



## MCC basketball alumnus coaches Nigerian Olympic team

Born in Ohio and growing up overseas, Mike Brown was a star basketball and football player at the Würzburg American High School in Germany. His advanced talent in sports was noticed by former Arizona State University basketball player Ron Johnson, who was coaching a professional German team at the time.

“He invited me to come and play for the pro team,” said Brown. “Because I was the youngest player on the team, still in high school, he became like my uncle.”

Johnson had coached one of the Maricopa Community Colleges teams and put Brown in touch with MCC Coach Tom Bennett because he thought the college would be a good place for the young athlete. Brown says Bennett became a mentor and lifelong friend.

“I went to MCC to play basketball and because Ron Johnson said it was good fit for me to play there and earn a scholarship to a four-year university,” said Brown. “And he had a lot of respect for Tom Bennett as a coach and a person.”

He added, “I loved the vibe of the campus. Everybody was friendly and extremely helpful. I truly believe that academics is as important as athletics at MCC and to be able to get support in both areas is something young men and women should want to strive for during their college careers.”

Brown earned a business degree from the University of San Diego and began his NBA career. Over the next decade he helped coach

*Mesa Community College alumnus Mike Brown (1988-1990) has experienced life on a global scale since childhood. His most recent international adventure was coaching the Nigerian national basketball team at the Summer Olympics in Japan and at the FIBA AfroBaskets 2021 championship tournament in Rwanda.*



Coach Mike Brown Photo courtesy of fiba.basketball

several teams, led the Cleveland Cavaliers to the NBA finals in 2007, was named NBA Coach of the Year for the 2008-09 season, and is currently on the lead coaching staff for the Golden State Warriors. The Nigerian Basketball Federation reached out to him in November 2019 to lead their national team to the Summer 2021 Olympics.

“I thought about it, and talked to people I trusted,” Brown said. “I was drawn to the opportunity to help a country like Nigeria and the continent of Africa as well as being head coach of an Olympic team. Also, I liked the vision the president of the federation spoke of and where he wanted the program to go. It

was an experience it would have been hard to pass up.”

He volunteers to coach the team. There is no salary. In fact, out of his own pocket Brown bought practice jerseys and other equipment. He arranged travel, lodging and food logistics. Eventually, he created a nonprofit — Friends of Nigerian Basketball — and a GoFundMe page to help the team meet the costs of the Olympics and future games.

The team’s pre-Olympic win is the stuff of dreams and legends. At July’s Las Vegas demonstration games, Brown coached the Nigerian national basketball teams to a 90-87 upset over the superstars of Team USA.

“These were friendly games, they didn’t count on your record,” Brown explained. “But it was great. No African team has ever beat Team USA. To be able to accomplish that while getting this program going was something to grow on and be proud of for many years.”

On the courts after a 30-hour flight from the United States, Team Nigeria lost to Italy, Germany and Australia in the Preliminary Rounds, keeping them off the Summer Olympics podium. Coach Brown’s new team roster, focusing more heavily on Nigerian players, met defeat in AfroBaskets 2021 from the Ugandan team.

*With the NBA season kicking off in October, Brown is focusing on his sixth year as assistant coach of the Golden State Warriors. He said he plans on helping Team Nigeria whenever and in whatever way he can, as long as they continue to need and request his help.*



# MCC celebrates Red Mountain Campus 20th anniversary

Mesa Community College is celebrating the 20th anniversary of its Red Mountain Campus with a month of festivities. The kick-off event, scheduled from 4 – 6 p.m., Nov. 2, 2021, at Red Mountain, features a Native Blessing, multicultural entertainment, music, food and fun. Popular academic departments such as Emergency Medical Technology (EMT), biology, dental assisting, nurse assisting and more will be there with gear, critters and other visuals to answer questions about career choices. A highlight of the afternoon will be the traditional group aerial photo commemorating the 20th anniversary.

## RED MOUNTAIN CAMPUS ANNIVERSARY KICKOFF

4-6 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2021

Red Mountain Campus 7110 E. McKellips Rd., Mesa, AZ. 85207



For more information about MCC Red Mountain Campus 20th anniversary events during the month of November visit [mesacc.edu/red-mountain](https://mesacc.edu/red-mountain).

We strive to host inclusive, accessible events that enable all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, to engage fully. To request accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact Lora Lassitter at 480-461-7475 or [lora.lassitter@mesacc.edu](mailto:lora.lassitter@mesacc.edu).

### EVENT INFO

Opening its doors to higher education with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in October 2001, the Red Mountain Campus quickly became renowned for its location – 98 acres of Sonoran Desert where Mother Nature serves as instructor, classroom and learning habitat. A spring-fed wetland, known as a cienega, was created as a refuge for endangered plants and animals. Partnerships with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Phoenix Zoo and the Desert Botanical Garden allow the cienega to be a living learning environment enabling students to be involved in conservation and habitat preservation research while networking with wildlife professionals.

The Red Mountain Campus' recognitions include the National Wildlife Federation's 2016 Wildlife Habitat Certification, North American Native Plant Society's 2014 Founders Conservation Award; Arizona Game and Fish Department 2012 Heritage Grant, and the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Certification for Sustainability (Saguaro building).

Guiding principles for the Red Mountain Campus focus on three academic pillars: health sciences, education and liberal arts and sciences. These academic pillars include a Certificate of Completion (CCL) or associate's degree options as well as courses and programs that transfer to a bachelor's degree pathway with one of Arizona's three state universities.

*Learn more about the MCC Red Mountain Campus innovations and celebratory anniversary events open to the public at [mesacc.edu/red-mountain](https://mesacc.edu/red-mountain).*





## ALUMNI & FRIENDS SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED FOR 2021-2022 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Alumni Association Selections Committee unanimously selected the top-scoring two scholarship applicants from a large pool of applicants. This scholarship is valuable for the financial assistance offered as well as the exceptional benefit of having a mentor, usually in the student's field of interest. Alumna **Heather Smyth** is mentoring Naomi Kline and alumnus **Doug Trimble** is mentoring Elizabeth Nevins.

**Congratulations to our 2021-2022 Scholarship Award recipients.**



**NAOMI KLINE**

**Psychology**

"Education is an important theme in my family. I attended college three semesters and then left to obtain a job and "real world" experience including volunteering in a village in rural Ghana, Africa, doing construction work and childcare. I am attending online classes at MCC to

finish my lower division classes by Spring 2022. From there I plan to transfer to ASU for an online Bachelor of Science in Psychology degree and then apply to a graduate-level degree program in clinical or research psychology, or pursue a degree to become a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner. I am following my passion of working with vulnerable individuals struggling with mental health (especially youth)."



**ELIZABETH NEVINS**

**Early Childhood Education**

"I am pursuing an associate's degree in Early Childhood Education with plans to attend summer school and graduate the summer of 2022. I hope to transfer to ASU and pursue a dual-teacher certification to become a Special Education teacher for children at the most instrumental time of their lives.

Even though it'll be challenging, it will also be extremely rewarding and allow me to make a difference in the world. I am very passionate about children with special needs because of my family background, and I want to make sure that I can do everything I can to help children achieve greatness."

*The Alumni & Friends scholarships are made possible through the generosity of the Alumni Advisory Board and MCC alumni. To contribute to the scholarship fund, contact Tracy LaPointe in the MCC Office of Development ([development@mesacc.edu](mailto:development@mesacc.edu) or 480-461-7200) or go to [mesacc.edu/development](http://mesacc.edu/development), click the green Donate Now! button on the left, fill out the form, indicating the Alumni & Friends Scholarship under Designation.*



# MCC alum and instructor brings fashion industry insights

**Tim Kaufman (2015) describes his teaching career as his “third act” in life.**

The former costume designer’s journey in the fashion industry took him all over the country and eventually led him to Visual Merchandising roles in large department stores.

Tim first learned about costume design while working at a regional theater as a wardrobe supervisor. In this role he met many visiting designers and was able to inspect garments up close, piquing his interest in the differences between costume designs and regular clothing. The clothes have to be able to move well, last eight shows a week, and be able to be washed or dry cleaned frequently.

Eventually, a job in wig design led him to design shows for summer theaters, which eventually led to designing for shows at regional theaters across the U.S. After 14 years accompanying national Broadway tours of *Cats*, *Wicked* and other beloved shows, Tim retired from costume design and moved to Arizona for a fresh start, enrolling in an MCC Textiles class and Makeup for Stage and Screen class for fun.

Evonne Bowling, the program director of MCC’s Fashion Design and Merchandising program at that time and current faculty member, quickly became Tim’s mentor. After earning an associate’s degree in 2015, Bowling encouraged him to reach higher, which he did, earning a Bachelor’s in Design Studies from Arizona State University’s Herberger School in 2018.

**A first-generation college graduate, Tim started his career in fashion merchandising working with well-known brands such as Nordstrom, Target and Saks Fifth Avenue.**

Tim is passionate about the visual display aspect of fashion merchandising, and emphasizes that visual merchandising is more than dressing mannequins. The job requires understanding of consumer psychology and data analysis to inform merchandising teams on how displays should be set up, and the best way to move products throughout a store.

While serving on the Visual Display team at Nordstrom Scottsdale Fashion Square in 2018, Bowling asked him to return to MCC -- this time, as an instructor! Tim began teaching Visual Display and Merchandising and Fashion Merchandising that fall and has enjoyed the new teaching role for three years.

“It was so surreal walking into the classroom on my first day teaching and standing behind the instructor’s desk, staring at the chair I sat in for two years as a student,” said Tim.

Today, with the online sales market continuing to grow thanks to the rise of social media, Tim believes the future of fashion lies with e-commerce and that MCC students should be prepared to harness the power of online marketing. He is in talks with his MCC colleagues to develop an E-Commerce class that would train students on how to manage online businesses.

**Tim’s dedication to his students was recognized in June 2021 when he received the MCC Outstanding Adjunct Faculty Award, highlighting his empathy for his students and working diligently to get to know them one-on-one.**

Looking to the future, Tim aspires to become the program director of the MCC Fashion Merchandising & Design Department.

Tim encourages his students to gain real-world experience, work hard, and above all, value their education.

“Make sure you stay in school. Earn your associate’s degree and don’t stop there,” he said.

“Always be on time. Everything I teach my students has to do with the real world, and I want them to be prepared.”

Tim reiterates what his mentor and colleague Evonne Bowling told him as a student: **“Your education can never be taken away from you.”**



Tim on his first tour of *Cats* in 2001.



## You're invited to the 10th Annual Battle of the Badges co-hosted by the MCC Alumni Association



The MCC Alumni Association, along with the Maricopa Community Colleges Police Officers Association, Arizona Law Enforcement Outreach and Support (AZLEOS), Pinal County Sheriff's Office, Central Arizona College, Maricopa County Community College District Police Department, Mesa Police Department and MCC Athletics presents the 10th Annual AZLEOS Battle of the Badges Hope Charity flag football game and tailgate party.

Proceeds from the event help injured and fallen officers' families and provide funding for first responder scholarships.

**Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021**

**Mesa Community College, John D. Riggs Stadium**

**1833 W. Southern Ave., Mesa, AZ 85202**

Beginning at 5 p.m. there will be food trucks, activities, trunk-or-treat from public safety vehicles, and a teen game start at 5 p.m. with kick-off for the First Responders game at 7 p.m. Thor, the MCC mascot, will be available for photos.

Bring your friends and families for a fun-filled night for a \$5 per-person donation. Children 13 and under are free. The first 100 to RSVP will receive a voucher for complimentary food truck items. RSVP by calling Lora Lassitter at 480-461-7475.



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**EXCITING START, EXTRAORDINARY RETURN**

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**MCC  
Hall of Fame**

Join us at Mesa Community College's (MCC) Hall of Fame ceremony. The MCC 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, NOVEMBER 4, 2021**

6:00 p.m. - Hors d'oeuvres Réception; 7:00 p.m. - Program

Mesa Community College, 1833 W. Southern Ave., Mesa, AZ 85202

*Free and Open to the Public*

RSVP required due to Covid-19 capacities: [mesacc.edu/alumni/hall-fame/2020-2021-hall-fame](http://mesacc.edu/alumni/hall-fame/2020-2021-hall-fame).

Specific location and a virtual option will be shared once RSVP is received.

Read about this year's honorees at [mesacc.edu/alumni/hall-fame/2020-hall-fame](http://mesacc.edu/alumni/hall-fame/2020-hall-fame).