

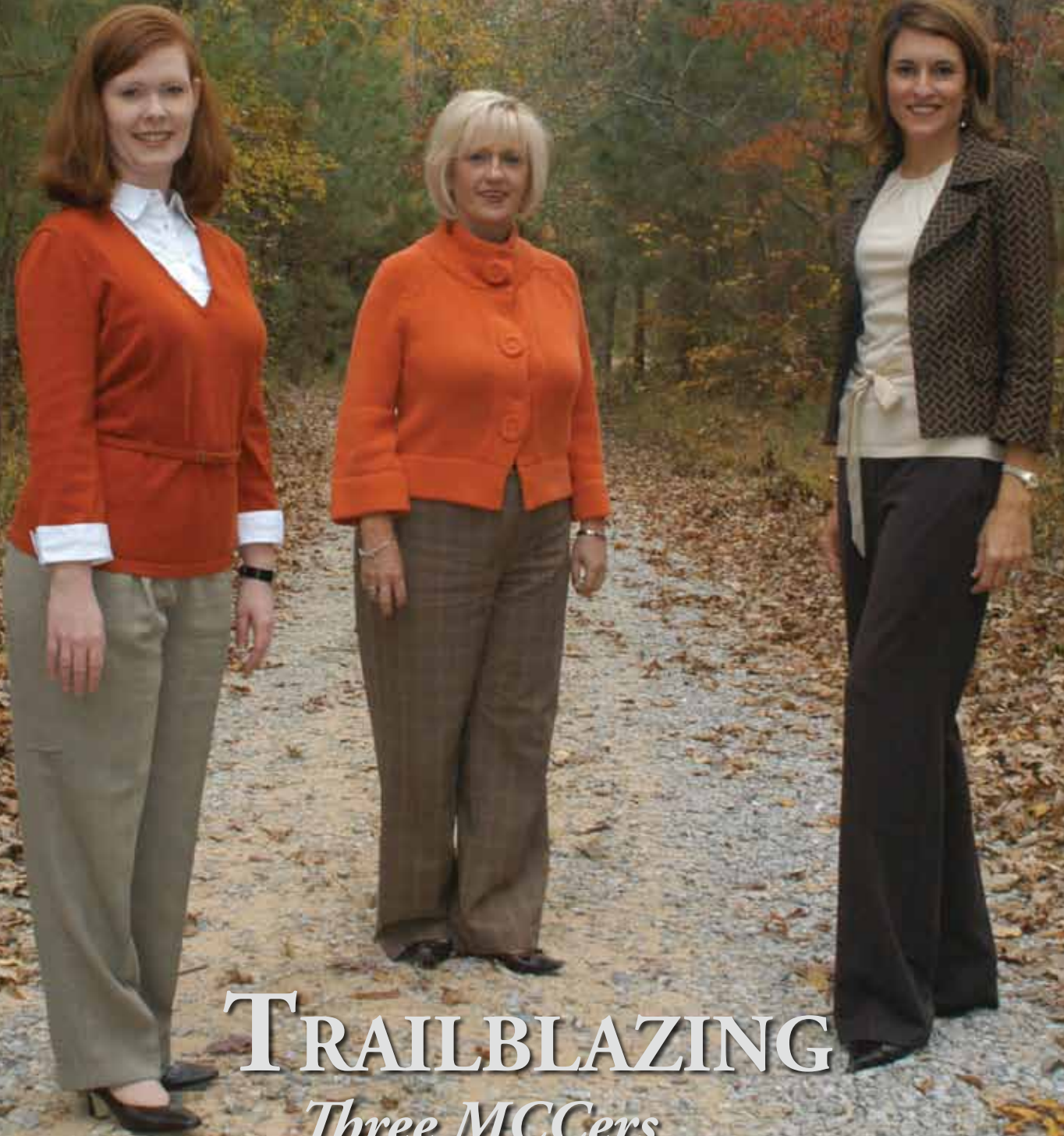
Fall-Winter 2008-09/[www.meridiancc.edu](http://www.meridiancc.edu)

*For friends of MCC*

MERIDIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# Connections

M A G A Z I N E



## TRAILBLAZING

*Three MCCers  
pursuing new paths*

Dr. Scott Elliott, *president*

Barbara Jones, *vice president, operations*

Dr. Kathy Baxter, *associate vice president, research, development and governmental affairs*

Shirley Nell Goodman, *associate vice president, workforce development*

Billy Beal, *dean, learning resources*

Amy Brand, *dean, fiscal affairs*

Janet Heggie, *dean, community and business development*

Dr. Richie McAlister, *dean, career and technical education*

Soraya Welden, *dean, student services*

Kathy Brookshire, *director, institutional advancement*

*Connections* is published by the MCC College Promotions and Public Relations Department.

Kay Thomas, *college promotions director*

Amy Miller, *graphic designer*

Daniel Ethridge, *graphic designer and webmaster*

On the cover: From left, Amy Brand, Barbara Jones and Soraya Welden. Cover story photos were taken at Timberlake in Meridian.

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MERIDIA  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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## COMMUNITY COLLEGES: Mississippi's ongoing stimulus package

The extent to which President Obama's federal stimulus package is going to assist Mississippi remains to be seen.

At this writing, Gov. Haley Barbour was threatening to turn down some of the money targeted for the Magnolia State, arguing that the funds won't last more than a couple of years, after which time an added burden would be placed on employers to replace the stimulus monies out of their own pockets. Barbour contends that would ultimately deter the creation of new jobs, rather than stimulating the economy.

I don't know about all that. Gov. Barbour is a lot smarter than me. I can only hope that the thought process is entirely non-partisan because there can be no denying that state-supported institutions like MCC could use a little boost right now. MCC has lost about \$1 million in state support for FY09 because tax revenues have not met projections, compelling the governor to cut appropriations to some agencies – MCC among them – by 5 percent. If that loss of \$1 million is offset by an infusion of stimulus dollars, well, that would come as welcome relief for the short term. MCC hasn't laid off any employees nor cut anyone's pay during my 11 years as president, and I wouldn't relish starting such practices now.

Truth is, I don't mind not being famous. I just don't want to be infamous, if I can help it.

In any event, Mississippi has had a stimulus package for a long time now. That package is called its Community College System, which has been ranked



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

among the nation's very best in two relatively recent independent national studies, including the 2008 Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government Report.

The "community" college movement was initiated by leaders like MCC President Emeritus Dr. Bill Scaggs, who determined that there was nothing "junior" about the mission of Mississippi's two-year colleges. One of the important components of that mission remains preparing students to matriculate to senior colleges and universities through a core general education curriculum.

But the mission of community colleges has evolved into so much more than that, to include:

- Degree and certificate career & technical programs, ranging from nursing to construction trades to graphics technology. (At MCC, we've now got 45 different such Career & Technical program options.)
- Customized workforce training courses that deliver fast-track contemporary job skills for existing and new industries, thus keeping our local workforce viable.
- Continuing Education classes ranging from cake decorating to desktop publishing for the purpose of personal and professional enrichment.
- GED and adult basic education programs that address basic skills deficiencies and literacy issues.

- Cultural programming from art to music to theater that provide humanities enrichment for our citizens.

- Dual enrollment courses that provide high school students with a head start on their college experience.

All of the above comes together to help "build community," which is MCC's bottom-line mission. And that's why Dr. Scaggs and MCC's trustees changed the college's name to Meridian "Community" College in 1987 as part of the institution's 50th anniversary.

In the end, it's all about economic development through human development. When a student comes to MCC working a part-time minimum wage job, and he or she leaves after one or two years with a new skill, prepared to compete for a solid entry-level position in the marketplace, then that's economic development.

I can cite countless success stories among MCC students – like nursing graduates who make \$45,000 a year right out of the gate or a commercial truck driving grad earning \$60,000-plus after only a couple of years on the job.

Now, that's what I call a real economic stimulus package. And we're not talking a one-time federal initiative. It's an every year deal at MCC.

# MCC FOUNDATION CELEBRATES ANOTHER YEAR

“It’s all because of you sitting out there. You donated and made it great.”

That’s what Bob Rea told the Northwood Country Club audience about the MCC Foundation when he accepted a retirement gift from Kathy Brookshire at the Foundation’s Membership celebration.

His comments were in keeping with the theme for the evening, “When the Spotlight’s on Our Donors ... MCC Shines.”

Rea, who served on the MCC Foundation Board from its inception in the 1970s, was recognized for his dedicated service at the annual gathering.

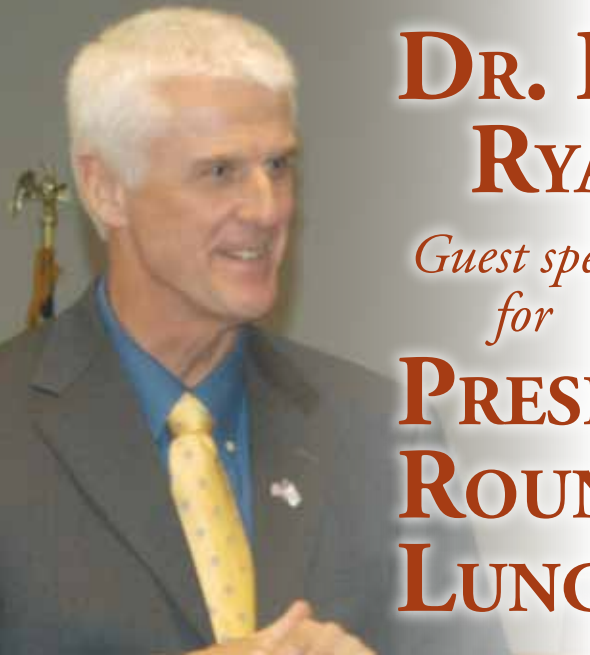
Also during the evening, Tony Pompelia took over the presidential reins of the board from Gerry Purvis. “This is a huge honor and a great privilege,” Pompelia said, as he spoke to the crowd. “MCC has meant so much to me and my family and to me professionally.” He added: “Every single dollar that you invest is an investment in our future and our economy.”



**Pictured:** 1. Bob Rea accepting a gift from Kathy Brookshire, 2. Vicki Mathis, 3. Tommy Dulaney, 4. Tommy McDonald, 5. Claudia and Dr. Scott Elliott, 6. Betty and Gerry Purvis, 7. Pam McDonald.



8. Tim Allred, 9. Percy Bland, 10. Martha Young, 11. Joann Dobbins, 12. Helene and Neil Johnson, 13. Roy Price, 14. Tommy Greer, 15. Laura Holladay, 16. Paige and Tom Sikes, 17. Sharon and Mary Catherine Pompelia, 18. Donnie and Charlotte Massey, 19. Mabel Merritt, 20. Jeff McCoy, 21. Anne Meyer, 22. Phyllis Campbell, 23. Anita Jo and Bill Ross, 24. Merle Jeffares, 25. Doris Gibson, Trevaline and Buddy Morgan, 26. Christen Waters.



# DR. PETER RYAN

*Guest speaker for*

## PRESIDENT'S ROUNDTABLE LUNCHEON

**G**rowing up on a thoroughbred horse farm, it was a natural fit for Dr. Peter Ryan to devote his career to the care and research of animals.

Ryan, who is an associate professor at Mississippi State University in the College of Veterinary Medicine, was the keynote speaker at the MCC Foundation President's Roundtable Luncheon. He told the capacity-filled Dulaney Room audience that much knowledge can be gained from working with animals.

Graduating its first class in 1981, MSU's College is one of

only 27 fully accredited colleges of veterinary medicine in the United States. The research the College offers is world-class. Ryan said the College works closely with not only zoological departments, such as the Memphis Zoo, but also with human disciplines including the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

The pig is a good model for human research, Ryan said, and horses are good models for research with athletes, he said.

Ryan holds a Ph.D. from the Ontario Veterinary College at the University of Guelph, and is a postdoctoral fellow at Rutgers and Princeton universities.



MCC sophomore Jennifer Lynn Kimbriel is the recipient of the Dr. Peter Ryan Pre-Vet Scholarship.

A Dean's List student, Kimbriel is studying in the University Transfer Program at MCC and plans to transfer to Mississippi State University in the fall. She is a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year community and junior college students, and is enrolled in a community leadership program. She also works part-time at the Meridian-Lauderdale County Public Library.

This \$765 award is funded through the MCC Foundation.



*Joel Payne & Donnie Massey*



*Ashley and Claire Massey*



*Cooper Brookshire and Alatha Williams*



*Larry and Lisa Love*

# POPEYES LOVES THAT MERIDIAN FRANCHISE

Giving back to the community has always been important to business owners Faith and Cary Vaughn. And in their office there's a crystal obelisk award that tells others that, too.

In October, Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen awarded Meridan husband and wife owners of Vaughn's Inc. the Marketer of the Year award during the organization's annual international franchise conference.

"We are thrilled to honor Cary and Faith Vaughn as our 2008 Marketers of the Year, based on their local store marketing initiatives and their involvement in creating community partnerships to better promote our brand," said Cheryl Bachelder, president and CEO of Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen. "Clearly, the Vaughns have distinguished themselves as dedicated and active restaurant marketers and are well deserving of this award."

To better solidify their presence in the community, the Vaughns create partnerships with a number of community groups- including Meridian Community College. Being involved in numerous local charities has proved to be a valuable marketing strategy that has contributed to the growth of their franchise, a spokesperson from the franchise said.

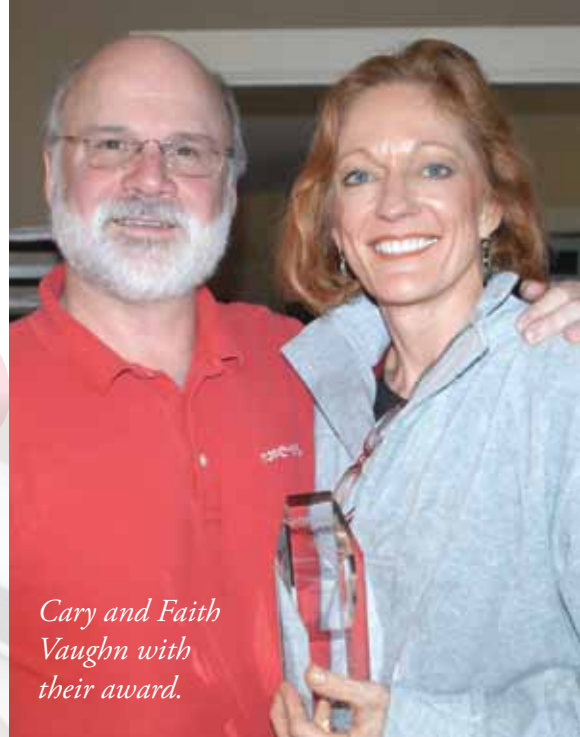
"It was a real honor (to receive this award) because we're so small among the big players in Popeyes," said Faith. Cary is proud of his wife's efforts and accomplishments. "Around Popeyes, most have agencies (to handle the marketing)," he said, "she does it all." Faith conducts the media buys, gets the promotional items and oversees the total marketing efforts. "For us to get that award... it speaks volumes. It speaks volumes for Faith," Cary said.

"As a business owner in a community where you make your money, you've got to support the base - which is education," Faith said.

Cary added, "We try to be a positive role model for our kids. Work with them, encourage them and help them have a stepping stone for their careers."

Good work ethic is important to the Vaughns and they are certainly role models.

The couple opened their first Popeyes store in Meridan in June 1993 at the Bonita location; almost two years later the College Park store began selling the



*Cary and Faith Vaughn with their award.*

famous New Orleans style chicken and biscuits. Two years later, they opened a store in Philadelphia and later sold it to Cary's brother.

"The Lord has definitely blessed us. We feel very strongly about that," Cary said. Starting out was a struggle. "We were on a wing and a prayer," said Cary. "And a lot of prayers."

Cary knew the chicken business - he worked for one of the state's largest chicken processing facilities before a layoff forced him and Faith to look elsewhere for their livelihood. After selling property in Madison, acquiring the financing for a small business loan and long days and nights in training in New Orleans Popeyes restaurants to gain experience, it was 13 months later and they were opening the doors to the first Popeyes in Meridan. "And it turned out to be a real blessing. We kind of carved it out and made it happen," Faith said. But it's all been worth it, the couple added. "Popeyes has been a fantastic franchise. We have two well-established stores which are doing way above national average in the Popeyes chain." The franchise employs 75-80 people.

"We make sure our stores are equipped to serve their customers well," Cary said.

They note the restaurant industry is "full of opportunities if you don't mind working hard," Cary said. "You can go from sweeping the floor to running the store."



ON March 1, 1992, Keli Breanne Brown came into the world with a head full of thick black hair and a sunny disposition.

Keli was the light of the lives of her parents, Betty, a nurse, and Charlie, a fire fighter; and she admired yet playfully aggravated her older brother, Ryan. As she grew up, her bright disposition blossomed into an intelligent, popular girl who loved life and enjoyed everything she tried and tried everything she could. Keli was always the life of the party. She was always ready to go anywhere with her church youth group or her school organizations. And, even as a young child, she became known as a bit of a prankster, a reputation that continued into her teens as she cajoled friends and mere acquaintances alike with stunts such as sneaking in 'unboiled' Easter eggs into someone's basket or placing fake mice in another's bed. She loved having fun and wanted to make certain that everyone else was having a good time, too. Her motto, "Live Your Life...and Smile," that so literally exemplified her life, was written in her handwriting on her bulletin board in her room, where the walls are covered with pictures from ski trips, beach trips, club meetings, tennis matches, sleep-overs, beauty pageants, and the many other events of her childhood and teenage years.

Keli's mother, Betty, after years as a respiratory therapist, went to nursing school at MCC and became a registered nurse in 2002. This sparked Keli's interest in the field of nursing. She was active in HOSA (Health Occupation Students of America) at West Lauderdale, serving as president beginning in August of 2008. She enjoyed Allied Health classes and HOSA club activities. She was planning her future in nursing.

On Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2008, when the Lauderdale county schools were on fall break, Keli awoke that morning with a list she had written the night before of all the things she intended to pack into that day, beginning with bathing her beloved Maltese, Riley, going to Walmart, and visiting some friends. At approximately 1:30 in the afternoon, Keli was involved in a car accident on Okatibbee Dam Road and was killed instantly. She was 16 years old. While she was in the process of actively living her life, and, most likely, smiling along the way, she was suddenly called from this earth into eternity.



*Keli and her brother, Ryan*

Certainly broken hearted, Keli's family was comforted by over 1,500 visitors to the church the night before the funeral. And while they miss her terribly, her family knows that they will see her again one day in Heaven. Despite their grief, Keli's parents and brother have given much time and attention to each of Keli's classmates who also have shared this horrible loss, encouraging them to live Keli's motto—to live their lives and smile as they go.

In honor of his precious sister whose zest for life filled her 16 years to their fullest, Keli's brother, Ryan, has set up the Keli Breanne Brown Memorial Scholarship with the Meridian Community College Foundation. Anyone interested in contributing to this special scholarship fund, please contact Kathy Brookshire at 601-484-8612.

**LIVE YOUR LIFE... AND SMILE.**

*Keli Brown*



# MCC FOUNDATION TRAVEL in NEW YORK



**Top Left:** Best Friends, front row, from left: Hayley Shirley, Liza Hannington, Shelia Uithovin, back row: Nicola Fruge, Carol Mosley, Jolie Carle, Jan Freeman, and Sherri Anders are having fun in Central Park – New York City! **Top Right:** Tanya Thompson poses with limousine driver, David, in front of the World Famous Gimaldi's Brick Oven Pizza Parlor in Brooklyn. **Below:** MCC Foundation Travelers, enjoy pizza at Gimaldi's. Left Front: Deborah Haggard, Kathy Brookshire, David, our Limo Driver, Ree O'Connell, Darlene Harrison. Right Front: David Haggard, Dee Haggard, Gini Haggard, and Tanya Thompson.

**I**n November of 2007 Bebe Roberts Freeman, a friend and supporter of Meridian Community College, died at her home in Starkville after a long bout with cancer.

## *Tribute to* **BEBE ROBERTS FREEMAN 1943-2007**

Bebe was a 1961 graduate of Meridian High School and attended MCC for one year when it was still MJC before transferring to Mississippi State College for Women (MSCW) to finish her degree in elementary education.

Bebe was a proud feminist, an excellent teacher, an organizer for the American Federation of Teachers and a social and political activist her entire life. She prided herself on being a Union Maid and a Yellow Dog Democrat to the end. She lived life to the fullest and was a dancer extraordinaire. The accompanying picture is of Bebe leading a parade through her dearly beloved French Quarter in New Orleans, her home neighborhood until Katrina drove her north to Starkville.

Bebe treasured her years in Meridian and experienced that “love hate thing” many expatriate Mississippians say they have experienced after they left the state (but for Bebe it was mostly love).

In October of 1992, Bebe and her husband, Harry Freeman, also a 1961 MHS graduate, established the Wilma G. Freeman Future Teacher Scholarship in memory of Harry’s mother, the Mary Lee Roberts Future Teacher Scholarship in honor of Bebe’s mom who is still very much alive and living in Jackson, and the Dr. Laura O. Williams Nursing Scholarship in memory of a family friend who practiced medicine in Meridian for many years. To date these scholarships have been awarded 85 times to provide support for 47 MCC students.

When asked why Bebe wanted to establish the MCC scholarship funds, Harry said, “Bebe always believed that education was extremely important if we Mississippians were to ever achieve our potential, and that the community colleges were the front line for achieving any improvements we might enjoy. She felt there were few places where an impact could better be made than by contributing to schools like MCC.” Harry plans to continue contributing to the three scholarships in part because Bebe would have had it no other way.

Kathy Brookshire, executive director of the MCC Foundation, remembers Bebe as one of the most dedicated educators that she has ever known. She said, “Bebe was so full of life, always willing to help all mankind. It was a privilege to know her. All of us at MCC are so grateful to Bebe and Harry for making educational dreams come true for so many students.”



# SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

*These \$1,000 scholarships are funded through the MCC Foundation by Harry Freeman of Starkville. He and his late wife Bebe Roberts Freeman established the awards in honor of their parents and a dear family friend. Recipients are asked to perform 10 hours of community service each semester they receive the award.*



**P**olly Shaw Stephens has been selected to receive the Mary Lee Roberts Future Teacher Scholarship at MCC.

Polly is a 1991 graduate of Meridian High School. She is a freshman in the University Transfer Program studying education. Her career goal is to teach on the secondary level.



**K**risten Leigh Warren has been selected to receive the Wilma G. Freeman Future Teacher Scholarship at MCC.

Kristen is a 1999 graduate of Southeast Lauderdale High School. She is a sophomore in the University Transfer Program studying education. A Dean's List scholar, Kristen plans to teach English at the secondary level.



**D**onna Marie Algood has been selected to receive the Dr. Laura O. Williams Nursing Scholarship at MCC.

Donna is a 1986 graduate of Quitman High School. A practical nurse, she is in the Associate Degree Nursing Upgrade Program. The classes for this program meet each Thursday, Friday and all day on Saturday, allowing students to continue to work while completing the course work. Donna is a member of the Organization of Student Nurses. She aspires to complete the bachelor of science degree in nursing.

# TRAILBLAZING

*Three MCCers pursuing  
new paths*



Three different women. Three different positions. Three different personalities. But these three women who serve the College have a similar drive, a common denominator: They are leaders.

Barbara Jones, vice president; Soraya Welden, dean of student services and Amy Brand, dean of fiscal affairs, find their roles both challenging and rewarding. Though every day isn't the same, they all acknowledge students are their top priority in their jobs at the College.

# SORAYA WELDEN

“Our goal is to help students reach their goals,”

said Welden. “We do what’s best for the students, and that is to provide courteous assistance and guidance to students who need and want to be in college.”

Welden herself experienced the MCC life as an undergraduate. “I started working here as a student in the Bookstore – when it was upstairs in Montgomery Hall,” she said. Finishing her two years in the University Transfer Program, Welden went to Mississippi State University, earning both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees. She returned to her MCC roots after school – even coming back to the Bookstore until she moved into the Financial Aid office where she was later promoted to Financial Aid director and eventually to dean of students.

She credits her work in the previous areas of the College as serving her well as dean of student services. “You’re asked a lot of questions about the college process,” she said, noting that keeping up to date with not only college policies but also state and federal statutes is vital.

Welden sees herself more as a coach. “We’re a good team (in the Student Services division). This is not a one-person job.” She credits all of her colleagues – including the President, with helping her in her position. “The people who guide you make all the difference in being successful and enjoying your job ... they’ve got your back. They give good advice and information so you can make good decisions.”

Reaching a successful end is important, and Welden strives to respond effectively to questions and issues posed.

Weldon and her husband, Lawrence, are the parents of two daughters, Reagan and McKenzie.





# BARBARA JONES

“Ultimately, a key part of leadership really is servant leadership,”

said Jones who has worked at the College full-time for 17 years in the roles of English instructor, division chair, associate dean, dean and now vice president. “Before you can be an effective leader, you have to understand and address the needs of the people you lead.”

Leading by example is a mantra for Jones. “If you’re going to expect commitment and hard work, you’ve got to model that yourself.” As an English teacher one of her philosophies was to show students how to write a thesis for an essay – not just to tell them.

She credits others for leading her. “I was very fortunate; I had people in my life who showed how to teach people and the importance of hard work and unconditional love,” Jones said.

Her parents, her first role models, were an overwhelming influence on her. She remarks, “They made me understand that taking pride in what you do and doing it well can be the greatest reward you can get.” She said they taught her and her siblings how to be independent. “Having lived through difficult times like WWII and the Depression, they (her father and mother) wanted us to stand on our own when we needed to.”

Education has been Jones’ passion for 37 years. “I’ve come full circle. I was a student at MCC who had great teachers who challenged me.” She never dreamed she would come back to work at her alma mater. “I taught night classes in the 1980s and I loved it.” In 1992, when a full-time opening became available in the English department, she was encouraged to apply, and landed the position which also came with the task of serving as Phi Theta Kappa adviser.

In addition to her duties at the College, she’s also a Lauderdale County School Board member, a board of director for the Mississippi School Boards Association (first one in the state to represent Lauderdale County Schools), and a board member for Leadership Lauderdale Youth. Clearly, education is dear to her heart. Her love of teaching reaches back to when she was a sixth grader who got the opportunity to teach a group of rowdy third graders. “From that time on, I knew I wanted to teach.”

She added, “I’ve been blessed. That’s why I’m a proponent of education. It is the positive influences and those who challenge you to succeed that can make a difference in your life.”

Jones and her husband, D.L., have a daughter, Mandy. They have two grandchildren, Mason and Anna Grace.

# AMY BRAND

## Brand will admit it: She's a numbers person.

"When I was 8 years old, I asked Santa for a calculator with a ribbon," she said, laughing at her youthful quest to make sense of numbers.

Dollars and cents are ingrained in Brand. "I love numbers; I love what you can do with numbers," she said. "I'm a big picture person – I like to see how everything fits together."

With her love of numbers mixed with her value of education, her position is a natural fit. "Education has always been very important to me. I received my BSBA in three years and MBA with an emphasis in accounting in one year while serving as resident director for married housing at Mississippi College, serving as a graduate assistant in the School of Business and working as a tax accountant at Horne CPA." She later worked as the business director of the Baptist Health Plex and reported directly to both the chief financial officer of Baptist Health Systems and the president of Mississippi College.

Wanting to move closer to home (Brand is a native of Enterprise), she interviewed and landed the payroll specialist/accountant job at MCC. Since then she has supervised payroll and processed W2s – employee wage report form for the Internal Revenue Service; compiled quarterly tax reports; worked on several grants; helped with projects for the State Board of Community and Junior Colleges and assisted with closing the accounting books for the fiscal year as well as others tasks.

She's also a person who enjoys multi-tasking. "I have always strived to do the best job possible. I believe we should always do our best with the talents and gifts God has given us."

Brand knows she's got big shoes to fill with the retirement of Vice President for Fiscal Affairs Pam Harrison. "Huge," she said.

But she added: "I am very blessed and fortunate in that I know the employees and the College's computer operating system."

Brand counts on teamwork as well. "Everyone has a hand in making the College successful. That's what I'm excited about." To have successful students is a reward for her as well.

She is married to Dr. Todd Brand, MCC chair of communications and fine arts. They have two sons, Eli and Noah.

Among the most widely recognized businessmen in the world, Lee Iacocca knows the importance of giving: "I was fortunate to get a scholarship when I went to Lehigh University and Princeton. They were both wonderful schools. Somebody was kind enough to spend their money to educate people that they would never get to know. That's what I think philanthropy is about."

- *Philanthropy - Self Help*

Countless numbers of MCC students have been helped achieve their dreams thanks to the philanthropic endeavors of others. Here are two more students:

## SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS



Jessica Lauren White has been selected to receive the first Edward T. Lafferty Scholarship at MCC.

This \$1,530 award is funded through the MCC Foundation by Ed Lafferty of Poplarville. Lafferty graduated from "MJC" in 1961 and finished an engineering degree at Tulane. He is an entrepreneur, philanthropist and avid horseman.

Lauren is a 2007 highest honors graduate of Heidelberg Academy. She had a perfect 4.0 grade point average and was recognized as the salutatorian of her graduating class. Lauren is a sophomore in the Associate Degree Nursing Program. Her goal is to become a nurse practitioner.

Lauren is the youth minister at Shady Grove First Baptist Church. She is a member of College Republicans and Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year college students.



Ryan Joseph Poythress has been selected to receive the Gerry Wayne Purvis Scholarship at MCC.

This \$765 award is funded through the MCC Foundation. Betty Purvis chose this means to honor her husband for his service to the Foundation as president of the board of directors and for his commitment to education. Gerry Purvis was recently named to the MCC Hall of Fame. This recognition is for alumni who have distinguished themselves in their chosen vocational field.

Ryan is a 2001 honor graduate of Meridian High School. He was a member of the Academic Team and participated in cross-country and track. Ryan completed his bachelor of science degree in wildlife and fisheries science. After seeing cuts in funding for his position as a fisheries biologist, he made the decision to return to school and train for a new profession. Ryan was accepted into the Associate Degree Nursing Program and began his first semester this spring. He would like to become a nurse anesthetist.



# REMEMBERING WITH A GIFT

What stronger ties are there than family? What better common thread woven throughout life than the love of music?

Those questions can be answered through the lives of a mother and daughter, Sarah Cox Moore and Nannie Moore Hudson. And their lives are celebrated and remembered thanks to the Sarah Cox Moore and the Nannie (Nan) Moore Hudson Memorial Scholarship through the MCC Foundation. Nell and Rhen Pierce established this scholarship endowment in memory of Nell's mother and sister.

Sarah had all the fruits of the spirit. She was always a very happy person that made the best of every situation, said Nell. Members of the Martin community in Lauderdale County, Sarah was a member of Pine Grove Baptist Church. After he returned from serving his country in World War I, Oswald Moore married Sarah in 1919 and they would remain in the Martin area throughout their lives. They had two sons, two daughters and six grandchildren.

The Moores worked tirelessly. Before becoming a wife, mother, homemaker and seamstress, Sarah taught school in nearby Newton County; Oswald owned a country store. They both were farmers who loved the land.

Times, though, were not always easy. Everything was rationed and when Oswald came to Meridian twice a week to buy from the wholesale house to replenish the stock in the country store, he bought what he could. And sometimes on those trips, daughter Nell would go with her father. Their last stop was Brookshire's Ice Cream store. They would pack the ice cream in ice for the return to the store.

Sarah also believed in music and was eager to share her love of music. Daughters Nell and Nan both took piano lessons;

neighborhood children could often be found practicing on Sarah's piano.

"If you can't do anything about the situation, make the best of what you have. Change it if you can ... enjoy life to its fullest," the Pierces said about Sarah.

A bright child, Nan started kindergarten at the age of 4, graduated from high school at 16, and from Meridian Community College with honors in the late 1940s. During college, Nan worked at Brookshire Dairy as a cashier at the retail store. After finishing college, she eventually advanced to the business office.

She, too, developed a love for music and played the piano at her church for several years.

Nan married Tom Hudson and because of promotions and advancement in Tom's work, they lived in different parts of the country including Atlanta, Kansas City and Baton Rouge. Nan also worked with the insurance company USF&G and retired from the Ethyl Corp., in Baton Rouge. They had a daughter and two grandchildren.

Proverbs 31, Chapters 25 through 31 sum up Sarah Cox Moore and Nannie (Nan) Moore Hudson best:

*She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.*

*She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.*

*She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

*Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:*

*"Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."*

*Charm is deceptive, the beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.*

*Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.*



Education major Regina Martinez has been selected to receive the first Sarah Cox Moore and Nannie Moore Hudson Scholarship at MCC.

This \$500 award is funded through the MCC Foundation from an endowment established by Rhen and Nell Moore Pierce. Sarah Cox Moore was Mrs. Pierce's mother and Nannie Moore Hudson was Mrs. Pierce's sister.

Martinez, who is a University Transfer Program sophomore, is a member of several college-based organizations including Ivy League Recruiters and the Future Educators of America. She also is a member of the MCC Chorus. The 2007 graduate of Meridian High School was a member of the marching and symphonic bands, MHS chorus and the Lamplighters.

# FROM HOOPS TO LEGACY

**Editor's note:** Wayne Williams, 1978 Meridian High School graduate, submitted this story to Connections. Williams is also an alumnus of MCC (Class of 1981) and is currently family and community engagement coordinator for the McMinn County Schools in Athens, Tenn.

About 30 years ago, if my memory serves me correctly, a bunch of scrappy kids from all parts of Meridian gathered one summer afternoon at the Meridian High School gymnasium (now Turnage Gymnasium) for a formal basketball practice.

We had no clue what destiny lay ahead of us. We just wanted to play the game people call "basketball." With a couple of excellent coaches, Don Evans and Billy Joe Brantley, along with some darn good managers, and an enthusiastic cheerleader squad, we were determined to do just that.

And play basketball we did, all the way to the Mississippi State Basketball Championship game in the state capitol, Jackson! Not only did those guys play in the championship game, they also won. What a way to complete a banner year in Meridian High School basketball. With a record of 33 wins and only 5 losses, the 1977-78 MHS Boys' Basketball team did what no other team had done before nor has done since, win a state championship.

About a year ago (February 2008), under the leadership of Donia Evans, a reunion was held in honor of this memorable team and quasi-famous players. Evans, the wife of Dr. Don Evans, thought it would be a good idea to "get the guys together for a lil' reunion." Well, living in several states and traveling hundreds of miles was not an easy task, but they came given her persistence. "What the heck," said one former player, "just one more road-trip."

To be back home and in a place we had become all so familiar with was so surreal and emotional. Where the

Mayor's Proclamation was a total surprise, the response of family members, "former" fans/classmates, and community supporters was not. Our families, friends, and community have always been there for us; former Northwest Junior High Principal James Vance and retired Gym Teacher/Coach James Williams of Kate Griffin to name two.

Because of community support and fan loyalty, we did so well during that championship run. Because of a spirit of unselfish giving and constant support, members of that memorable '78 team and their classmates want to give back to a community that has given so much to them.

With the help of several MHS Class of '79 classmates (who were also a part of that memorable team), and coaches and their families an endowment with the Meridian Community College Foundation is being established. All former players and classmates of the two classes, '78 & '79, are encouraged to participate.

In a way, it's about giving back to former coaches, teachers, the community, and friends who have given so much to us. Helping to establish this endowment with this championship team, and hopefully others, is not only a way to commemorate an awesome achievement, but highlight the importance of teamwork and cooperation. As former educator Dr. R.D. Harris states, "it is about being a good citizen." That my friend, is about **LIFE!**



Joe Brantley

Dr. Don Evans



## MCC Hall of Fame Highest Flying Eagles

*Meridian Community College honored its own during the Homecoming Celebration held in February. Tapped for the honor were alumni, from left; Hoot Gipson, Larry Love, Tony Pompelia, Jack Shank and Gerry Purvis. Here are the captions which are permanently displayed with their portraits in the Dulaney Room;*

### **Gerry Wayne Purvis**

A 1977 President's List graduate of Meridian Junior College, Purvis served his country in the U.S. Army as an electronic technician before entering the field of business office systems. After serving as Service Operations Manager for Monroe Business Systems in Savannah, GA, Purvis started Purvis Business Machines out of the trunk of his car in Meridian in 1979. He has since grown the business into a 15-employee operation with annual company revenues of about \$3 million. He has been a member of the MCC President's Roundtable since 1998 and served as President of the MCC Foundation from 2007-08 during a time of unprecedented growth for the organization. He has also served as President of the Mississippi Office Machine Dealers Association and Director of the Southeastern Regional Office Machine Dealers Association. In 2008, Purvis' distinguished business career was highlighted by earning the honor of "Elite Achiever Classification" by Toshiba.

### **George Kline "Jack" Shank, Jr.**

A 1942 honor graduate of Meridian Junior College, Shank went on to earn bachelors and masters degrees from Mississippi State University. After a stint as Director Public Information for the Trades Training Institute of Mississippi State College, Shank joined the staff of Meridian Junior College as an instructor/counselor. He rose to the rank of Director of Adult Education and finally Dean of Continuing Education. Upon retiring from MJC in 1986, Shank had left his mark as a state leader in the field of adult education. He served as President of the Mississippi Adult Education Association and Chairman of the Study Committee on the Status of Adult and Continuing Education of the Southern States Conference, among other professional activities. Shank also served as President of the Meridian Exchange Club, wrote a weekly history column for the Meridian Star, served for 12 years on the Meridian Preservation and Historical Commission, and published books on his WWII experiences and three-volume work on Meridian, *The Queen of the Past*.

### **Larry Love**

A 1971-72 alumnus of Meridian Junior College, this Meridian native went on to major in marketing at the University of Mississippi before entering the family business, Rogers/LJ Candy Company. While at MJC, Love played on Coach Jim Redgate's inaugural Eagle golf team, which included Lou Hart, Rickey Quinn, Scooter Holloway and Ronnie Thompson.

That squad captured the Junior College State Championship by winning all of its matches. Love led the way in that first season by winning medalist honors in every tournament, excepting one in which he shared medalist honors with Holloway. In 1988, he joined the firm of Specialty Roll Products and became owner and President of the company in 2006. Love is married to the former Lisa Nuckolls. The Loves have three daughters, Melissa, Sara and Mary Lawrence.

### **Anthony "Tony" Pompelia**

A 1972-75 alumnus of Meridian Junior College, Pompelia went on to earn a business degree from Mississippi State University with an emphasis on marketing. After a successful tenure in marketing management positions with McKee Foods Corporation and Earthgrains, Inc., Pompelia started Leading Edges Advertising in Meridian in May 2000. Leading Edges serves clients throughout the Southeast as well as those from international cities. Pompelia became a member of the MCC Foundation Board in November 2002 and began serving as its President in 2008. He also served as Chairman of the Lauderdale County United Way Board. He and his wife, Sharon, have two children, Karie and Tyler. Tony is the son of the later Gene and Mary Catherine Pompelia.

### **E.M. "Hoot" Gipson**

A 1955 graduate of Meridian Junior College, Gipson served his country in the U.S. Marine Corps before coming to MJC under the GI Bill. After cutting his teeth in the steel fabrication business in management positions for such firms as Tucker Steel and Bates Steel, Gipson and his wife, Doris, started their own company – Gipson Steel in 1976. Since that time, Gipson grew his company to some 80 employees. Along with other local firms such as Structural Steel and Slay Steel, Gipson helped Meridian to become one of the Deep South's most dynamic centers for the steel fabrication industry. Always a big advocate for higher education, Gipson has served for many years on the advisory board of Mississippi State University and the MSU Foundation. He has also held several other positions of key leadership in the community, including Chairman of the East Mississippi Business Development Corporation, President of the Optimist Club, President of the Downtown Club of Meridian, and President of the Mississippi Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc. He has also served as a director of Northwood Country Club, the Meridian Little Theater and the local Workforce Council. Doris Gipson is also a MCC alumnus.

# The extensively and newly renovated Mitchell Distributing Company touts more than just new offices and additional space – it pays tribute to the past, too.

An engraved cornerstone at the front door of the 49th Avenue facility connects the past to the present.

Mitchell Distributing Co., a part of the Mitchell Companies, started in the 1940s by brothers Mann and Bilbo Mitchell as a distributor for Falstaff Beer. According to the company's website, in 1953, Mann made an arrangement with Anheuser-Bush to become its wholesaler. In 1955, the company split, with Bilbo taking the Falstaff Distributing Co., and Mann taking Mitchell Distributing Co. The brothers continued to work together into the early 1970s. Mann's son, Manny, entered the business full time in 1975 and remains owner and chairman of Mitchell Companies.

Joel Payne, a native of Macon, Ga., moved to Meridian in the mid 1980s after Mitchell persuaded him to leave his district manager position with Anheuser-Bush in St. Louis and come to East Central Mississippi to run the beer operation; today he is Vice President of Mitchell Distributing.

Investing in the community is important to the organization. And so is the company's commitment to Meridian Community College. Payne serves on the board of directors of The MCC Foundation and is a firm believer in the Foundation's innovative Tuition Guarantee program. The program guarantees tuition



## DISTRIBUTING *to a* COMMUNITY GUARANTEE

*Joel Payne*

*Manny Mitchell*



for four semesters to high school seniors in Lauderdale County. “One of the main reasons we’re so supportive of the community college is the Tuition Guarantee program. It is paramount,” Payne said.

The company has also hired many MCC students in the past, Payne added.

Combining an East Mississippi Business Development Corporation Business After Hours event and a Young Professionals of Meridian meeting, Mitchell Distributing hosted a grand opening in October. Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour attended, as well as nearly 400 people.

According to the company’s website, the beer business has shown steady growth through the years, enabling the company to grow and expand into other markets like Leland, Columbus and Tupelo. “Our depth of management experience has enabled us to continue to look for further expansions and to make long-term plans to continue to move our companies forward,” the website cites.

This second-generation company is now entering into its third generation. Manny’s son, Adam, worked for the Meridian organization for a year and a half and is now running the operation in Tupelo. Adam wrote a letter to the editor in *The Meridian Star*:

*This is an exciting time for MDC as we complete our new facility and our investment in the community. My family has been a part of this neighborhood and community since my great grandfather in 1931, so we have always wanted to remain on this location. It was only through the cooperation of the Mayor John Robert Smith, the City Council and the Board of Supervisors that we were able to remain in this sentimental location. The city allowed us to close First Street, which gave us the space necessary for our expansion. I am personally grateful to them for allowing us to stay here; otherwise I would have been the first Mitchell not to spend my career on 49th Avenue.*

# Joel Drummond, DMD MD,

The newest member of the MCC  
Foundation President's Roundtable

Joel Drummond, a native of Picayune, is an advocate for the public education system. He attended public school and is proud to say he is a product of the community college system. Dr. Drummond is an alumnus of Pearl River Community College. That is one of the reasons he is excited to support the Foundation and its Tuition Guarantee Program. "What a great way for our community to give back to our own students," he said. "I wish I had been given that opportunity when I was a student."

He is a graduate of Ole Miss and the University of Mississippi Medical Center, where he received his Doctorate of Dentistry. He went on to the Louisiana State University Medical School in New Orleans to obtain his medical degree.

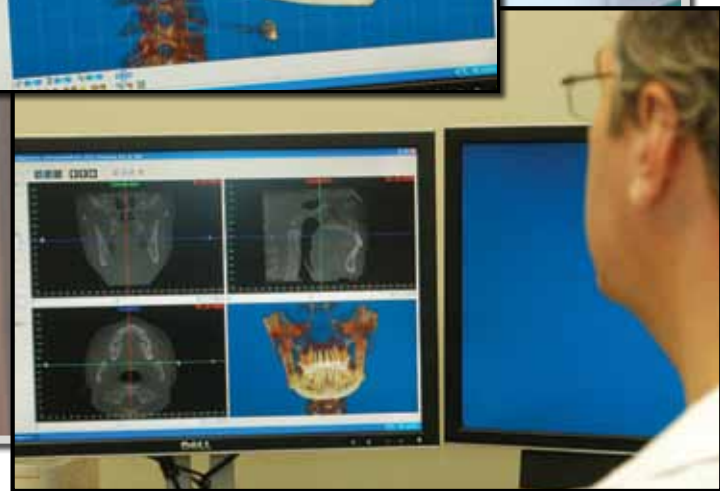
Both Dr. Drummond and his wife, Amy, grew up in small towns, so the size of Meridian was attractive to them. In addition, they felt a strong sense of community here and decided that Meridian would be a great environment for their children. The Drummonds are the parents of Bryson, three years old, Zoe, two years old, and Brodie, eight months old.

Dr. Drummond bought the Skewes home on 23rd Avenue, and after much consideration, decided to replace the home with a new structure. He loved the original windows on the home, so he incorporated them into the new office design. A lot of hard work went into restoring them, but he is pleased that he was able to save a part of the lovely old residence.

Traditional oral surgery such as wisdom teeth removal, dental implants, corrective jaw surgery, reconstructive dentistry, TMJ treatment, and pathology of the jaw services are provided. His office is equipped with the latest technology including the i-CAT Cone Beam 3-D Dental Imaging System, which allows dentists to share a visual diagnosis with their patients so they can better understand their treatment options. He also offers state of the art cosmetic skin care, skin peels, and dermal fillers such as Botox, Restylane, or Juvadurm.

Dr. Drummond and MCC are already partners in that the Dental Hygiene Program and Dental Assistant Program students do rotations with his clinic.

The Drummonds love to camp, travel and cook meals together. Their favorite country to visit is Italy...the place they were married!



Linda Suttle with the Mississippi Organization for Associate Degree Nursing recently established the Mississippi Organization for Associate Degree Nursing Scholarship Endowment with the MCC Foundation. With Suttle are Dr. Elliott, left, and Kathy Brookshire.



An addition to the College's landscape, a newly-planted Ginkgo tree also serves as a memorial tribute to a former MCC Board Trustees member.

Eric Stubbs, left, with Modern Landscape Design and employee John Wilson planted the tree near Reed Hall in memory of Jeanette Ferguson Noe, who served on the College's board for a decade beginning in 1985. MCC Director of Landscape Vinnie Gutierrez was also on site for the planting.

Stubbs noted a group of women from out of town contacted him about planting a tree and notified the College. A memorial plaque will be placed near the tree.

The Ginkgo tree is picturesque at maturity and is grown for its shade, large size and bold accents in the landscape. It is thought to be one of the oldest trees still living on earth.



Local organization gives to Tuition Guarantee.

Arjen Lagendijk, left, Rotary Club vice president, joins Kathy Brookshire as she accepts a check from Rotary Club President Joe Mercado designated for the MCC Foundation Tuition Guarantee.

***Return Service Requested***

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MCC Foundation members Tom Sikes, left, and B.B. Archer kick off the MCC Foundation 2009 fundraising campaign with puppets “Carrot Top” and “Frenchie.” The puppets were characters in the fall Arts and Letters theater production of *Carnival*.

**ATTENTION ALUMNI:**

We are looking for you. If you attended MJC or MCC for at least a year, please send a message to Kathy Brookshire by visiting the web at [www.meridiancc.edu/classmates](http://www.meridiancc.edu/classmates)

