

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Donations for student scholarships are accepted on an ongoing basis. With the difficult economy, more students are enrolling at MCC and seeking financial assistance. In fact, existing financial aid resources meet less than 50% of MCC's students' documented needs.

**Please consider making a gift.** Contact Deb DeVore in the MCC Development Office at 480.461.7356 or devoredeb@mesacc.edu. Donations can also be made online via credit card at [www.mesacc.edu/alumni](http://www.mesacc.edu/alumni).



Make a Difference. Invest in the Future.



**Alumni Relations**  
1833 West Southern Ave.  
Mesa, AZ 85202

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Phoenix, AZ  
Permit No. 662

# Alumni & Friends

A Publication for the Mesa Community College Alumni Association

## MCC Celebrates Opening of New Saguaro Building at Red Mountain

Chuckwallas, tarantulas and rattlesnakes are regular guests at MCC's new 43,000 square-foot Saguaro building at Red Mountain. The indigenous Sonoran Desert creatures are housed in the lobby's expansive terrarium which showcases the building's unique environment for learning, supporting life science and performing arts programs.

*"The building itself is a nice blending of the arts and sciences," said Jo Wilson, dean of Red Mountain campus. "Rarely do you find in an educational institution life sciences and research labs housed in the same facility as a performing arts center."*

In addition to the terrarium, the SmithGroup-designed facility enriches life science courses through a variety of distinctive architectural features. Bat roosts on the building's south façade are designed to attract Mexican Free-tailed bats and adjacent observation windows located in classrooms allow a direct view for students. On the ground below the roosts, a snake wrangling pit aids in the study of snakes and reptiles. Two additional terrariums will be home to rattlesnakes and tree frogs and serve as transparent walls for adjoining classrooms.

The performing arts component includes practice rooms and a Rehearsal and Performance Centre which has state-of-the-art lighting and sound systems. The RAP Centre's architectural form, color and texture was inspired by nearby Red Mountain and when the exterior's perforated rusted metal is illuminated at night the facility serves as a beacon inviting the community to campus events.

MCC is seeking Leadership in Energy, Environment and Design (LEED) gold certification for the building. "Students are the ones who have led the agenda to qualify for LEED gold



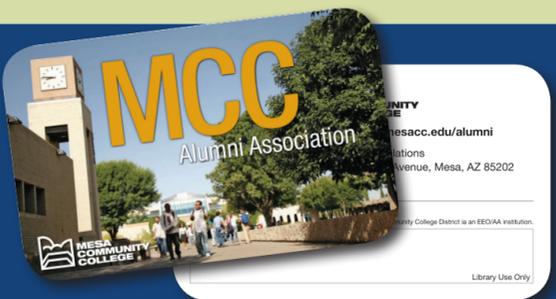
certification," said Wilson. "They came to us with the concept of educating others about LEED processes and have been instrumental in this effort."

Members of MCC's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society met regularly with Red Mountain faculty, builders from Johnson Carlier and architects from SmithGroup, throughout the construction of the building and are contributing needed points for a gold ranking by producing a video to educate others about the LEED process. In addition, the students are putting together a series of building signage highlighting green aspects of the building.

*"Our goal with the Saguaro building was to help our community feel ownership," said Wilson. "We hope they experience a place where they can come to be educated, interact with others and enjoy entertainment."*

The \$13.5 million project was supported through funds made available from the MCCC bond initiative of 2004.

**Check out the Saguaro Building by attending the Red Mountain Family Discovery Series - For a listing of events and times, see Page 5.**



## Request your Alumni Card Today!

Become an active member of the MCC Alumni Association and gain additional benefits by signing up for your Alumni Card. To request your Alumni Card, contact Jennifer LaForge at [jenner@mesacc.edu](mailto:jenner@mesacc.edu) or 480.461.7794. The card is free, and cardholders enjoy:

- Invitations to special events and ceremonies
- Email announcements about college news and events
- Free admission to all MCC athletic events (tournaments and post-season play excluded)
- Discounted tickets to the Theatre Outback
- 10% discount at the MCC Bookstore on merchandise bearing the MCC logo (does not include textbooks)
- MCC library privileges
- Free use of MCC Career Services

For online services, register for the alumni community at [www.alumniconnections.com/mcc](http://www.alumniconnections.com/mcc) and update your personal profile!

**facebook**

Find MCC's new Facebook page <http://facebook.com>. Type "Mesa Community College" in the search box then click the "Become a Fan" box.

**twitter**

Follow MesaCollegeAZ at: <http://twitter.com/mesaCollegeAZ>

**You Tube**

View videos at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/mesacc>

**MCC**

Alumni Association

**EXCITING START, EXTRAORDINARY RETURN**

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

**Editor** Marcy Snitzer  
**Phone** 480.461.7792  
**Email** [marcy.snitzer@mcmail.maricopa.edu](mailto:marcy.snitzer@mcmail.maricopa.edu)

**FALL ALUMNI EVENTS – REGISTER TODAY AT [WWW.ALUMNICONNECTIONS.COM/MCC](http://WWW.ALUMNICONNECTIONS.COM/MCC) AND CLICK ON THE EVENTS CALENDAR**

## Mark Your Calendar

**October 5 – 15**  
**Art Faculty Show**  
Reception, October 7, 6:00 p.m.  
Navajo Room, Kirk Student Center

**October 8 – 10, 7:30 p.m.**  
**October 11, 2:00 p.m.**  
**The Overcoat**  
Theatre Outback

**October 10 – November 4**  
**Abraham Lincoln: A Man of His Time, A Man for All Times**  
Southwest Reading Room, Library 3rd Floor  
See inside for more details

**October 20, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**  
**Empty Bowls, Fundraiser for Paz de Cristo**  
Community Room, Mesquite Building, Red Mountain Campus (Power and McKellips)

**October 28, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**  
**Empty Bowls, Fundraiser for Paz de Cristo**  
Navajo Room, Kirk Student Center

**October 28 – 30, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat**  
Theatre Outback

**November 5 – 6, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Dance Concert**  
Theatre Outback

**November 6, 6:00 – 10:00 p.m.**  
**Astronomy Nights**  
Planetarium shows every half hour  
Physical Science Building

**November 7**  
**Homecoming**  
**Tailgate Party, 5:30 p.m.**  
**Football Game, 7:00 p.m.**  
John D. Riggs Stadium  
See inside for more details

**November 10, 7:00 p.m.**  
**Training for Complex Skills, Psychology Lecture Series**  
Navajo Room, Kirk Student Center

**December 3 – 5, 7:30 p.m.**  
**December 6, 2:00 p.m.**  
**Blood Wedding**  
Theatre Outback

**December 4, 6:00-10:00 p.m.**  
**Astronomy Nights**  
Planetarium shows every half hour  
Physical Science Building

**December 11, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Broadway Bound, Music Department Scholarship Showcase**  
Theatre Outback

**February 25 – 27, 7:30 p.m.**  
**February 28, 2:00 p.m.**  
**The Great White Hope**  
Theatre Outback

**All events are at the Southern and Dobson Campus, unless otherwise noted.**

### MCC's Red Mountain Campus Family Discovery Series

**October 16, 7 p.m.**  
**Rock Art of the Southwest – Dr. Niccole Cerveny**  
RAP Centre, Saguaro Building

**November 20, 7 p.m.**  
**What you Don't Know about Bats! - Dr. Andy Holycross**  
RAP Centre, Saguaro Building

**January 15, 7 p.m.**  
**20 Weather's Greatest Mysteries Solved – Dr. Randy Cerveny**  
RAP Centre, Saguaro Building

**February 19, 7 p.m.**  
**Saving Wild Cheetahs: Education vs. Guns and Bullets – Dr. Dennis Wilson**  
RAP Centre, Saguaro Building

**March 26, 7 p.m.**  
**Saving the Planet – One Building at a Time – Dr. Alex Cheroske**  
Lobby, Saguaro Building

**April 16, 7 p.m.**  
**The Life and Habits of Rattlesnakes – Dr. Andy Holycross**  
Lobby, Saguaro Building

For a full description of each event, visit [www.mesacc.edu/rm-discovery-series](http://www.mesacc.edu/rm-discovery-series). The Family Discovery Series is free and open to the public. Location – Red Mountain Campus, 7110 E. McKellips Road, Mesa, AZ (Power and McKellips).

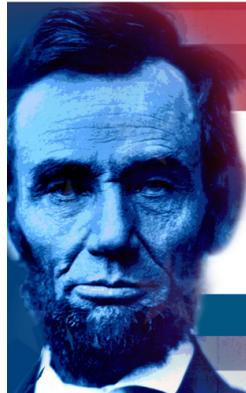
For a complete listing of events and times, check out our online calendars.  
**GENERAL MCC EVENTS** [mesacc.edu/alumni](http://mesacc.edu/alumni) then click EVENTS CALENDAR **ATHLETICS** [athletics.mesacc.edu/schedules](http://athletics.mesacc.edu/schedules)

### Fall 2009

Abraham Lincoln Exhibit .....	Page 2	Make a Difference.....	Page 5
Ron Colburn - Alumnus.....	Page 2	Discovery Series.....	Page 5
Alumni News Clips.....	Page 3	Mark Your Calendar .....	Page 6
Homecoming Invitation .....	Page 4		



MCC's library one of only 40 nationwide selected to host this exhibition!




THE GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY

A national traveling exhibit that examines Abraham Lincoln's life, accomplishments and legacy.

October 10<sup>th</sup> - November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Southwest Reading Room, Library 3rd floor,  
Mesa Community College

# Abraham Lincoln:

A Man of His Time, A Man for All Times

*Abraham Lincoln: A Man of His Time, A Man for All Times is a national traveling exhibition organized by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. The traveling exhibition has been made possible in part through a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, dedicated to expanding American understanding of human experience and cultural heritage.*

For further information, contact Zoë Luter 480.461.7286



www.mesacc.edu

Paul A. Elsner Library  
1833 W. Southern Ave.  
Mesa, AZ 85202

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.  
FREE ADMISSION.

### Opening Day Reception

October 13th, 2009  
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm  
Southwest Reading Room, Library 3rd Floor

**WELCOME**-Dr. James Mabry, Vice President of Academic Affairs

**PROGRAM:** *Lincoln at 200* by ASU scholar Dr. Brooks Simpson.  
*Hors d'oeuvres*

### Children's Storytime & Crafts

Join us for crafts & storytime on our 16th President, Abe Lincoln!  
October 15th at noon  
November 3rd at 6:00 pm  
Southwest Reading Room, Library 3rd floor

### Film Screenings

*Looking for Lincoln*  
October 27th at 11:30 am  
and again at 5:30 pm  
LB245, Library 2nd floor

### Exhibition Hours

Mon-Thurs 6:30 am - 10:30 pm  
Fri 6:30 am - 5:00 pm  
Sat 8:00 am - 5:00 pm  
Sun 2:00 pm - 8:00 pm

The Maricopa County Community College District is an EEO/AA institution.



Colburn conducts a tour of the border near Yuma for then-Governor Janet Napolitan and then-President George W. Bush.



Staff photo.



Colburn in Bolivia during special operations conducted by the Border Patrol about 20 years ago.

## MCC Alumnus Ron Colburn

On any given day, Mesa Community College alumnus Ron Colburn may brief Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, or the White House, or Congress, about the issues of the day as he fulfills his duties as Deputy Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol.

Ron, who graduated from MCC in 1977, went on to graduate from the U.S. Border Patrol Academy and never looked back. He has served through six administrations: Carter, Reagan, Bush (41st president), Clinton, Bush (43rd), and now the Obama Administration.

Ron said one of his most interesting assignments was to the White House from 2002-2003, where he served as the Director for Law Enforcement, Border & Transportation Security Directorate, Homeland Security Council, with the Executive Office of The President.

"There were some real 'pinch me' moments during that time, as that was when the new Department of Homeland Security was created, and many instances of counter-terrorism activities occurred," Ron said. "I was the proverbial 'fly on the wall' for some spine-tingling, even hair-raising conversations, planning sessions and special, national events."

Today, Ron oversees an operational budget in excess of \$3 billion dollars annually and is in

charge of a fleet of 13,000 vehicles and conveyances that deploy along the U.S. southwestern and northern border, plus some coastal areas.

His office is located just two blocks away from the White House. Ron said as he drives over the Potomac River each day to begin work, he is reminded of the importance of his job.

*"During this pre-dawn drive (5:30 a.m.), I view the Washington Monument and the dome of the Capitol building, lit up with floodlights, casting a stark reminder that I work within the leading, central governmental system of the western free world," Ron said.*

While at MCC, Ron played football for the Thunderbirds, served as president of the student government and lobbied on behalf of Arizona community college students.

He also worked in MCC's audio-visual department, where he met his future—and still current—spouse, Deborah E. (Hicks) Colburn, when he filmed her dance performance. They married in 1979, had two sons and now have eight grandchildren. He is appreciative of the opportunities MCC gave him in regard to his professional life as well as his personal life.

"Talk about carrying something away from your college experience...well, eight grandkids count, right?" Ron said.

## Alumni NewsClips



### JOEL CRANSON DIRECTS AWARD-WINNING FILMS AND PLAYS

Since graduating from MCC in 2004 and earning a BA in theatre from Grand Canyon University, theatre alumnus Joel Cranson has performed in countless productions and directed several award-winning films and plays. He recently performed at Phoenix Symphony Hall as part of Valley Youth Theatre's Alumni Benefit Concert along with American Idol star, Jordin Sparks.

Joel has served as a stage director in multiple venues throughout the Valley. For MCC, he has directed numerous shows, including last season's Brighton Beach Memoirs. Joel has also lead theatre workshops in the area of acting and improvisation for MCC, East Valley Children's Theatre, The Mesa Arts Center, and many public schools throughout the Valley.

Film directing has become a favorite of Joel's many talents of late. In 2009, Joel had four films entered in the Phoenix Film Fest. His film *Following Suit* took home three awards for Best Film, Best Actor and Best Director.

Joel said a great deal of who he is as a theatre professional is a product of Mesa Community College's Theatre department.

*"The training I received there as a student was very intimate," Joel said. "The teachers always made me feel like I was integral to every project I was involved in. I recommend this department to every young person I meet who wants to pursue theatre."*

This spring, Joel will be directing "The Goat's Gruff" with East Valley Children's Theatre. For more information, visit joelcranson.com.

### DENNIS PIRCH INDUCTED INTO THE ARIZONA COACHES ASSOCIATION HALL OF FAME

Alumnus Dennis Pirch was inducted into the Arizona Coaches Association Hall of Fame, honoring more than 30 years as a public school teacher and legendary wrestling coach at Payson High School.

Dennis founded Payson's wrestling program in 1974 and served in the leadership role for 28 years as the head coach. The ACA has cited Pirch for numerous "Coach of the Year" awards and he received the top award of USA High School Coach of the Year in 1997.

Upon receiving the NWCA citation, Dennis thanked his family and the assistant coaches who helped build the program into one of the most successful in the United States. Dennis also thanked former Payson High School coach, athletic director and principal Tom Meck for allowing him to found the wrestling program and giving him the freedom to build it as he saw fit.

Since his retirement in 2001, Dennis has written for the *Payson Roundup* newspaper and teaches part time at the Gila County Payson Education Center.

To read more about Dennis in the *Payson Roundup*, visit: [www.paysonroundup.com/news/2009/apr/24/expayson\\_coach\\_goes\\_hall\\_fame](http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/2009/apr/24/expayson_coach_goes_hall_fame).



# Homecoming 2009

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2009**  
MCC Southern and Dobson campus, John D. Riggs Stadium  
1833 West Southern Avenue, Mesa, AZ

**TAILGATE PARTY 5:30 P.M.**  
Entertainment and games for the entire family! Silent auction to support student scholarships.  
Free food for first 500 guests from Whiskey Ranch BBQ Co.

**FOOTBALL GAME 7:00 P.M.**  
MCC Thunderbirds vs. New Mexico Military

Additional event details available at [mesacc.edu/alumni](http://mesacc.edu/alumni) and click on the "Events Calendar" link.

**DID YOU KNOW? MCC IS RANKED AS ONE OF THE TOP 100 COMMUNITY COLLEGES OUT OF 1,200 IN THE NATION BY COMMUNITY COLLEGE WEEK MAGAZINE: 12TH IN THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS RECEIVING CERTIFICATES, 35TH IN NURSING, 40TH IN GENERAL STUDIES AND HUMANITIES, 56TH IN THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS GRADUATING IN ALL DISCIPLINES.**



### BERT MILLETT LEADS EFFORT TO RENOVATE MESA'S HISTORIC PARK OF THE CANALS

Photo courtesy of Kelli Millett

Mesa's historic Park of the Canals was recently renovated and received badly needed playground equipment due to the initiative of MCC alumnus Bert Millett. Millett, a 2001 graduate who now practices law for Udall-Shumway in Mesa, organized a committee of local residents including representation from the Foundation for Mesa Parks and Recreation and the Mesa West Rotary.

Their efforts resulted in sponsorship from The Home Depot, Kaboom and SRP. More than 500 volunteers gathered May 28 for the park's makeover. The volunteers installed the new playground equipment, painted walls and structures, set in new pavers, planted new vegetation, trimmed back overgrown plants, trees and shrubs, and replaced the wood on the picnic tables and benches. In addition, tiles with children's handprints who live in the surrounding area decorate a wall near the park's rest area.

