



Alumni & Friends

A Publication for the Mesa Community College Alumni Association



Hannah Cheloha — Making a Difference one App at a Time

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission finds that only 36% of women are in IT careers. Then there's Hannah Cheloha, a woman who codes and builds apps and does so with a social conscience.

Earning a micro certificate in iOS App Coding from Mesa Community College during the fall, spring, and summer 2018 semesters when she was one of the first students to enroll in the Apple Everyone Can Code course, she returned in fall 2020 through fall 2021 for an app building internship.

She credits the learning opportunities offered at MCC and her instructors for her success as an American Sign Language (ASL) lecturer and ASL program coordinator at Arizona State University. "When I interviewed at ASU I was told specifically that I was being offered the job to build an online program for the university. There is no doubt that I would not have been the preferred candidate if not for my IT and online teaching experience," she says. "MCC prepared me for success and provided the resources and opportunities to put my IT education and theories into practice."

Hannah notes that Michael Bogner, MCC Computer and Information Systems faculty, reached out to her about the three-course internship program at the college designed to help students with app coding skills get real world experience. "The program established what could be described as an app boutique that partners with the Mesa Chamber of Commerce to connect businesses with student interns to build apps for businesses," Hannah explains. "The boutique not only builds custom apps to promote local businesses but also provides students with hands-on experience."

One of the first apps the interns created was for Mesa Public Schools. "They reached out because of a high suicide rate among the student

population in Arizona. Their desire was to connect students with mental health and suicide prevention services," she continues. "The app we created is called Reach Out AZ. I primarily worked on the website which provides the backend data relay, information about the app for students and parents, and access to links so students and parents can download the app. The idea that I can participate in a project that may save a child's life is rewarding and exceeds the reach I anticipated for the project." Hannah looks forward to seeing the app in the Apple App Store, where it can have a positive impact on students' lives, she adds.

Hannah also worked with her classmates and MCC faculty to develop the RISE (Resources, Information, and Services for Everyone) app as a pro-bono development operations manager and coder. This app connects students from Maricopa County Community College District, along with students within other community college and higher education institutions nationwide, with resources for free and modestly priced food, housing, and healthcare, enabling them to be successful at school and beyond. *"The app is a great way for students and others to quickly connect with food banks, shelters, and much more. We have also customized the RISE mapping tool with additional student information such as building and classroom locations."*

As a final project for her internship and micro certificate, Hannah built an ASL dictionary app which became a companion app for her open education resource website, ASLInteractive. The website, for ASL students and interpreters, provides access to the dictionary and a variety of courses. I'm looking forward to seeing both the online immersion programs grow in the coming years."

Hannah explained that at the time of her internship, there was not much available for teaching ASL online. So, she worked

with colleagues to build online materials to supplement existing materials. "I taught myself Wordpress, Final Cut Pro, basic html, and other technologies for website building. When MCC offered the iOS app building courses, I saw the sequence as the perfect opportunity to move my resources into the mobile assisted language learning arena."

Her talent for app development is receiving national attention, specifically from Apple CEO Tim Cook. In 2020, Hannah was invited by Apple to attend a White House virtual event to share her experience with the Everyone Can Code program and met the President, Vice President, and other political figures. "It was certainly a once in a lifetime and quite surreal experience. I felt extremely fortunate to be chosen for the honor of attending as a representative for MCCC and Apple." Hannah was also recognized a second time by the White House for her work on the RISE app.

"I have worked very hard to bring ASL teaching into the online environment and have had to overcome many technological hurdles. My success getting the position I hold now at ASU is largely due to my ability to teach online, and my strengths with technology and problem solving. Being recognized by Tim Cook was exciting and unexpected."

To help narrow the gap between young girls and careers in STEM, Hannah has been assisting MCC in its efforts toward this goal. She has volunteered with Girls Get IT, an MCC-sponsored event to facilitate a workshop for high school girls interested in STEM careers. "Mike Bogner and I introduced the girls to Sphero robots and AR apps using iPads. It was fun and rewarding to see young women excited about coding and technology, and working together to problem solve and innovate."



Dear Alumni,

It is with purpose and enthusiasm that I have accepted the position as president of Mesa Community College. I have had the pleasure of meeting with our dynamic Alumni Advisory Board. It was wonderful to learn about our former students' personal paths to success. I am so impressed at the levels of participation. Similarly, the alumni scholarships being awarded also come with a mentor who assists to foster each recipient towards their academic goals. Alumni and college events are being planned to creatively contribute to alumni engagement as well as student success. I hope you will join me in honoring our college's outstanding alumni and employees at the Hall of Fame celebration on October 27, 2022.

Alumni and friends who participate in our weekly email list, received a message from me in August 2022. For those who only receive our print newsletter or may have missed my previous message, I'd like to take this moment to introduce myself. My knowledge and understanding of the work to be done at MCC is informed by 25 years of higher education experience. I proudly began as an adjunct instructor and then became a tenured faculty member in English. I served in this role for several years. This was followed by a decade devoted to administrative positions including serving as a vice president, dean, and athletic director, and other executive leadership roles.

Most recently, I was Vice President of Instruction at Cañada College in Redwood City, California, which is located near San Francisco. I also served as the Vice President and President-elect of the California Community College Chief Instructional Officers' Executive Board. In 2020, I received the Carter Doren Leadership Award, which is an honor bestowed on CIOs by our peers.

I am a first-generation, community college graduate, as are so many pursuing higher education at MCC. This speaks to the power of achieving an education that, in one generation, my family went from not completing high school to a daughter becoming a college president. I hope that others are motivated by this personal foundation that aspires to shape higher education as a beacon of hope for the students who often don't even dare to dream of a secure, sustainable future.

Among the many reasons I was drawn to this position is MCC's authentic pursuit of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Acknowledging, understanding, and removing barriers to higher education are vital to meeting the needs of the burdensome challenges so many students face. I am so proud to lead a college that, with a long-standing partnership with the City of Mesa, became the first higher education institution in the state to offer a College Promise Program. This is a phenomenal economic engine for the college, the state, and the region.

I also take pride in serving and collaborating on national boards such as the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Workforce Development Commission for the American Association of Community Colleges. From that experience, I bring focus to expand MCC's national reputation for long-established partnerships with business and industry. I have seen how these connections uplift students and energize the economy by educating those in the community to fill in-demand, 21st century jobs.

I am an involved and accessible President. I look forward to meeting you at college and public events to listen to and learn from your experiences. Go Thunderbirds!

With great aspirations,

Tammy Robinson, Ed.D.

President, Mesa Community College





Join us at Mesa Community College's (MCC) annual Hall of Fame event

The Mesa Community College Hall of Fame honors alumni, community members, and MCC employees whose personal and professional accomplishments and positive contributions to the college and community set them apart.

Thursday, October 27, 2022

6 p.m. - Hors d'oeuvres Reception MCC ART GALLERY PATIO

7 p.m. - Program MCC THEATRE

Mesa Community College, 1833 West Southern Avenue, Mesa, AZ 85202

Free and Open to the Public • RSVP Required

RSVP at: mesacc.edu/alumni/hall-fame/2022-hall-fame

2022 Hall of Fame Honorees

Alumni Achievement

- **Tom Arviso**, nationally awarded journalist, mentor, Navajo Nation business and community leader
- **Jacob Chavez, Ed.D.**, recognized for innovative elementary school diversity programs, teacher support, and parental engagement
- **Gerardo de los Santos, Ph.D.**, renowned leader in higher education attainment, inducted into the American Association of Community College's Hall of Fame
- **Aaron Franklin, Ph.D.**, Duke University Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Chemistry; 50+ patents, Dean's Award for Excellence in Mentoring
- **Dennis Pirch**, AZ Coaches Association Hall of Fame, founded/coached 30 years Payson High School wrestling program; U.S. High School Coach of the Year; AZ National Wrestling Hall of Fame

Excellence in Teaching

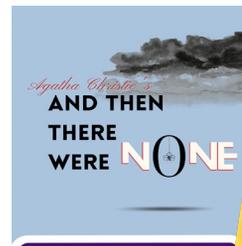
- **Charles Evans**, MCC's first Theatre Arts professor, decades directing award-winning theatre productions, helped establish the Theatre Outback as well as the Mesa Center for the Arts

Distinguished MCC Staff

- **Greg Reents**, U.S. Air Force veteran; global advocate for cultural diversity; fosters student success through outreach to marginalized communities

Outstanding MCC Athletes

- **Michelle Amete**, top MCC All American with 10 Track & Field awards; broke MCC indoor weight mark, junior college national record in the hammer throw
- **Mike Brown**, head coach Sacramento Kings, led Cleveland Cavaliers to 2007 NBA finals, NBA Coach of the Year, coached Nigerian national basketball team in Summer 2021 Olympics
- **Dave Collins**, All American on Mesa's 1972 NJCAA national championship team; 16-year Major League Baseball career for seven teams, primarily Cincinnati Reds



Oct. 7 - Oct. 15, 2022



April 28 - May 6, 2023



Dec. 2 - Dec. 10, 2022

MCC Department of Theatre and Film Arts Announces 2022-2023 Season

The Mesa Community College (MCC) Theatre and Film Arts Department presents its 2022-2023 season for the college and greater community.

This year, the department is presenting two comedies and a mystery. Kicking off the season is Agatha Christie's classic mystery, **"And Then There Were None,"** set to run October 7-15.

Next is **"The Lady Demands Satisfaction"** by Arthur Jolly, which will run December 2-10.

The final show of the season is Shakespeare's **"A Midsummer Night's Dream."** MCC's version of this classic comedy is set in the Disco-era with the backdrop of Studio 54. It runs April 28 through May 6.

Season passes are \$24 for the general public and \$18 for students, alumni, seniors, faculty, staff, and military. Season passes may be purchased by calling (480) 461-7172. Tickets for individual performances are \$12 for the general public and \$9 for students, alumni, seniors, faculty, staff, and military at mesacc.edu/arts.

Learn more about the MCC Theatre & Film Arts program at mesacc.edu/programs/theatre.



Wupakti National Monument, Coconino County, AZ

The GeoCivics Project: Westward Expansion Summer Academy



GeoCivics, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education to the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at ASU, recently awarded its first cohort to the Westward Expansion Summer Academy. Bringing crucial support to the program was a diverse group of MCC faculty and staff.

The project's goal is to integrate geography across the social sciences and improve the instruction of diverse student populations. Across Arizona and the nation, GeoCivics uses a systemic approach to help support, educate, and empower K-12 teachers.

Awardees were selected from a highly competitive applicant pool of K-12 teachers throughout the U.S. Numerous factors contributed to their selection, including experience teaching social studies, geographic diversity, and work performed with underrepresented populations.

Award recipients earned professional development hours issued by the Fulton Teachers College, a GeoCivics Educator Certificate, and were provided a \$2,500 stipend. GeoCivics also covered expenses for the six day learning experience.

MCC PARTICIPANTS pictured from left to right:

- Brian Dille, Ph.D.** Residential Faculty - Political Science
- Tawn Hauptli, Ed.D.** Residential Faculty - Education Studies
- Niccole Villa Cerveny, Ph.D.** Residential Faculty - Geography & Sustainability
- Sam Stevens**, Manager of American Indian Institute and Assistant Women's Basketball Coach



Mural of Black Wall Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma

From Corps to Courtroom, Lyle Jones on the Full Circle of Service

Law was a second career for Mesa Community College alumnus Lyle Jones, who has been practicing since 2006. In that time, he has worked in private practice, served as a public defender, sat as magistrate judge over the Tipton County, Tennessee Juvenile Court, and currently hears disability cases as a United States Administrative Law Judge for the Social Security Administration.

"I'm very proud to serve as an Administrative Law Judge," says Jones, who graduated from MCC in 2000. "Deciding disability cases really gives me the opportunity to make sure that people are being treated fairly by the agency."

When asked about what he remembers from being an MCC student, Jones responds with fond memories of the campus wildlife. "The rabbits! Are they even still on campus?" (They are, and in abundance).

As intrigued as he was with the wildlife, Jones was focused on academic success and sought enrollment as a continuing education student. Prior to enrolling at MCC, he served in the United States Marine Corps.

Jones signed up for the Marines right after high school and served on active duty until he and his wife, Julie (an alumna of the MCC Nursing program, and manager of outpatient clinics at St. Jude), decided to pursue their higher education. After the couple moved to Arizona, Lyle enlisted in the Arizona National Guard. His entire military service spanned the course of two decades.

"My time on active duty gave me a positive look at what I was capable of accomplishing. Probably the most important thing I learned in the Corps was how to evaluate and set goals, and then work hard to achieve them."

Jones knew there was something he wanted to do that he could not reach while on active duty. "I'm not really sure how I decided to become a lawyer," he admits. "I'm the first lawyer in my family."



The path to achieving this goal, though not as extreme as a life on active duty, was still an intense one. "I went to the veteran services office, and because it had been so long since high school, I took an assessment to see where I was at academically. The results broke my heart," he remembers. "Here, I wanted to be a lawyer, but I had to take remedial math!"

Yet, this didn't discourage him, even when he needed some 'tough' love. "I told my advisor that I wanted to take fencing. His response was, 'Let's get you through math and English first, and if you can handle that, we'll talk about fencing.' Exactly the right words and the right mindset I needed to hear," Judge Jones says.

What he lacked in an educational foundation, Jones made up for in his goals and a drive to help others. ***"MCC met me where I was academically, and gave me what I needed to succeed."*** After MCC, he could immediately

start upper division classes at Arizona State University, where he graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree and eventually earned his juris doctorate from ASU's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law.

All along the way, after a dual career in service to his country and to others, Jones has never forgotten the Thunderbirds. "I think what I appreciated most about MCC was that the professors and administrators took time to give genuine feedback on my work. I truly felt they were interested in my success."

Although Jones planned on retiring from the reserves after law school, his unit received warning orders about activating for duty in Iraq during his final semester. As a result, he spent all of 2005 deployed with his unit. When he returned, he and his wife moved to Tennessee to begin their new lives.

Jones remains steadfast in bridging his Marine Corps and legal training in his day-to-day activities. "I feel almost like it's come full circle, and the time I spent in the Corps and in the National Guard was just preparation for a life of service."



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EXCITING START, EXTRAORDINARY RETURN

Alumni & Friends is published by the Office of Institutional Advancement (IA) for the alumni of Mesa Community College

Editor **Jeremy Byrum** ☎ 480.461.7056 ✉ jeremy.byrum@mesacc.edu

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ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP

You became a member of the Alumni Association the moment you completed your degree or certificate. Alums with MCC degrees and certificates are automatically added to our outreach list.

But what if you attended MCC without graduating? No problem! You're still welcome to join the association.

We recently redesigned the MCC Alumni card. If you would like a new one, or haven't requested one yet, get yours today. Visit mesacc.edu/alumni/membership/request-your-alumni-card to request one.

To see what the benefits of the alumni card are, or to update your information in the alumni database, visit mesacc.edu/alumni/membership.



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