

# FOUNDATION FOCUS

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE FOUNDATION NEWS

SUMMER | 2020



**EMERGENCY  
ASSISTANCE  
HELPS STUDENTS  
WEATHER PANDEMIC**

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**ON THE FRONT LINES WITH  
NURSING ALUMNA DAWN HARRIS**

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**BLACK LIVES MATTER:  
DR. DERIONNE POLLARD'S VIEW**

# FROM THE CHAIR

The last few months have provided all of us time to stop and think about what we value. As our community faced the vulnerability of lives and livelihoods, we have observed profound examples of heroism, generosity, and kindness. I am proud that Montgomery College and the Montgomery College Foundation have been in the forefront of acting quickly—with great humanity—to lift up our community and support those in need.

There are so many examples, large and small, of MC stepping up and reaching out. When the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System put out a call for help, 31 MC nursing students responded. They started practicing their profession even before taking their last final exams. What courageous action in the midst of so much uncertainty to immediately apply their education and provide care for their fellow community members!

The desire to care for and lift each other up is also demonstrated from the community to our students. This, of course, is nothing new. Over the past seven years, we have been working toward a \$30 million fundraising goal—the biggest stretch goal in our history. Under the leadership of President DeRionne Pollard, Campaign Chairs Ashley Cheng, Jeffrey Slavin, and Linda Youngentob, and Honorary Campaign Chair Catherine Leggett, we surpassed this milestone before our June 30 target date.



Ken Becker

At the time of this writing, we have raised \$31 million toward scholarships, emergency support, and program funds such as ACES and MBI. Along with their gifts, donors to the campaign sent a clear message: They believe in the potential of our students and they share a commitment to ensuring educational opportunities are accessible to all members of our community.

We pause to celebrate the opportunities our students will have because of the thoughtfulness and generosity of our donors before returning to the work at hand. The obstacles our students face are growing, and so must our investment in their future and the future of our community. Together, we will ensure our students receive the education and training they require to assume the critical roles they will fill in the future.

## FOUNDATION FOCUS

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The Montgomery College Foundation is a 501©(3) charitable organization governed by business, alumni, and community leaders to enhance the work of Montgomery College to a level of excellence comparable to the finest colleges and universities across the country. Through advocacy, influence, and financial support, these volunteer leaders work to ensure understanding of and commitment to the community college philosophy of opportunity, inclusion, and education achievement for all.

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## IN MEMORIAM

### Allison Henderson (1961–2020)

The members of the Montgomery College Foundation Board of Directors mourn the recent loss of fellow board member Allison Henderson. As a vice president at Westat, Allison's career was dedicated to education policy. She was a passionate advocate for students, which led to her joining the board as well as the ACES Advisory Committee.



### Pete Vidal (1971–2020)

In his role as the College's staff photographer—which he considered his dream job—Pete captured hundreds of special events for the College community. He was a proud MC alumnus, and his spirit, professionalism, and patented smile will be forever etched in the minds of his colleagues and in the spirit of the College community that he so proudly served.



## MONTGOMERY COLLEGE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020–2021

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DeRionne P. Pollard, Ph.D.  
President,  
*Montgomery College*

### Student Member

Alaa Sharaf  
Public Health Major, *Montgomery College*

# MC

# COMMENCEMENT 2020 IS A



# VIRTUAL SUCCESS

By Jill Fitzgerald

Celebrating a commencement ceremony like none other in College history, MC 2020 graduates felt the support, admiration, and respect of local VIPs—and national celebrities. The May 22 event included guest appearances by Dr. Anthony Fauci, General Colin Powell, Emmy-award winning actress Julia Louis-Dreyfus, and the first lady of Maryland Yumi Hogan.

More than 600 students participated in the ceremony, providing customized slides with a photo and a personalized message. Nearly 150 students participated in a recorded Zoom meeting added to the ceremony.

In her address, Montgomery College President DeRionne Pollard summed up sentiments of everyone who had well wishes for the class of 2020: "This event format, just like the rest of the semester, has been a new experience for each of us. Celebrations have taken on new form, but the pride that we feel in our hearts for the graduates is no less for being physically separated."

From the moment College operations moved remotely during the coronavirus pandemic, officials researched alternatives to a live, in-person event. "Just as we have done every year, we wanted to recognize and honor our students' academic achievements," says Denise Matheny, director of special events. The Special Events team collaborated with MCTV staff and outside vendor, Marching Orders, which provides software support for graduation ceremonies, to produce the nearly two-hour event.

Though virtual, the event struck emotion for viewers. A Germantown Campus professor commented: "...as someone that has been choked up or fought back tears at many commencements... this year's celebration was (incredibly) one of the best, if not the best ever. Just when I was about to [turn away], another group of students would be coming on thanking parents, teachers, God. I was so happy that I tuned in."

To watch the 2020 commencement ceremony, visit <https://youtu.be/XtTcypnl3Zs>.



3,207 degrees and certificates were awarded to nearly 2,900 graduates



First Early College graduating class (students who finished with a college degree and a high school diploma)



615 graduates customized their slides



140 graduates participated in the Zoom meeting shout-outs

## YOUTUBE STATS:



11,963 views



34 countries

## FACEBOOK STATS:



15,883 views



4,731 engagements



2,776 reactions  
(834 from shares)



1,002 comments  
(355 from shares)



119 shares

# STATEMENT FROM COLLEGE PRESIDENT DR. DERIONNE POLLARD ON REACTIONS TO CALLS FOR JUSTICE

At Montgomery College, one simple truth drives the ethos of our work: No student is expendable and no portion of our community does not belong to us. The health, safety, and prosperity of our collective demands that anchor institutions such as Montgomery College acknowledge the pain, fear, and disillusionment that exist for our students, employees, and community members. We are not the same after the recent events. They have manifested what many have felt for some time: Our nation is at risk, our systems are fractured, and our community is vulnerable. The death of George Floyd and so many before him must not be divorced from deep currents that were always just beneath the surface: economic and social inequality, inconsistent accountability in law enforcement, a glaring absence of a moral compass in certain sectors. It is a palimpsest of racism in this country.

## **Black lives matter.**

Just as we have declared and embraced our mutuality with immigrant and undocumented communities, LGBTQ+ communities, and Muslim communities, Montgomery College recognizes how racism and xenophobia continue to endanger too many. Violence and injustice only beget more violence and injustice—destroying opportunities for authentic and impactful healing and transformation. This is a crucible moment for our nation and community; will the progeny of systematic and generational hate and violence be our birthright as a nation? Are we satisfied with that outcome? We must reconcile who we claim to be with who we really are and hope to become.

## **Black lives matter—especially in this moment.**

We need a notion of radical inclusion that is omnipresent: a deep-seated and profound recognition that inclusion and equity cannot exist in the absence of justice, empathy, compassion, and truth. This moment isn't about high rhetoric, wrapping benign platitudes in gratuitous sentimentality. It is about the deep and painful work of truth-telling, reconciliation, and community building. Justice and truth are always preconditions for peace.

I can think of no better community in which to lead an organization to engage in this type of work. I have profound hope in the rich diversity of Montgomery College to influence meaningful action and advance purposeful decisions that create a more just community. We are the community's college—committed to reinforcing civil engagement by members of the MC community,



Dr. DeRionne Pollard

creating safe spaces to engage in public discourse, contributing intellectual fortitude to craft community solutions, and acknowledging our own need for growth and development for students and employees alike. I encourage you to visit the Montgomery College Equity and Inclusion Roadmap for Success (2020), which explicates our specific commitments to build a stronger and more just community.

Recent events have only deepened our commitment to these goals. I am grateful for the care with which these values inform our mission: to empower students to change their lives and to enrich the life of our community. This is our pledge to our entire community—and we will be accountable for our results.

# A TIME FOR ACTION

## New Scholarship Program for African American Male Students

By Joyce Matthews | Photos by Brady Patton

Most of us have never seen a moment like this in history. During the past few months, we have witnessed protests in all 50 states and even around the world. People's hearts and minds are consumed with issues around systemic racism. As we look directly into the soul of the nation, there is universal agreement that the time for talk has passed. Instead, this moment calls for intentional, positive, deliberate action.

Under the leadership of Dr. DeRionne Pollard, Montgomery College is positioned to offer a strategic response and start a movement in higher education that serves our African American male population as they deserve to be served.

Why African American men? Our data shows that more than one of every two African American male students at Montgomery College will struggle to graduate and to complete courses at a level that transfers to four-year institutions. More than any other population, they are not reaching their academic goals. Graduation rates, grade point averages, and time to completion are significantly below the College's overall population.

Dr. Pollard knows it is not "someone else's fight," yet she also recognizes she cannot do it alone. Months ago, she began building a coalition of key county constituents who will embrace this effort and help remove barriers.

In March, 24 leaders representing local government, the health care industry, historically black fraternities,

faith organizations, and the business community met on this topic. In June, a second roundtable with 17 presidents and CEOs of community-based social agencies and organizations met. These individuals represent a broad constituency that serves the most diverse and sometimes vulnerable populations in the county. Their unity around this one targeted cause of supporting African American men is noteworthy as a reflection of the undeniable, urgent need for systemic change.

Upon hearing Dr. Pollard's ideas for change, one participant said, "I am shaken and excited. This is going to work."

The College's plan offers unparalleled services in a tight-knit learning community that addresses many aspects of the students' educational experience. In addition to the financial and academic support, the students will have a meaningful mentoring experience with a volunteer leader from industry who will be in contact with the students consistently, both

In March, the first roundtable gathered input from leaders in business, community organizations, local government, health care, and historically black fraternities.



Dr. Pollard with Dr. Scott Royal, president and CEO of Westat

to encourage them to continue their studies and to apprise them of industry opportunities. As available, volunteers will be asked to provide summer internships and experiential learning opportunities to give students hands-on experiences. Faculty and retirees will also play an integral role in supporting the new program.

"We want young men to graduate from MC and go into relevant industries—not low-end jobs—so they are highly successful and mobile," Pollard said. "Improving college completion rates for these students is not only a social justice imperative, it is an economic imperative that should be of concern to the business community, which will miss out on much-needed workforce talent."

**If you would like to support this important initiative, please contact Joyce Matthews at [joyce.matthews@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:joyce.matthews@montgomerycollege.edu).**



C. Marie Taylor, president and CEO, Leadership Montgomery, and Julian A. Haynes, director, Maryland Partnerships and Strategy, Meyer Foundation

# BOARD MEMBER BRINGS SOCIAL JUSTICE INTO FOCUS

By Diane Bosser

Abigail Seldin knows the power of photographs in today's 24/7 news cycle. This spring, Seldin's nonprofit organization, the Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation (SHSF), partnered with Getty Images to launch The New College Majority Photo Series. More than 200 images showcase a new demographic of students who are parents. They show young adults carrying books and babies, pushing strollers on campuses, and doing homework in the laundromat.

"The new Getty images let people see what students look like in 2020," Seldin says. "And while people might glaze over at a statistic, photographic images of sacrifice and resilience can move people." Seldin adds, "They are not tragic; they are not celebratory, but this is what resilience looks like. This is their reality."

The first set in the series, which launched May 10, 2020—Mother's Day, focused on college students who are mothers. The partnership plans to add four more installments under the New College Majority theme to remedy a problem. For journalists, few photos available to them reflect current higher education demographics in which 80 percent of students work; 60 percent are over age 24; 40 percent experience food and housing insecurity; and 20 percent are single parents.

In addition to the Getty Images project, SHSF successfully launched a free digital tool for students seeking financial aid appeals. The SwiftStudent app received notoriety as an "equity leveler" by Dr. Pollard, who was quoted in a *Washington Post* article that featured the new platform. In the works is an initiative to bring federally funded child care to college campuses.

SHSF, founded in 2019, funds public interest projects during seed stages, focusing currently on initiatives that improve outcomes for underrepresented students in higher education.

"We are different from other foundations in that we are focused on early stage and higher risk projects," Seldin says. To illustrate, she cites the foundation's failure rate: "One third of our ventures fail. The remaining two-thirds end up influencing policy at the state level. That's a ratio I am really proud of—if it were any less, we wouldn't be daring enough."

Seldin joined the MC Foundation Board of Directors in 2019 after hearing Dr. Pollard speak at a higher education conference in Washington, D.C. She recollected Pollard as a lone voice for dynamic change to help students. "Dr. Pollard spoke about our obligation to act now to improve student success—while others talked about needing better data. That is someone whose leadership I want to support."



PHOTO COURTESY OF ABIGAIL SELDIN

Abigail Seldin, CEO of Seldin/Haring-Smith Foundation, joined the MC Foundation Board in 2019.



Seldin's foundation collaborated with Getty Images to produce a series of images that reflects the realities of today's nontraditional college students.

# WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Montgomery College Foundation welcomes the following new members to our board of directors. Their expertise and leadership strengthen the foundation, which ultimately results in student success. We are immeasurably grateful for their generosity, goodwill, and stewardship.

## PETER BULCAVAGE

Executive vice president, Buch Construction, with more than 20 years of industry experience, Bulcavage oversees several building teams and specializes in corporate, retail, and life sciences projects. He has been a longtime MC Foundation supporter and donor, including the annual MC Golf Classic event.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER BULCAVAGE

## STEVE ROBERTS

Roberts is a Shapiro professor of media and public affairs at George Washington University. He is an award-winning journalist, best-selling author, and TV and radio analyst. He writes a bimonthly column, *Hometown*, for *Bethesda Magazine*, and is a regular book review and travel writer for *The Washington Post*.



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE ROBERTS

## ALAA SHARAF

Sharaf, a Magruder High School graduate, is the first student member of the board. She was home schooled for the first two years of high school, when she attended an online university. At MC, she is a Montgomery Scholars student, studying public health and economics, and is immersed in numerous clubs and activities.

"I myself have benefited from the work the foundation does," Sharaf says, "I am excited to be able to give back, and to help the people who are working to make sure every MC student has the opportunity they deserve to learn without overwhelming financial burdens."

Outside of a heavy academic workload (she is waiting on approval for an 18–21 credit hour semester this fall), Sharaf volunteers at shock trauma at the University of Maryland Medical Center, as well as other human rights and religious organizations. She is employed as a communications associate at Mercy Without Limits, a humanitarian relief organization. At MC, she founded the Advocacy for Community Empowerment (ACE) Club, which aims to educate/promote women's empowerment.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALAA SHARAF

"My parents are Egyptian. My mother is a retired OB/GYN, and my father is a scientist. Growing up, they always taught us we have an obligation to help others through volunteer work, nonprofits, and working with victims." Sharaf is the seventh of 10 children. "I eventually want to study trauma medicine and work with victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual assault in crisis zones."

# EMERITA FOR LIFE

By Diane Bosser

Professor Catherine Scott, age 102, was recently given the highest honor from the Montgomery College Foundation. This June, a unanimous motion was passed to name her director emeritus. Universally recognized as a distinctive honor, this status gives Professor Scott the rights and privileges of board membership for life. This recognition is given in honor of her years of service as a board member, her generous philanthropy and, most importantly, for the impact she has had on the lives of countless Montgomery College students.

“Catherine is one of the most dedicated and insightful volunteers with whom I have ever worked. She adds value to every conversation and gives us all something to aspire to as we think about the future,” says Joyce Matthews, Montgomery College Foundation executive director. “She’s an incredible lady and we all feel fortunate to know her.”

In 2001, Scott named the foundation in her estate plans with a bequest intention of \$200,000, supporting students on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. In 2013, she made an additional bequest intention for \$1 million supporting the next generation of ACES and MBI students.

Scott taught secretarial studies at the Takoma Park Campus and served as chair of what was then known as the Department of Office Education. The Catherine F. Scott Commons Building at the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus remains the only campus building named in honor of a faculty member. She retired in 1986 after nearly 30 years of service.



PETE VIDAL

Professor Emerita Catherine Scott has continued to support MC students long after her retirement from the classroom.

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the pandemic and economic fall-out began to impact our students in mid-March, it was clear that they were encountering issues never before imagined. It was also clear that the Montgomery College Foundation's emergency funds would quickly be depleted. We floated an idea to the College leadership to reallocate money from Commencement and other cancelled events into our emergency fund for students. The leadership team quickly embraced and implemented our proposal, providing \$550,000 for our student emergency fund.

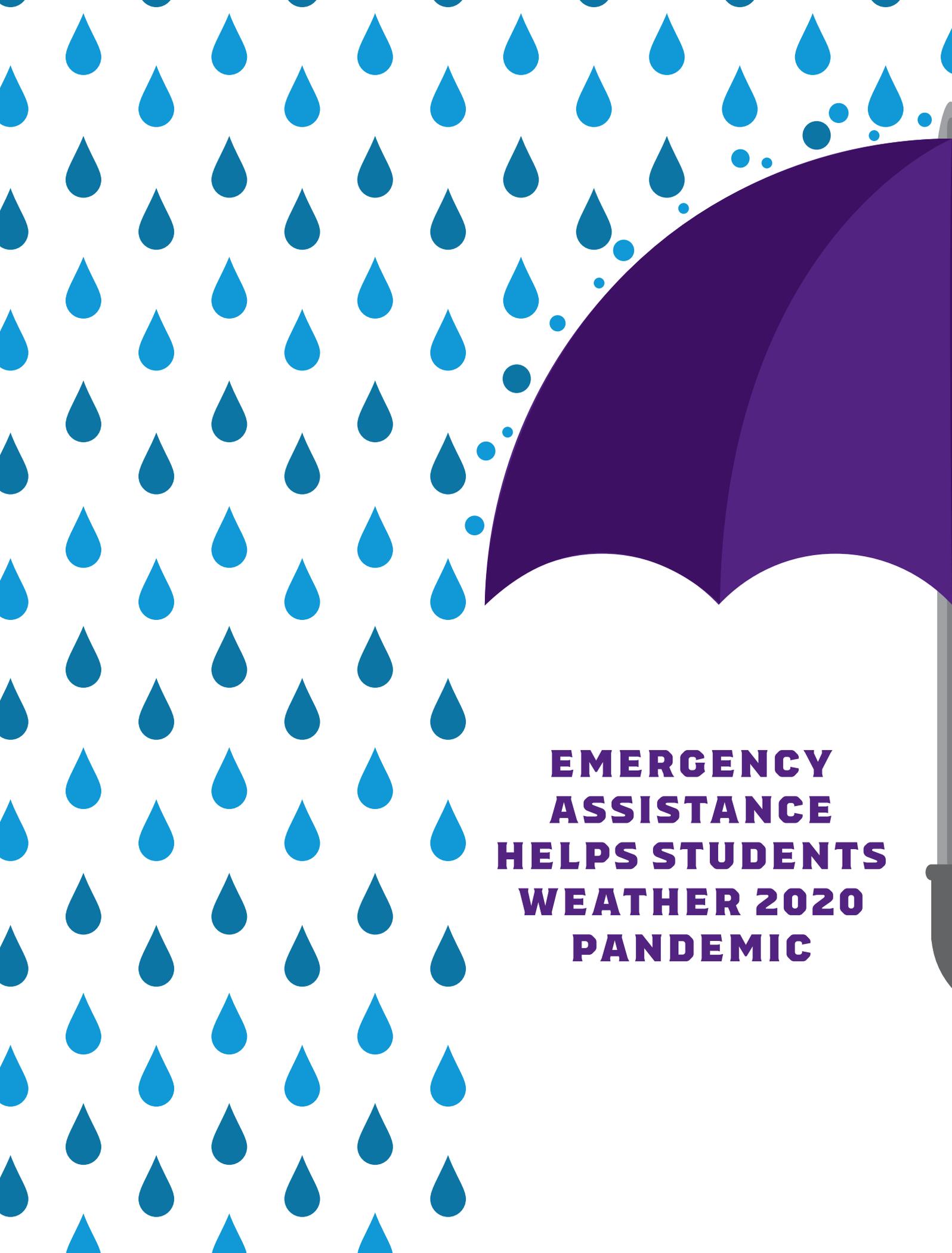
A message went out to our students on March 20 that the foundation wanted to help. Word quickly spread and emails started streaming in. The volume was one thing (more than 2,300 requests for emergency assistance). The stories were another. The stories served as a clear reflection of the struggles millions of Americans faced. But these were our students in our community, and it brought the whole crisis to our doorstep. Emails came in both day and night with subject lines that read: "help," "desperate," or "emergency." With the work of an amazing team, our response began. Between March and May's Commencement, we made more than 1,784 awards, which included providing \$577,000 for laptops, tuition, and general support, and 530 gift cards for groceries totaling \$46,850.



Joyce Matthews

As difficult as this situation has been for our students, we remain focused on Dr. Pollard's "heart-based" leadership that inspires our amazing faculty and staff. Faculty, staff, and retirees began making personal donations to the student emergency fund. More than 145 employees and retirees gave more than \$31,000 to help our students stay on track and "in class." The staff union (AFSCME) donated \$75,000, and the full-time faculty union (AAUP) donated \$150,000 from funds remaining in their professional development budgets. Their generosity—coupled with that of many donors—helped ensure our students didn't go to bed hungry, were able to remain in their homes, and continue to pursue their education.

In the words of C.S. Lewis, "Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny." With the strength and continued support of our community, I am certain that we will emerge stronger than ever.



**EMERGENCY  
ASSISTANCE  
HELPS STUDENTS  
WEATHER 2020  
PANDEMIC**



Not even a pandemic can derail Montgomery College students, given their resourcefulness—and support from the Montgomery College Foundation. When campuses closed due to COVID-19, students without Internet access at home drove to campus and connected via MC WiFi from parking lots. Students without laptops used cell phones and handheld devices to complete assignments on tiny screens. Many needed financial assistance.

More than 2,300 students requested emergency assistance from the MC Foundation. A majority had never applied for aid before because they had been able to work while pursuing their education. The money they earned paid their rent, groceries, and tuition. Because most service industry jobs were cut indefinitely, students needed emergency support for the most basic necessities.

The MC Foundation dispatched financial grants and vouchers for computers to be purchased through the MC Campus/Follett Bookstore. Largely, awards were in \$500 allotments/\$530 vouchers in order to spread funds across thousands of requests. Students who ordered computers took delivery within three to five days of their order, a testament to successful institutional partnerships that benefit students in good times—and pandemics.

# OCEANS OF GRATITUDE

After receiving emergency assistance, students' heartfelt thanks poured in, flooding the foundation's inbox. Although directed to the foundation, these notes extend to everyone who has supported the emergency assistance fund.

"Thank you so much! I truly appreciate the generosity and assistance Montgomery College is providing to its students. It makes me so extremely grateful and proud to be a part of the MC family. It's in times like these that I'm realizing that school is not just an institution but can actually in many ways be a family. Again, I cannot thank you enough. This will surely assist me greatly as I look for ways to make it through these times. We're all in this together. My sincerest prayers, hopes, and wishes to all of you. Thank you." —P.A.

**AWARDED A \$500 SCHOLARSHIP**

"During this time, we are all struggling in different ways. Thank you for working for the student body, and for providing resources that benefit not only students but also their families. You don't know how thankful my family and I are for the monetary help that we received." —H.G.

**AWARDED A \$500 SCHOLARSHIP**

"These are very difficult times not only for me but for everyone at Montgomery College. I truly admire how Montgomery College and its staff really care about their students, whether they be new or nearing the end of their journey at this amazing college. ... I will always remember Montgomery College as more than just a college, but as a place where staff and faculty are devoted to helping its students succeed, regardless of their race, gender, or economic status. Thank you so much!" —A.M.

**AWARDED A \$500 SCHOLARSHIP**

"Your help is highly appreciated by me and my family, and we hope that one day we can give back and be a part of the Montgomery College community. Thanks again and best regards." —A.S.

**AWARDED A \$500 SCHOLARSHIP**

"It means a lot to have supportive administrators such as yourself and team, especially given the current situation. I hope to make MC proud as a future MC nursing graduate. Thank you for your assistance. Please continue to be safe." —J.

**AWARDED A \$530 SCHOLARSHIP/  
TECHNOLOGY VOUCHER**

## TOTAL FUNDS DISTRIBUTED

March 20–May 30



1,784  
financial aid awards made  
by MC Foundation staff



\$858,099  
total awards

“Thank you so much for your financial support of my studies. Your support makes a big difference in my life at this difficult moment. I was getting nervous as we are close to the end of the semester. Your response gave peace of mind to my family. Thank you very much. I heartily appreciate it.” —R.S.

**AWARDED A \$500 SCHOLARSHIP**

“I wish I could show you the immense gratitude and tears of happiness on [my student and her mother’s] faces when they saw the email and heard of the assistance. This is truly life-changing help and provides so many of our families with the hope and support that is needed during this time.” —Melissa Gudiel, ACES Academic Coach, Montgomery College (Paint Branch High School, on behalf of student recipient).

**AWARDED A \$500  
GENERAL ASSISTANCE SCHOLARSHIP  
AND \$100 TARGET GIFT CARD**

“I am so grateful and really appreciate the time you guys are putting into making sure everyone is safe during this time. This scholarship means a lot to me. I am excited to register for Summer 1!” —Z.D.

**AWARDED A \$500 SCHOLARSHIP**



530 gift cards distributed for groceries, totaling \$46,850



145 employees and retirees contributed more than \$31,000 to help students

# THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced campuses and public libraries to close during the spring semester, some MC students were left without access to critical technology resources. Thanks to AstraZeneca (AZ), 67 students who did not own a computer were able to start summer courses as planned. In March, the biopharmaceutical company gifted 67 Lenovo X240 laptops to the MC Foundation, which are being distributed to students in need.

Gail Wasserman, AstraZeneca senior vice president of biopharmaceutical development, noted the company’s role—and her interest—in supporting the College. “I have been on the PIC MC Board for a number of years and chair the academic partnerships committee. I am so proud to see AstraZeneca set the standard for being a great partner to the community and helping students.”

Previously, AZ and its Gaithersburg-based global biologics research and development arm, MedImmune, have supported MC’s ACES students and STEM majors through various grant awards. The company’s former executive vice president, Dr. Bahija Jallal, served as an honorary co-chair of the Montgomery College Foundation’s MC 2020 Campaign to raise \$30 million for scholarships and programs.



BRADY PATON

In May, the College took delivery of 67 laptops donated by AstraZeneca delivered to the College’s Central Services Building in Rockville.



## ON THE FRONT LINES

# BOARD MEMBER DAWN HARRIS, R.N., FACES CHALLENGES OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Diane Bosser

Dawn Harris, R.N., recently logged 14,000 steps one day and 16,000 steps the next—the equivalent of seven to eight miles a day during a weekend shift at the hospital. As an assistant nurse manager at Holy Cross Hospital, she oversees more than 80 staff in a 51-bed medical-surgical unit. The COVID-19 has made a hard job even harder.

Each time Harris and her staff enter a COVID-19 patient's room, they layer themselves in personal protective equipment: "We wear everything—gowns, gloves, hair covering, the N95 face mask, a second mask over that, and a plastic face shield over that. The gear is hot and makes breathing difficult."

COVID patients are isolated inside the unit, so Harris and her staff become their surrogate family. "Without their family, they are anxious," says Harris, "so we hold their hands when they get treatments. We also set up iPads for them to talk with family. We are taking on all kinds of roles beyond nursing. And day after day, we get up and do it again."

Harris trained as a nurse after a career in journalism and another in the insurance industry. She stepped away from full-time work to raise two children, support her husband's career, and volunteer in her community. Sixteen years later, she enrolled in the nursing program at MC. "I knew I could be good at it," she says. "I have a brain, and I have been familiar with nursing my whole life."

Harris's mother was a nurse. Growing up in Ohio in the 1960s, stories about nursing were as common in their family kitchen as orange Kool-Aid and peach cobbler. After graduating the program at MC and passing the NCLEX exam, she was hired at Holy Cross Hospital. While working full time, she completed a bachelor's degree in nursing.

"When I chose this field, I never imagined I'd be working in a hospital during a pandemic," says Harris. "I've been fearful at times, of course, but if you are passionate about nursing—then the circumstances don't matter."

***Dawn Harris '13 joined the Montgomery College Foundation Board of Trustees in 2019. She holds a B.S. in journalism from Ohio University, an A.A. in nursing from Montgomery College, and a B.S.N. from Grand Canyon University, Arizona. She is dedicated to helping Montgomery College students via the nursing scholarship fund and more recently through the Student Emergency Assistance Fund, what she calls "a no brainer [during COVID-19]—to help students who have lost their jobs pay for classes."***



### PAST MC STUDENTS

You may join the Alumni Association at no charge. Activate your membership or update your contact information at [montgomerycollege.edu/alumnimembership](https://montgomerycollege.edu/alumnimembership). Nursing graduates are encouraged to reconnect with the Nursing Alumni Chapter at [facebook.com/groups/MCNursingAlumni](https://facebook.com/groups/MCNursingAlumni).

# FOUNDATION SURPASSES

## \$30 MILLION CAMPAIGN GOAL

The Montgomery College Foundation recently celebrated a historic milestone in closing the MC2020 campaign. Under the leadership of President DeRionne Pollard, Foundation Chair Ken Becker, Campaign Chairs Ashley Cheng, Jeffrey Slavin, and Linda Youngentob, and Honorary Campaign Chair Catherine Leggett, the campaign surpassed a seven-year fundraising goal of \$30 million—the largest campaign in the foundation’s history.

“We are beyond grateful to our community and the incredible generosity shown by so many supporters. We are doing all we can to keep students enrolled—and headed toward their goals—despite the obstacles they now face,” says Joyce Matthews, executive director of the Montgomery College Foundation.

Funds raised will benefit students through scholarship assistance, facilities improvements, and program enhancements. For students like Alina Ramirez, an ACES student who attends MC full time and works to help support her family, paying for college can still be just beyond reach without financial assistance.

“This scholarship has helped my family and I lift a huge weight off our shoulders,” says Ramirez. “Without it, I don’t think I would have been able to go to school this year. Last year was pretty tough on us with my dad out of work due to his injury. It was up to my mom and I to take care of our big family. I had to take three jobs just to get us by.”

Ramirez wants to become a genetic counselor and eventually start her own practice. She will be the first woman in her family to earn a college degree. Thanks to the many MC Foundation supporters, she will have the chance to get closer to her dream career.



Alina Ramirez, ACES student and scholarship recipient

CAMPAIGN TOTAL \$31,421,200

CAMPAIGN BY THE YEAR

\$5,913,334

2020

\$4,316,162

2019

\$4,418,795

2018

\$2,717,726

2017

\$4,975,836

2016

\$4,045,680

2015

\$4,023,667

2014

\$1,010,000

2013



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIMMY DUONG



RENDERING COURTESY OF QUINN EVANS

Rendering of new Student Services Center, Rockville Campus, to be named for Kimmy Duong and Long Nguyen this fall.

## HOLDING TRUE TO FAMILY VALUES KIMMY DUONG MAKES \$1M GIFT FOR EDUCATION

By David Frey

When Kimmy Duong was growing up in Vietnam, her father instilled in her and her seven brothers and sisters the importance of education. Each month, he'd send much of the salary he earned as a nurse to put his children through boarding school. When testing time came in June, he'd wait outside the school to find out the results.

"It could make him very happy or very unhappy," Duong said, laughing.

That emphasis on education changed the course of her life. Her bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Saigon earned her a job with IBM in Vietnam. In 1975, the year the capital city Saigon fell under control of Communist forces, Duong fled the country with just \$30 in her back pocket, a few pieces of clothing, some photographs, and cassette tapes. Though she left with so little, she did have something else of potential value: a career prospect with IBM in the United States.

When the U.S. Navy vessel that carried Duong and other refugees from Vietnam stopped in Guam, she managed to meet with an IBM representative there. He helped set her up with a position at IBM in Bethesda but also helped in more immediate ways. "He came to see me and asked me, what do I need?" she said. "Embarrassingly, I said, 'I need money.'"

The \$100 he gave her helped send her on her way. Now, she said, it's her turn to pay back what society has given to help her and her husband be successful. "It's not something we do as a kindness," she said. "It's our responsibility. We took it from society. We have to put it back. If we don't, then we are not going to have any hope."

After a 25-year career with IBM, Duong now serves as vice chair and chief financial officer for Pragmatics Inc., a government contractor founded by her husband, Long Nguyen, a computer scientist and physicist. The couple have given generously to universities in Maryland and Virginia.

This year, Duong established a \$1 million scholarship endowment to support Montgomery College students with financial need.

"The community college is where it helps people with the first step in higher education," Duong said. "Helping a community college is helping the people who need it most."

Four of her nieces and nephews attended Montgomery College before continuing on with their degrees at four-year universities. "College is almost a requirement for everybody in our family," she said. "We want to do the same for other people, too."

MC is naming the Rockville Student Services Center after the couple in honor of this transformational gift. A building dedication celebration is scheduled for October.

### SAVE THE DATE

October 28, 2020 | 10 a.m.

Building Dedication Ceremony (livestream event) via YouTube, Facebook, and [montgomerycollege.edu](http://montgomerycollege.edu)

# DONATION WILL LAUNCH NEW FINANCE LAB

By Brady Patton

Macklin Business Institute (MBI) students will soon have access to an educational finance lab designed to give them the real-world, real-time experience employers are seeking in today's competitive job market. Students will utilize financial software used in investment banks, brokerage houses, and hedge funds on Wall Street. This extraordinary opportunity for students in a community college setting is made possible through a \$1.22 million donation from the Gordon and Marilyn Macklin Foundation.

The Gordon and Marilyn Macklin Business Institute Finance Lab will be located on the Rockville Campus in the Macklin Tower Building. Montgomery College will be the only two-year institution in Maryland that offers this level of economic and financial education with the addition of the new finance lab.

"While finance labs are exceedingly common at four-year universities, they are almost nonexistent up to this point at the community college level," said Don Dawn, president of the Macklin Foundation and nephew of the institute's founding benefactor, the late Gordon Macklin. "Gordon and Marilyn would be very proud to see how MBI has continued to improve student business readiness by the incorporation of key technology into its experiential learning curriculum."

In the new lab, students will learn how to research and analyze data for their accounting, economics, and/or other business-related coursework.

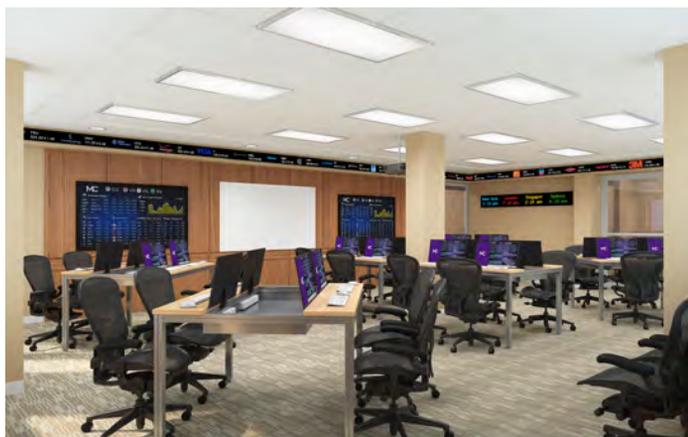
"Not only do we get to experience realistic applications of our studies, but the finance lab also demands leadership skills and teamwork," said Michael Whiteman, a second-year MBI student. "Furthermore, we can earn badges that appear on our LinkedIn profiles, showing employers that we are what they are looking for in their company."

JOE HAWK, RISE DISPLAY



Macklin Tower exterior ticker (rendering)

JOE HAWK, RISE DISPLAY



Finance lab interior (rendering)



Macklin Business Institute students with Don Dawn, president of the Gordon and Marilyn Macklin Foundation, and Stan the Dinosaur in Rockville Science Center lobby.

BRADY PATTON



Montgomery College Board of Trustees Chair Gloria Aparicio Blackwell with Robert Shoenberg, former member of the MC Foundation Board and trustee emeritus of Montgomery College. The pair shared news of Shoenberg's gift with faculty and staff at the College's spring 2020 opening meeting.

LISA USHER

## \$600,000 GIFT ESTABLISHES FELLOWSHIP TO SUPPORT PART-TIME FACULTY

By Vanessa Zambrano

The College is able to now provide part-time faculty with a sabbatical for research and scholarship, a benefit made possible through a major gift from former MC Foundation Board Member and Board of Trustees Emeritus, Dr. Robert E. Shoenberg. He has pledged \$600,000 over a 10-year period to allow three adjunct faculty members a year to take a sabbatical to pursue research, academic, and artistic scholarship that would enhance their ability to obtain full-time faculty employment.

"Dr. Shoenberg approached us because he was concerned ...that many recent Ph.D.s who come to us find themselves on the adjunct faculty line for a long time," said Carolyn Terry, associate senior vice president for academic affairs. Of MC's

829 active part-time faculty members, 186 have doctoral degrees.

"I thought that it was at least worth a try," Shoenberg said, "to make it possible for some of those people at the College with Ph.D.s to have some free time from teaching multiple courses in multiple places to work on the research, scholarship, or artistic endeavors that they haven't had time for because they are so busy running from pillar to post."

Shoenberg spent his career in academic administration, serving as associate vice president for academic affairs at Buffalo State College, an ACE fellow in academic administration at the University of Southern California, and 14 years as the dean for undergraduate studies at the University of Maryland.

# CLARK FOUNDATION PAVES THE WAY FOR FUTURE ACES STUDENTS

In December 2019, the A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation awarded \$500,000 to the MC Foundation to help students with financial need who are enrolled in the Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) program, including Maryland Dream Act students. The first Clark Foundation scholarships from this philanthropic investment were awarded to students this past spring. This is the Clark Foundation's second major investment in Montgomery College. In 2015, it established current-use and endowed scholarships for engineering students with financial need.

The Clark Foundation is the family foundation of the late A. James Clark, the president of Clark Construction Group, which transformed the landscape of Washington, D.C., with its many projects. Mr. Clark's legacy can be found in the region's iconic buildings—the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Nationals Park, Capital One Arena, and World Bank Headquarters—as well as in the endowed scholarship for MC students.

“The Clark Foundation’s investment is life changing,” says Karen Callender, director of ACES. “This support has made it possible for ACES students to dream and achieve. ACES students have stayed enrolled throughout the uncertainty of the pandemic, grateful they were being supported. One student stated, ‘I am so glad I received this scholarship. Both of my parents are out of work, and I know that I would not have been able to make my payments on time this semester.’”

The Clark Foundation partners with grantees who build practical, immediate, and concrete connections between effort and opportunity, and focuses its investments in the following areas: educating engineers to solve society's toughest problems, improving the lives of veterans and their families, and providing members of the D.C. community the best opportunity to thrive.

PETE VIDAL



Joyce Matthews, executive director of the Montgomery College Foundation [front row, center], with ACES students



A community investment in student success: Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES) is a collaborative effort among Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, and The Universities at Shady Grove to provide students with a seamless and supportive pathway to a bachelor's degree.

# CAREER CONNECTION LEADS DONOR TO SUPPORT MC STUDENTS

By Diane Bosser

Before 2009, Mitchell E. Davis, M.D., had no direct ties to Montgomery College—he is not an alum; he has had no children attend; and he does not live in Montgomery County. It was experience in his medical career and a personal connection with a hospital staffer that led him to become one of the College’s most loyal benefactors.

“I was a young resident at Washington Hospital Center and came to know the head nurse Dorothy McRae. Years later, after my private practice was established, I had the opportunity to join her in supporting MC students; she was creating an endowed scholarship to honor her son, Scott McRae.”

L. Scott McRae was an MC employee who passed away in 2008. McRae’s mother solicited help from hospital staff and friends but came up short of the \$50,000 she needed to establish the endowed scholarship. Davis stepped in to close the gap “out of respect for her.” That was when he looked closer at the Montgomery College Foundation and learned how it assists students in need.

“I chose to support Montgomery College because I know my contributions are going to make more of an impact there than at big universities. Students at the community college are not born with a silver spoon in their mouths. And I know many are international students who struggle with language and cultural differences. Their financial challenges are greater.”

Davis is the son of Russian-Jewish immigrant parents. He understands the struggles immigrants face in a new country. But his affinity for helping Montgomery College students, who come from more than 150 countries, goes well beyond newcomers. He has extended opportunities to students with disabilities and many who experience unforeseen obstacles, such as COVID-19 job losses, and housing and food insecurity through emergency assistance funding.

“When I saw how much the students appreciated the L. Scott McRae Fund, I started one myself, in Dorothy’s honor,” says Davis. “Nearly 10 years later, I continue to support the Montgomery College students because it continues to be rewarding—and I know my gifts are going to make an impact.”

L. Scott “Scotty” McRae worked for the College for 22 years. In his memory, the The L. Scott McRae Endowed Scholarship fund has helped nearly 40 students since 2008. It supports students studying business or management.



DON REJONIS

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT

When philanthropist Mitchell Davis, M.D., chooses to support the Montgomery College Foundation, he also shows his support for Development Associate Director La Verne Gordon. “La Verne reminds me how my gift is working,” says Davis. “When I give to charities, I want to know my contributions are going to make an impact. All my contributions are related to her representation.”

**Contact La Verne Gordon**  
**240-567-4023**



JOHN KIRAKUSION

# PLANNED GIVING: COLLEGE DEAN SUPPORTS STUDENTS IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

By Jill Fitzgerald

"I've got the best job. I love Montgomery College. I love what we do for students. I love our mission—and I love that we're putting our students to work," says Ed Roberts, instructional dean in the Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education.

Roberts, who has been with the College for 27 years, wants to create a lasting legacy through planned giving for Montgomery College students who are pursuing careers in the technical trades.

"I see people whose lives are literally changed by these programs," says Roberts. "People might overlook the career and technical programs, but the degree-granting programs, as well as the noncredit apprenticeships, actually put people to work."

One particular program that strikes a chord with Roberts is the Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MI-BEST) certificate in apartment maintenance technician. The 80-hour course, a grant-funded program, integrates basic skills with technical training. Instructors provide basic reading, language, and math skills to help students succeed.

One particular session of the course, Roberts noted, had 16 students from 14 different countries.

"These people are getting beginning salaries of \$18 an hour—that's \$37,000 per year," says Roberts. "If they come back and get some HVAC skills, they'll be making \$100,000 in a few years."

MI-BEST certificate courses are designed for students whose English skills are high intermediate or more advanced but still need improvement. Courses conclude with a test that, if passed, provides students with an industry-specific, nationally recognized certification. Many courses finish with job fairs and connections to employers looking to hire graduates.



Professor Ed Roberts, instructional dean

LISA USHER

To create a lasting legacy that creates opportunities for future workers, visit [montgomerycollegefoundation.planningyourlegacy.org](http://montgomerycollegefoundation.planningyourlegacy.org).

## WHY I GIVE: CARLO SANCHEZ

"Once I learned how easy it was to start an endowed scholarship as a College employee [through payroll deduction], I knew it was something I wanted to do," says Carlo Sanchez. "And I didn't have to wait 20 years to be able to do it."

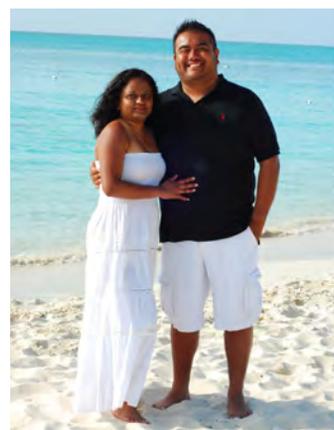
Sanchez is not only an employee, he is a Montgomery College alumnus. He remembers his first semester at the College—and the scholarship that made it possible.

"There was never a doubt that I had to go to college. It was what my parents had been telling me my whole life," he says. Sanchez's parents fled El Salvador in the late 1970s just as the country was heading into a civil war. But after high school, Sanchez discovered he couldn't afford Montgomery College—even with financial aid and his earnings from a part-time job: "I would not have been able to start that first semester without the help of an MC counselor who suggested I apply for a scholarship I never would have known about."

Sanchez and his wife, Mary—an international student and MC alumna—founded the Carlo and Mary Sanchez Endowed Scholarship in 2015. When it matures, the scholarship will support minority students at MC who have financial need.

"It makes me feel good to think that while I work here, there will be a student enrolled who will be receiving help."

For information about establishing a scholarship through payroll deductions, contact Noah Saposnik, annual fund manager, 240-567-4108 or [Noah.Saposnik@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:Noah.Saposnik@montgomerycollege.edu).



Carlo Sanchez '14 is manager of public safety and emergency management, Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. Mary Sanchez, R.N. '08 works at Kaiser Permanente.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CARLO SANCHEZ

## A DECADE OF DIFFERENCE

This fall, Montgomery College will celebrate President DeRionne P. Pollard's 10 years of extraordinary leadership. In the past decade, she has spearheaded many innovative efforts, including:



PETE VIDAL

- Establishing Achieving Collegiate Excellence and Success (ACES), a collaborative effort among Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery College, and The Universities at Shady Grove, to provide underrepresented students with a seamless and supportive pathway to a bachelor's degree
- Creating a partnership with Holy Cross Health, including the addition of Holy Cross Germantown Hospital adjacent to the College's Germantown Campus
- Securing landmark funding from the Department of Labor for cybersecurity education
- Setting up the Pinkney Innovation Complex for Science and Technology (PIC MC)
- Academic restructuring, including academic master plans and the one-college model
- Championing radical inclusion of Dreamers, DACA students, and refugees
- Initiating the Innovation Fund, which provides systemic improvements for the enhancement of student education and services
- Revamping developmental education and other efforts to close the achievement gap, including creating a Student Success Scorecard
- Increasing student access through a 2013–2020 fundraising campaign that raised \$31 million

Local luminaries and government officials, the Montgomery College Board of Trustees and the Montgomery College Foundation, as well as faculty, staff, and students will honor Dr. Pollard in sound bites contributed to a series of videos, which will be live streamed through the College's MCTV station. [montgomerycollege.edu/about-mc/office-of-the-president](https://montgomerycollege.edu/about-mc/office-of-the-president)