

## MCC Alum Channels Passion for Art Through Photography



Granville Carroll



Ori, 2019, From Because the Sun Hath Looked Upon Me by Granville Carroll

*Granville Carroll never considered pursuing art as a career path until a coworker encouraged him to take a photography class after seeing some landscape photos he took on his cell phone. Granville kept that thought in the back of his mind until he began classes at Mesa Community College (MCC) in pursuit of a psychology degree.*

Today, Granville is a visual artist and recent Masters of Fine Art graduate from the Rochester Institute of Technology. Granville's work is focused on Afrofuturism, a process through which the Black identity is reimagined through technology, the imagination, and science fiction. Landscapes are deconstructed and digitally rebuilt, and portraits are broken down to silhouettes and filled with extraterrestrial details. He also addresses issues of Black representation within photography.

When Granville enrolled at MCC, his coworker's encouragement to pursue photography stuck. He took Photography 1 with professor Ron Bimrose and Photography 2 with professor Joe Travino. During those first photography classes, Granville learned how photography could be used as an artistic tool.

"At first I set out to be a purist, but photo editing made me want to see the world in different ways," Granville said.

In an Introduction to Digital Arts class with professor Rosie Shipley, he learned about multiple image layering through Photoshop, which laid the foundation for his current aesthetic of reconstructed landscapes and portraits with starry layers.

As his passion for photography and art grew, Granville decided to switch the focus of his studies from psychology to the arts.

When he graduated from MCC with an Associate in Arts in 2015, Granville transferred to Arizona State University's (ASU) Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, where he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts. Granville says that the portfolio of work he built at MCC helped him in his application to ASU.

One of his ASU professors, Stephen Marc, encouraged him to study art for a Masters degree, which led him to the Rochester Institute of Technology.

While in grad school in Rochester, Granville's work began to take on a darker, more somber tonal range,

focusing on the literal and metaphorical aspects of blackness. In Arizona, his work featured more light due to the ever-present desert sun. He also began to give student teaching a try, considering it as a possible pathway to sharing his passion for photography with others.

In May of 2020, Granville graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology with a Masters of Fine Art in photography and related media.

"The biggest thing that set me on this path was connecting with my professors at all the institutions I've been at, and embracing the unknown," he said. "When I decided to become an artist and follow this path, I didn't know where it would take me. I never intended to get a Master's in Photography or even a Bachelor's."

In Fall of 2020, Granville began teaching Digital Photo classes at Arizona State University as a Faculty Associate. When he joined his first faculty meeting (a virtual meeting because of the pandemic), Granville noticed a familiar face.

"My MCC Intro to Digital Arts professor Rosie Shipley was on the call. I had no idea she started teaching at ASU!" Granville said.

When asked about his future career aspirations in addition to teaching, Granville replied that he'd possibly like to work in an art gallery at some point to connect with other artists and art professionals and explore artist residencies.

Granville stressed the importance of experimenting and not fearing momentary failure as a part of his journey.

"Take those moments as learning opportunities and ways to grow," he said. "Draw inspiration from everything you encounter such as music, film, books, etc. These things will help feed your creative mind."

His advice to aspiring artists and photographers?

**"Trust yourself. Be open to criticism, be open to being vulnerable. Vulnerability is such an important part of being an artist because it gives people access to you. If you remain closed, it doesn't give you space to think creatively and allow people to recognize what you're attempting to do."**

As Above, So Below by Granville Carroll



# Message from the President

Dear Alumni and Community Colleagues,

As we transition into welcomed fall weather, the Thunderbird spirit at Mesa Community College is soaring. Fall 2020 may be like no other in our history, but it is still filled with the hopes and excitement of students pursuing their dreams. I would like to share with you a few of the many extraordinary ways MCC staff and faculty as well as our community partners have joined together to help our students and neighbors through their challenges.

## SUMMER TO FALL SEMESTER

While the campuses remained closed to all but essential services, a few students and faculty whose Spring courses were unable to move to remote instruction returned to campus June 15 through Aug. 6. A task force developed and continues to hone policies to ensure anyone coming to campus follows protocols exceeding CDC and other government guidelines for health, safety and physical distancing.

Our fall classes are underway with 90% being held virtually or online. Students select from four class formats, with the hybrid variety providing on-campus labs for subjects such as welding, nurse assisting, languages and sciences.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

For more than 50 years, MCC has been part of the economic and cultural tapestry of the East Valley. Of the more than 2,300 who work at MCC, nearly 1,000 reside in Mesa and Tempe, reinforcing the commitment of our employees to the community we serve. Our partnerships with the City of Mesa, business, industry and educational institutions benefit students at all levels of education as well as providing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce.

Reinforcing the college's long-standing role as a contributing partner in Mesa, I was invited to be a part of the City of Mesa's April 2020 Facebook Live Digital Education Summit. Our Senior Associate Vice President Nora Amavisca Reyes participated in the Spanish version.

I also joined a panel of community leaders as well as government, youth, policy and policing experts at The HeroZona Foundation's Bridge Forum Time for Change series to address systemic racism and ways to achieve equity. It reaffirmed the creation this summer of the MCC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council, formed to ensure that the college's new Mission, Vision, and Values are a lived experience for everyone.

Pride and excitement characterize so many of our partnerships with the City of Mesa. The city announced that a portion of the \$90 million provided to them by the COVID-19 relief fund is going toward education and the Mesa Promise Program (MPP). Approximately \$50,000 of the funds have been specifically allocated toward MPP, a program created this February by Mayor John Giles and a task force of community members including MCC leadership. After applying for federal and other scholarships and grants, the remaining scholarly expenses will be covered for graduating Mesa high school students enrolling at MCC, who come from low-income Mesa families or need the additional resources.

MCC is partnering with The City of Mesa and the Mesa Chamber of Commerce in the Mesa CARES Small Business Technical Assistance Program for the city's businesses affected by COVID-19. A complimentary technology series includes two-hour sessions weekly for five weeks and a limited number of free laptops plus software subscriptions.

Working with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, as the population of the

endangered Gila Topminnow in the Red Mountain Campus cienega became large and healthy, the fish were donated to other refuges. On August 17, 100 topminnow were collected by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and transferred to Pima County's Roger Road Nodal Park pond. This is part of the Red Mountain's ongoing collaboration with the Phoenix Zoo, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and AZGFD.

We have turned our stadium parking area into a 24/7 drive-thru COVID-19 testing location for Embry Women's Health, with assistance from the Arizona National Guard. Through August, more than 98,000 tests have been conducted since the site opened in July. Mesa Public Schools referred teachers and parents here rather than conduct its own testing as some schools have done.

At this time, you will see some limited on-campus activity as both the Red Mountain and Southern & Dobson campuses have one-stop centers for information, student Wi-Fi use and computer access. We are continually reviewing the best options for safely opening our facilities, but are not planning to fully return employees and students to campus in the near future.

Gratitude and compassion are two qualities that nurture the best in our lives. I am thankful for the college's time-honored and enriching relationship with our community and for our staff, faculty and the alumni who contribute so much and make us proud.

We remain Thunderbird strong!

**Lori M. Berquam, Ph.D.**

Interim President  
Mesa Community College

# 2020 MCC Hall of Fame Honorees

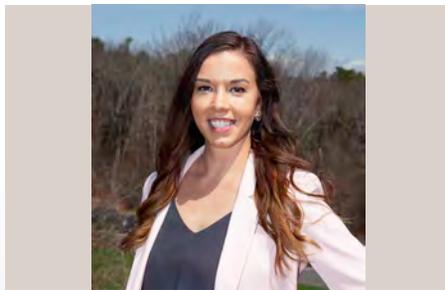
The Mesa Community College Hall of Fame honors alumni, community members and MCC staff and faculty whose professional and personal accomplishments as well as notable contributions to the college and community serve to amaze and inspire.

*Alumni Achievement honorees have reached the pinnacle of accomplishment in their chosen professions. Selections are based on professional accomplishments such as leadership and impact, innovation, mentoring, awards and honors, as well as service and volunteerism.*



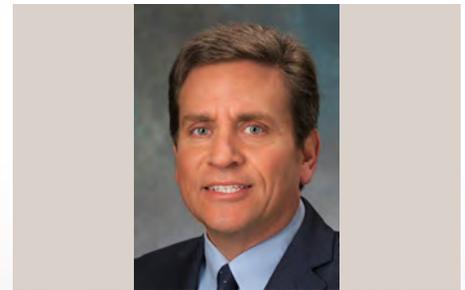
**EDWARD BUFFORD, M.Ed.**

Highly awarded marketing and education professional as well as community activist



**SHELA LEVANTE, M.P.A.**

Rising from foster care to community college director of development with leadership roles in a numerous nonprofits



**JEFFREY M. MENDOZA, Ph.D.**

An aerospace scientist with more than 25 years of developing innovative technologies, winning many awards including from NASA and Raytheon Technologies

*Distinguished MCC Staff honorees are recognized for sustained, outstanding contributions in areas such as development of programs at MCC, enhancement of MCC's reputation, excellence in serving students, and commitment to shaping the future.*



**KEN COSTELLO, M.Ed.**

Going beyond expectations teaching and leading educational technology innovations



**JONATHAN VALPEY, M.F.A**

Award-winning scenic designer, professor, and cultural venue creator



# MCC Hall of Fame

The traditional fall Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place at a 2021 date to be decided depending upon the best safety protocols during this COVID-19 pandemic.

The Alumni Selections Committee agreed that a virtual video event would not afford colleagues, friends and family the opportunity to fully celebrate the honorees.

**Excellence in Teaching** recognizes residential faculty members who, over a number of years, have distinguished themselves as exceeding expectations in their contribution to the classroom, the college, the district, the profession, and the community.



**WYNN CALL, Ph.D.**

Professor for 30+ years, chair of Psychological Sciences Department, leader at MCC and his field



**MONA SCOTT, Ed.D.**

Award-winning professor and educational innovator advocating for indigenous and underrepresented communities



**ELIZABETH (BETSY) HERTZLER, Ed.D, M.A., M.C. Counseling**

25+ years of teaching and a founding member of MCC Center for Teaching and Learning

**Outstanding MCC Athlete honorees** are selected for their contributions to sports while at MCC including earning All-America honors as well as All-Conference and All-Region; helping teams to national honors and earning NJCAA All-Academic recognition; and for athletic accomplishments post MCC.



**RASHAD ARMSTRONG**

2001 NJCAA Offensive Player of the Year placing third in nation in rushing yardage, earned athletic honors at Baylor



**HAKEEM ROLLINS, M.B.A.**

2003 lead ACCAC scorer, First Team all conference, Washington Huskies and international basketball player



**STEVE JACOBS**

ACCAC Coach of the Year, led Thunderbirds to more than 37 national championships and Academic All-American awards

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## From International Student to Faculty Member: an MCC Journey

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Francesca De Martini

As international student Francesca De Martini began her initial coursework at Mesa Community College (MCC), she remembers thinking: “I have to work here one day!”

The native of Milan, Italy says she was looking for a new life and career when she came to the United States in 2009.

Already holding Bachelors and Masters degrees in biology from Italian universities, she had no idea that her time at MCC would influence her to become an educator.

In 2019, Francesca became a full-time biology professor at MCC - exactly 10 years after she came to the United States.

“I came to the U.S. at 29, and when you’re that age in Italy, no one starts a new career,” Francesca said. “It was scary to come here, but MCC made all the difference.”

One of her English professors during her first year in the U.S. was Dr. Lutfi Hussein. Knowing her desire to master English so she could eventually do a Ph.D. in biology, Dr. Hussein helped her study for the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) exam. He also was her mentor for her first year as a full-time faculty member.

Another professor who inspired Francesca was the late Dr. Stanley Kikkert, a biology professor that she got to know during her time in the Biotechnology program. He wrote a letter of recommendation for her and helped her gain the confidence she needed to apply to the Ph.D. program at Arizona State University (ASU).

The support of both Dr. Hussein and Dr. Kikkert gave Francesca the boost she needed to take her passion for biology and teaching to the next level. She has a heart for international students because she remembers the challenges she faced during her first year in the United States.

**“The professors at MCC made all the difference. They were so engaged with the international students,” she said. “The sense of belonging and safe space for us to not be judged because of our accents empowered me and made a difference.”**

Francesca has a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Studies Milano-Bicocca (2004), a Master in Sciences and Bio-Monitoring Technologies from the University of Studies of Genova (2006), a Ph.D. in Environmental Life Sciences from Arizona State University

(2016), and completed postdoctoral studies at ASU (2019).

Today, her teaching philosophy is to excite students about the content they are learning. A grant she received from the National Science Foundation (NSF) in early 2020 will help develop and integrate undergraduate research into the existing Biology 181 course curriculum, which she hopes will help students become passionate about biology.

“This grant will embed research into Biology classes so that every student can be exposed to undergraduate-level research,” Francesca said. “It’s a great way to include everyone. A student might have a low grade point average (GPA), but this could help them have a moment that sparks interest.”

Her advice to international students like herself?

“As an international student, you need to learn to be yourself and be ok with that. Learn not to get offended, but on the other hand, try to find that bridge with your new neighbors.”

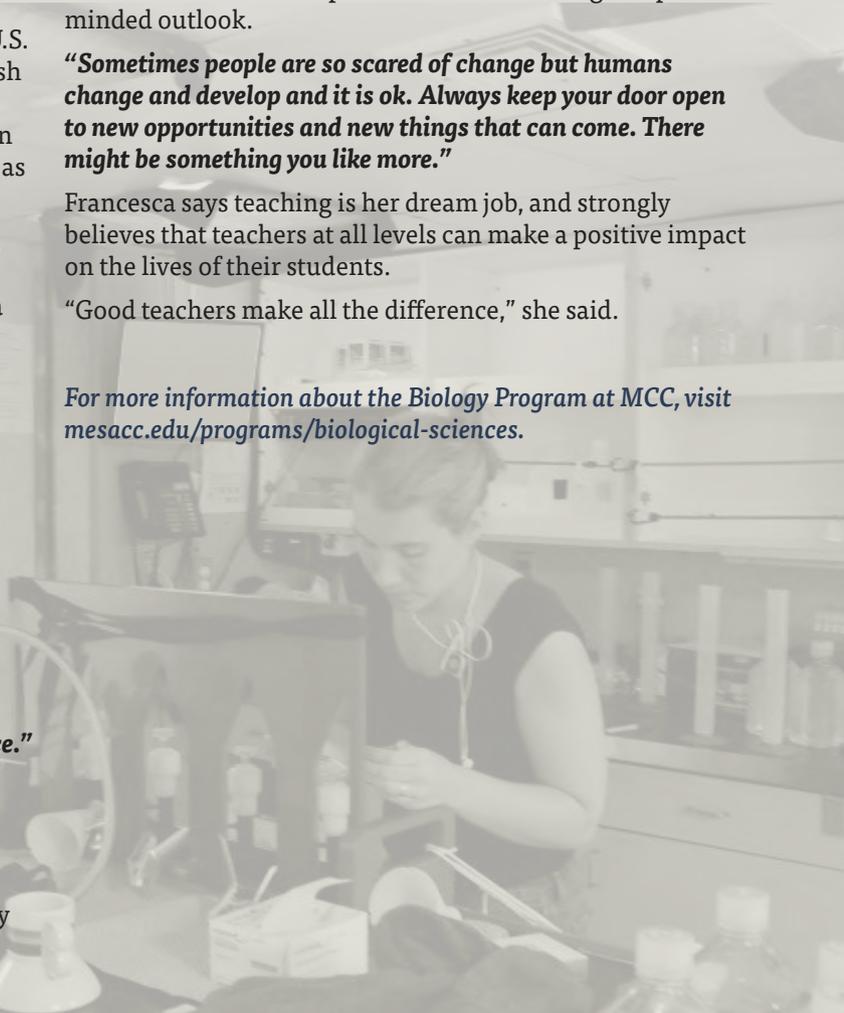
She also stresses the importance of maintaining an open-minded outlook.

**“Sometimes people are so scared of change but humans change and develop and it is ok. Always keep your door open to new opportunities and new things that can come. There might be something you like more.”**

Francesca says teaching is her dream job, and strongly believes that teachers at all levels can make a positive impact on the lives of their students.

“Good teachers make all the difference,” she said.

**For more information about the Biology Program at MCC, visit [mesacc.edu/programs/biological-sciences](https://mesacc.edu/programs/biological-sciences).**





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# MCC

## Alumni Association

EXCITING START, EXTRAORDINARY RETURN

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

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## MCC Student Receives White House Invitation



Hannah Cheloha

Former Mesa Community College (MCC) student Hannah Cheloha’s efforts in app development is earning national recognition. This summer, her tech-driven ideas to mitigate food insecurity across the Maricopa Community Colleges were again highlighted during an event at the White House.

In July, Hannah attended a workforce readiness Ad Council Campaign conference called “Try Something New” led by Ivanka Trump. She was introduced by Apple CEO Tim Cook and her work on MCC’s iOS app development classes were exemplified as the avenue she used to channel her passion and background in American Sign Language (ASL). Her new app, ASL Interactive Dictionary, aims to broaden the reach of ASL.

Hannah is no stranger to the White House. In 2019 she represented the Maricopa County Community College District at the Pledge to America’s Workers Month campaign event due to her success in the MCC Everyone Can Code program, an Apple curriculum designed to help students learn Swift computer coding language.

“Being invited to the White House was unexpected, flattering, and a testament to the hard work on the partnership between MCC and Apple to create new opportunities for students and local entrepreneurs like myself,” she said.