & Hughes

at its distribution center in Bridgewater. MCC instructors and consultants help prepare Turtle & Hughes personnel for the exams necessary to obtain industry-recognized professional certifications from the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals. MCC is a participant in the New Jersey Talent Development Center for Logistics, Distribution and Transportation. This program makes it possible for much of the highly specialized professional training and certification testing happening at Turtle & Hughes to be supported with grant funding provided by the Talent Development Center.

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*MCC's training "provides a competitive advantage, increases employee commitment, and creates an opportunity for growth."*

**Chris Pilla,**

**Human Resources Director, Turtle & Hughes**

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The MCC Corporate Education and Training staff also works extensively with Turtle & Hughes personnel at its corporate offices in Linden delivering a broad array of organizational development programs on topics such as management skills, team building, problem solving and customer service communications. Additionally, Turtle & Hughes has taken advantage of the College's capability to provide technical training in Microsoft Office applications at both the Linden and Bridgewater facilities. These courses are all readily available through MCC with the NJBIA Basic Skills Training program. Working closely with Turtle & Hughes management to assess needs, MCC develops and delivers the necessary training programs on-site to support the needs of the organization.

County College to facilitate the professional development of its workforce that is necessary to meet its organizational objectives.

Chris Pilla, director of Human Resources at Turtle & Hughes, believes that employees are the organization's most important asset and the company must work to maximize their potential. He believes that the training afforded by MCC "provides a competitive advantage, increases employee commitment, and creates an opportunity for growth."

In addition to providing first-in-class electrical and industrial supplies and services, Turtle & Hughes partners with its customers to provide integrated supply chain management support. The objective is to provide exceptional service across all components of the supply chain as well as operational and logistical support. Accomplishing this mission requires a well-trained and highly skilled workforce. To develop and maintain the necessary organizational expertise, Middlesex County College provides

Turtle & Hughes provides services to customers in many industries including industrial controls and automation, power distribution, communications, energy management and energy generation among many others. They offer support with supply chain services, global export, materials management, logistics and technical consulting.

To maintain its leadership role and competitive position within the industry, Turtle & Hughes places a high priority on developing a professional workforce with the necessary training and required expertise. Middlesex County College works closely with Turtle & Hughes to provide the resources necessary to support these objectives and fulfill its organizational mission.

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*Of Campus & Commerce is a column written by MCC's director of Corporate Education and Training, Nick DeMatteo. It addresses training issues at New Jersey's businesses and organizations. His email is [NDeMatteo@middlesexcc.edu](mailto:NDeMatteo@middlesexcc.edu).*

# *Sweet Sounds*



**Master violinist Xiaotong Wang makes beautiful music and is learning English at MCC.**



# Sweet Sounds: Xiaotong Wang and the Language of Music

Xiaotong Wang picked up the violin when he was 3 ½ years old and he has never set it down. A native of China, he was pushed by his parents to learn the instrument.

But he soon came to love it.

“It became my buddy,” he said. “It became my passion. I wanted to learn more.”

Indeed. The notes that flow from his violin are sweet, moving and melodious.

“Music – the violin – is my life,” he says. “I can’t live without music.”

His wife is also a violinist and his 3-year-old son is learning the instrument.

Mr. Wang received a Bachelor’s Degree at the Academy of Music in JiNan, China, and his Master’s and Ph.D. from the Moscow Conservatory in Russia. He developed a love for classical music, especially Tchaikovsky.

“Now I love all classical and romantic music,” he said.

During his eight years in Russia, he studied for six and played for two with the Russian National Orchestra. He is now performing with the Bravura Philharmonic Orchestra in Princeton.

“Mr. Wang is truly a first-class violinist,” said Chiu-Tze Lin, Bravura’s music director and conductor. “He has great technique and a most musical tone in his playing. I have enjoyed working with Mr. Wang tremendously as he is always professional in his interaction with colleagues. New Jersey is very lucky to have Mr. Xiatong Wang residing here. I am sure that he will contribute enormously to the arts and culture in New Jersey.”

In 2007, Mr. Wang won the first prize in the 21<sup>st</sup> Cen-

tury Youth Virtuoso Competition and in 2008, he was invited by the Tula Oblast government and New Moscow National Music School to become a lifelong judge of the Gnesin-Academy Cup Chamber Music International Competition.

He is fluent in Chinese and Russian, and is learning English at Middlesex County College.

“The English as a Second Language Program at MCC is very, very good and helpful,” he said. He credits his teachers – Gary Abbott, Richard Roy, Mary Lynch and Sudipta Biswas – with helping him immensely. Mr. Wang started taking classes in the summer, and has gone to level four already, which is the highest level for the program.

“It’s a pleasure teaching Xiaotong whose passion is to improve his English language and American culture,” said Professor Lynch. “And it is especially a pleasure when he shares with his ESL classmates his passion for performing in orchestras with his magnificent violin.”

He plans to stay in the United States and become a music teacher at a university. Actually, he is now teaching violin to 15 students – most of them American-born Chinese – in the United States. He can teach and communicate with his students in English now.

Jane Jiang, an MCC reference librarian who is also from China, said Mr. Wang learned Russian in about six months.

“Since he picked up Russian that quickly, he’ll be able to learn English rapidly,” she said. “He is very passionate and enthusiastic about his new life in the U.S.”

Mr. Wang actually knows a fourth tongue.

“Music is its own language,” he said.

Pulitzer-Prize-winning author Junot Díaz spoke to the College community as part of Hispanic Heritage Month. From left, Mr. Díaz, Ode Hoppie, assistant director of Student Life; English Professor Wilson Class and Angelo Abreu, assistant director of the New Brunswick Center.



# FOUNDATION REPORT

An MCC Advisory Board member and former trustee, Dr. Jean Battaglia, and her husband, Frank, made a generous contribution to the **Blaha Battaglia Family Endowed Scholarship**. The scholarship was established in 2006 to benefit students who show academic merit and have financial need.

Friends of the **Middlesex County Charity Golf Corporation** made a generous contribution of \$2,500 to the Veterans Services Center.

Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation renewed its commitment to the **Delta Dental of NJ Foundation Annual Scholarship** with a gift of \$10,000 to assist deserving dental hygiene students who, in turn, will serve the communities in which they live and work.

**Provident Bank Foundation** has renewed its Mission Partner support for 2016-17 which includes recognition as the presenter of the Annual Scholarship Reception held October 27 and as a Casino Host at the 6th Annual Casino Night to be held February 24, 2017. The Provident Bank Foundation established the Provident Bank Foundation Endowed Scholarship and the John Mulkerin Endowed Scholarship and has provided Mission Partner support since 2004.



Lisa McCormick Lavery, director, corporate reputation and media relations at Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, met with senior administrators, faculty and staff in September. Bristol-Myers Squibb has been a loyal and generous supporter since the College was founded, supporting a wide variety of programs and funding both endowed and annual scholarships. Here, Ms. McCormick Lavery (seated third from right) with faculty, staff and students in front of South Hall, the new academic science building.



Carlos Sanchez has renewed his commitment to the Carlos Sanchez Young Entrepreneur Scholarship for the EMPOWER Program with a pledge of \$4,000. Established in 2014, the scholarship is designed to educate students on the importance of free enterprise and business in the USA. The scholarships will reward MCC/EMPOWER students who aspire to run a small business and will encourage research of successful young entrepreneurs globally. From left: Luz Sanchez with Sanchez scholars Nayeli Hernandez and Dora Veliz, and Carlos Sanchez at the Annual Scholarship Reception.

Federal Business Centers fulfilled its pledge of \$25,000 for the **Frank D. Visceglia Endowed Scholarship** established in 1991 by family, friends, colleagues and business associates in memory of Mr. Visceglia. Mr. Visceglia was a hardworking business leader who was also dedicated to MCC and the community. The scholarship is awarded to a health technologies major.

Professor Phalguni Ghosh renewed his commitment to the **Anjali Ghosh Memorial Annual Scholarship** with a generous gift of \$1,000. Established in 2013, the scholarship is awarded to students majoring in Natural Sciences with a minimum GPA of 3.5 and, to date, has helped three students achieve their academic goals.

James Mikusi, Sr. has provided a generous contribution of \$5,000, eligible for an equal matching gift from Prudential, to the **James Mikusi, Jr. Endowed Scholarship**. The scholarship is being established in memory of his son, Jimi Mikusi, Jr., alumnus from the Class of 2000, and will ensure his memory lives on in perpetuity.



**Christine Harrington** is generously continuing her support of the “Student Success 101 Research Poster Contest” which she established in 2013. Entrants must be enrolled in the Fall semester “Student Success” course and elect to compete in an extracurricular research poster contest.

Northfield Bank Foundation renewed its support of the **Northfield Bank Foundation Annual Scholarship**. Established in 2009, the scholarship is awarded to students with financial need who live in East Brunswick, Milltown, Avenel, Monroe, Woodbridge, Linden or Rahway where Northfield Bank has locations. Since 2009 the scholarship has benefitted 28 students.

Switzer Foundation has again provided a generous gift of \$10,500 to support the **Switzer Foundation Annual Scholarship** for Nursing Students. Established in 2012, the scholarship has helped 41 students in achieving their academic and career goals.

Mary Trickel ’77, MCC Foundation trustee and MCC retiree, renewed her support of the **Mary E. Trickel Endowed Scholarship**. Established in 2000, the scholarship is awarded to a custodial parent who is returning to academia after a five-year lapse in formal education.

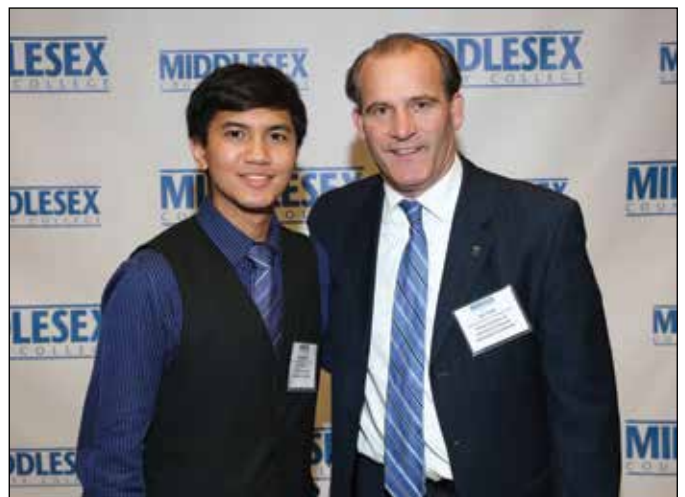


The Zifchak family established the Josephine Zifchak Memorial Annual Scholarship with donations from family, friends and MCC faculty and staff. The late Josephine Zifchak resided on campus for 29 years with her husband, Robert, former athletic director, and their children. Contributions from the Zifchak family and friends also provided for a bench dedicated to her memory in front of the Physical Education Center. The youngest generation of the Zifchak family recently visited the bench. Seated, from left: Morgan Zifchak, Matthew Zifchak, Julia Zifchak, Katie Riha and Amanda Zifchak. Back row, Emily Riha, Bob Zifchak and Tyler Gorecki.

Maud Urbanski made a generous contribution to the **Professor Robert Urbanski Annual Scholarship** established in 2013 in memory of Professor Urbanski who was respected for his many achievements and contributions to society. The scholarship is awarded to a full-time student majoring in mathematics enrolled in the Honors Program.

## Foundation Welcomes New Member

DeAngelina Inman was unanimously approved as a trustee of the Middlesex County College Foundation at its meeting in September. Ms. Inman is manager of the Clara Barton Branch of Investors Bank in Edison, and has received numerous awards and recognition for sales accomplishments and involvement with the community. Prior to joining Investors Bank, Ms. Inman was employed at Provident Bank. She is an active member of the Edison Chamber of Commerce, joining the Board of Directors in 2014 where she played a significant role during a leadership transition. She also volunteers with the Middlesex County Improvement Authority and the Edison Memorial Tower.



The Edison Chamber of Commerce made a commitment of \$1,500 for the Edison Chamber of Commerce/Annaeae Baerenbach Business Scholarship. Through revenues raised from its “Taste of Middlesex” event, the Chamber assists an Edison resident majoring in business, computer science or engineering technology. From left: scholarship recipient Christian Cuison with Joseph Coyle, Chamber executive director, at the Annual Scholarship Reception.

# Scholarship Reception

About 300 students, donors and guests enjoyed the Annual Scholarship Reception in October to thank scholarship donors and to provide the opportunity for supporters to meet scholarship recipients. The reception was supported by the Provident Bank Foundation.



Warren Kelemen, coordinator of emeriti and retiree relations (2nd from left), Mitchell Danzis, Nicholas Danzis (3rd and 4th from left) and Hank Bauer, trustee, MCC Foundation, (far right) with recipients of the Dr. Rose Channing Danzis Endowed Scholarship and the Dr. Sidney Danzis Memorial Endowed Scholarship.



Keith Mullane meets recipients of the Mary Braun Scholarship.



Two students were awarded Alumni Association scholarships. Kendra Muse (seated, left), a nursing major, was awarded a \$750 Alumni Association Scholarship for Academic Excellence. After graduating, she plans to open her own substance abuse clinic. Paula Ulyak (right) was awarded a \$500 scholarship for a dependent of an alumnus who is active in community service. She is studying biology and aspires to become a veterinarian. Her father Paul is an MCC alumnus. Standing from left, Dorothy Bitetto, Alumni president; Albert Gomolka, vice president; and Michaela Macauley, trustee.



Delta Dental of NJ representatives Gene Napoliello (second row, second left), president, and James Suleski '73 (second row, far right) senior vice president and chief financial officer, with Claire Pean (top row, first left), chair of the Dental Hygiene Program, and Risa Levi (top row, far right), faculty, with dental hygiene scholarship recipients.



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# ALUMNI ACTIVITIES

## AlumNotes

**Dennis C. Miller '70**, nonprofit board and CEO leadership coach, has formed a new partnership with The Angeletti Group. The joint venture, named The Nonprofit Search Group, will conduct executive search projects for a wide variety of industries, including independent and higher education, healthcare and human services, religious institutions, the arts, and other community building organizations.

**Robert Fedor '76** is business manager/plant controller at Ronpak, manufacturers of printed packaging in South Plainfield. Robert was offered a position at the company through MCC's job placement service and reports "Almost 41 years later I'm still at the same company and going strong."

**William Pavlak '78** has been named head coach of the South Plainfield High School wrestling program. He previously coached the Tigers from 1994-2002 and led them to two group, four sectional, six Greater Middlesex Conference and eight district championships. William teaches at Franklin Elementary School in South Plainfield.

**Edwin S. Skrobacz, PE '81** is currently relocating to Tampa, Florida as a supervising structural engineer. Most recently, he was a supervising engineer at LaGuardia Airport Reconstruction in New York. Edwin has been a bridge designer for the past 30 years. He was an adjunct instructor at NJIT and Stevens Institute and served as grand knight for the Knights of Columbus. He and his wife Susan, MCC Class of 1986, have been married for 30 years and have two children. Edwin's interests include long distance bicycle touring, mountain biking, hiking and kayaking.

**Joseph Falcone '96** has been promoted to sergeant in the North Brunswick Police Department where he has served as a patrolman since 2001. Previously he served as a sheriff's officer with the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office and a corrections officer with the Middlesex County Adult Corrections Center. Joseph is the recipient of several letters of commendation.

**Daniel Passafiume '97** has been promoted to sergeant in the North Brunswick Police Department. He was a patrolman since 2005, transferring from the Middlesex County Sheriff's Office. He also served as a corrections officer

with the Middlesex County Adult Corrections Center. Daniel earned an Associate Degree in Police Science from MCC, a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from Rutgers University and a Master's Degree in Human Resources Training/Development and Education Administration/Supervision from Seton Hall University.

**Susan Zogheib, MHS, RD, LDN '05** is a graduate of the Dietetic Technology Program and holds a Master's Degree from Ryerson University in Toronto. Susan is a food and nutrition expert and media consultant with more than 10 years' experience working as a clinical dietitian. She is the author of the "Renal Diet Cookbook" (2015) and "The Mediterranean Diet Plan" (2016). Susan lives in Pittsburgh, PA, and can be found online at [susueats.com](http://susueats.com).

**Helen Nguyen '10** majored in chemistry at MCC, then transferred to Rutgers and graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering. "I found myself prepared and ready to take on the next challenges at Rutgers and then began working in the chemical industry after earning my Bachelor's Degree."

**Melvin Inoa '12** is a firefighter with the Perth Amboy Fire Department. Melvin also served as a military police officer with the U.S. Army and received several awards during his service.

**Patrick J. Foy '13** went on to earn a B.A. in Psychology from Kean University with a minor in Marketing. He will continue his education at Kean University Graduate School to pursue a Master's in Human Behavior and Organizational Psychology.

**Ahmed Anwar '14** is continuing his education at Rutgers.

**Mohamad Anwar '14** was accepted into New York College of Pediatric Medicine after having graduated from Rutgers and MCC.

**Jason Latham '14** went on to graduate from Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences in 2016 majoring in Microbiology Research.



Nicholas Johnsen was awarded the Middlesex County College Alumni Association Academic Excellence Scholarship of \$750. He is an Earth Science major who will graduate in the Spring of 2017 and plans to transfer to either Rutgers or SUNY Oneonta or SUNY Oswego, where he plans to major in meteorology. He is shown with Dorothy Bitetto, president of the Alumni Association.



**Anthony Noto '14** plans to graduate from Rutgers University in December 2016. He has currently applied to graduate programs at Cornell, Wisconsin, North Carolina State and Penn State. He plans to double-major in Biotechnology and Plant Biology.

**Linda Remache '14** is a senior at New Jersey City University and will be continuing her education to complete a Master's Degree in Accounting.

**Zachary Tevoli '14** is a police officer with the North Brunswick Police Department. Zachary graduated from the Mercer County Police Academy and is a former loss prevention detective at Bloomingdale's. He earned a graduate degree in National Security Studies from New Jersey City University.

**Rana Abousleiman '15** is currently a dietetics student at Rutgers University. She plans to go on to graduate school. "I miss Middlesex. I know I couldn't have done as great as I have at Rutgers without having gone to Middlesex first."

**Angela Cardaci '15** is currently a student at Rutgers University. "Middlesex gave me a strong

foundation. I am applying to physical therapy schools now. I love genetics! Professor Gardner is the best!"

**Joanna Eaton '15** "I greatly enjoyed the personal and professional connections that I made at Middlesex. It was the first step that I needed to take to begin my artistic career. Thank you MCC!"

**Deepika Bakshi '16** "When I started Middlesex I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I ended up choosing graphic design and I was surprised by the diversity of the classes. Freehand drawing and photography widened my skill set. I transferred to Kean and the skills I learned at Middlesex are extremely useful."

**Cory Ross '16** graduated as valedictorian from the Edison Jobs Corps in 2016. Cory previously served in the U.S. Army.

**Rebecca Lynn Gonzalez '16** is attending New York Institute of Technology in Manhattan, majoring in Architecture.

**Michele Lobaito '16** graduated from MCC with an Addiction Studies certificate and is studying for a Master's Degree in Counseling at Kean

University. Michele had earned a Bachelor's Degree prior to attending MCC. She graduated with highest honors and received an award for achieving a 4.0 GPA. Michele says "Thank you!"

**Orchid Poponne '16** "I very much enjoyed Middlesex. It provided me with a great opportunity and I am proud to be an alumna. I mastered the material and learned skills needed to excel at the next step of the educational process. The interpersonal skills I learned help me to build life-long relationships."

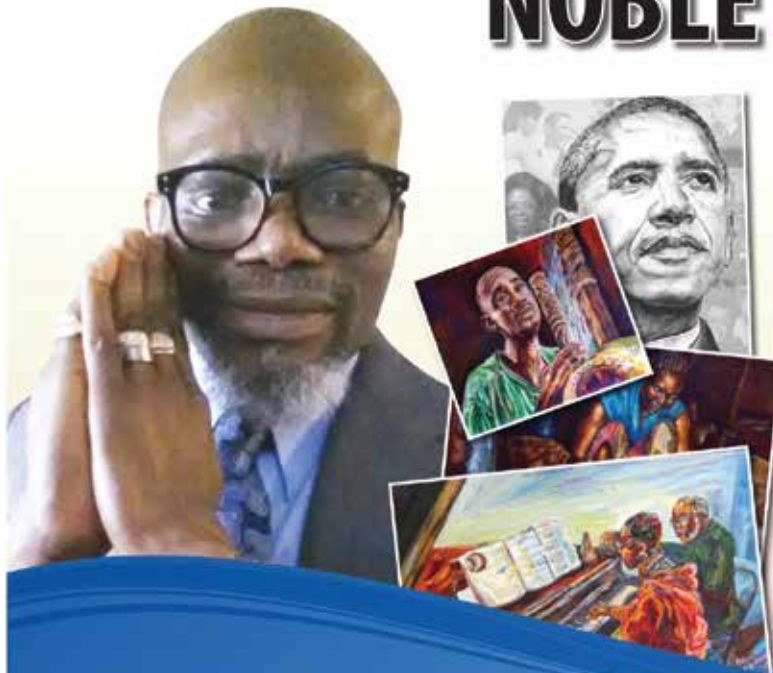
## In Memoriam

Thaddeus 'Ted' Cislo '68  
Margaret 'Peggy' Cislo '69  
Cora Tomblin '73  
Tyler Davis '16

Karen Kavanagh, former director of personnel and later director of employee relations.  
Dorothy Calabro, who worked in Facilities.  
Vera Deuringer, who worked in the College Library.  
Gliceria Zoraida Calvo-Scott, former MCC counselor.

**MIDDLESEX**  
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## BLACK HISTORY MONTH ART EXHIBIT NOBLE EXPRESSIONS



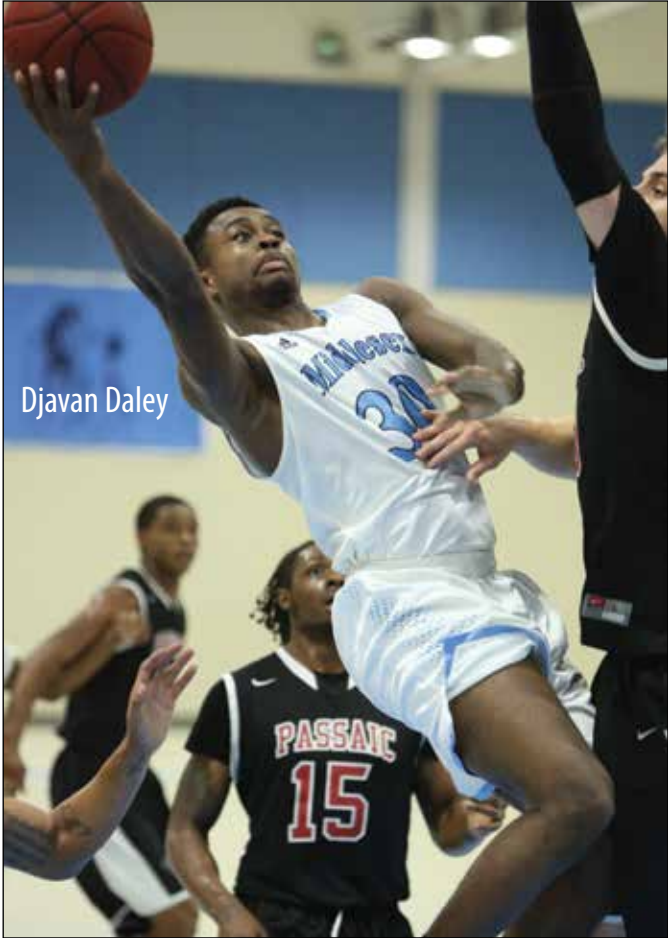
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# SPORTS UPDATE



Djavan Daley



Michael Valentin

Ziykara Hicks (center right, holding ball) with the banner honoring her for scoring 1,000 points at MCC. The sophomore guard hit the milestone at a December 10 game at Cumberland County College, but the banner was unveiled at the next home game. A larger version will hang in the Physical Education Center. She is surrounded by teammates, coaches, College officials, family and basketball alumnae.



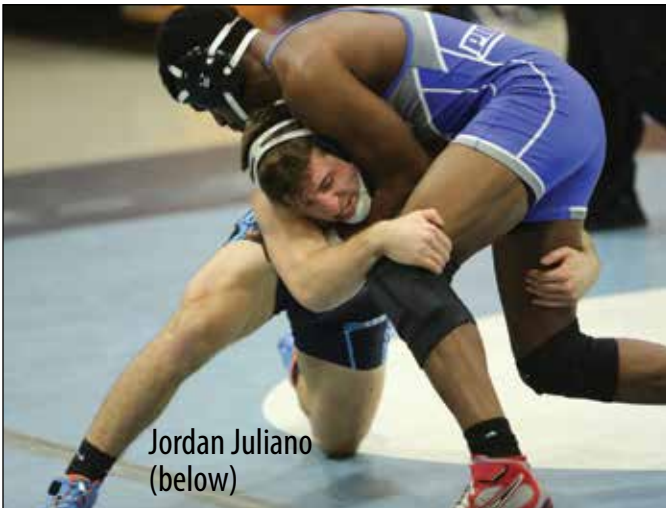




Ziykara Hicks



Kaitlyn Johnsen



Jordan Juliano  
(below)



Algenis Nunez

## Sports Update

The **Men's Basketball** team is rebuilding this year under first-year coach Bilal Dixon. The team has an overall record of 3-12. Michael Valentin is leading the way for the Colts. He is currently 15th in the nation in scoring.

With an overall record of 11-4, the **Women's Basketball** team has picked up where they left off last season. They are in second place in Region XIX (10-1) and first place in the Garden State Athletic Conference (8-1). The team has a nice balance of freshmen and sophomores contributing to their success. Ziykara Hicks has been named Garden State Athletic Conference Player of the Week twice.

The 2015-2016 **Wrestling** season has been great so far, with place finishers in every tournament in which they have competed. Jordan Juliano is a wrestler who has the potential to do well at Districts this February.

# MIDDLESEX

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Thirteen 3-to-5-year-olds from Acelero Learning of Monmouth /Middlesex Counties recently visited the College Dental Hygiene Clinic. Senior dental hygiene students, faculty and the clinic dentist welcomed the children. The kids received a dental screening, toothbrush education, a teeth cleaning and fluoride varnish application. From left: Joy Mangafas and Marilyn Rangel clean a child's teeth.