MCC Foundation honors
Jerry Greene
Annual Celebration - see page 6
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Foundation board members:
Eddie Kelly, left, MCC Foundation board member, talks with Donnie Smith, president of the Foundation, and Tony McDaniel, outgoing president.
If you talk to almost any state legislator, local government official, or economic developer these days, most all of them will tell you they have three priorities – jobs, jobs, and jobs.

Just recently, I participated in a meeting with Governor Phil Bryant, who noted that Mississippi ranks 49th in the nation on the rate of workforce participation – meaning the rate of able-bodied people, 16 years and older, who are gainfully employed. The governor further emphasized that some 34,800 job vacancies were currently posted on the Mississippi Works website.

So, there's a huge gap in Mississippi between people seemingly available to work and job vacancies. The only thing that will close that chasm is training people in the skills that correlate with those employment opportunities, and community colleges – more than any other agency – are positioned to deliver that training.

Why community colleges? Because community colleges tend to focus on what has been characterized as “middle skills” job training. In other words, we don't train architects and engineers, i.e., white collar positions. Rather, we train the welders, carpenters, plumbers, and electricians who turn the blueprints developed by such professionals into the reality of a building or a bridge.

Middle skill jobs represent about 66 percent of the job opportunities that exist in America today.

Bringing the issue down to the local level, I get a little bit frustrated, if not annoyed, about those who criticize MCC's job training efforts, as if the college were a part of the problem in attracting new industry to our community, as well as serving the needs of existing industry. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Last year, under the direction of MCC Dean of Business and Community Development Joseph Knight, MCC trained some 13,978 individuals with that number reflecting that some people engaged in more than one training activity. To depict the growth of the college's training activities, that number was 9,268 in 2009 and has grown steadily since then. And, of course, those numbers only represent customized, short-term training conducted by MCC. The college also offers some 52 Career & Technical degree and certificate programs, ranging from commercial truck driving to nursing – that also contribute to the local workforce.

Keep in mind that, statistically speaking, MCC has only a ½-county district under Mississippi Code. All of the other 14 community colleges in the state have multi-county districts – as many as 11 counties from which to draw workforce training accounts. Therefore, if one were to examine the amount of training MCC performs on a per capita basis, I would argue that the college is doing as much or more than any institution in the state.

But we want to do more, and we want to do it better. To that end, this summer MCC – thanks chiefly to a $3.7 million grant from the Riley Foundation and a $1.5 million federal grant from the Department of Commerce -will embark upon a $6.2 million renovation of its Workforce Development Center. Give us about 18 months’ worth of construction, and you'll see the old Wal-Mart building on Hwy. 19 North renovated into a state-of-the-art workforce training center that will be a showcase to prospective industry.

Why is that so important? Prospective industry leaders ask a lot of questions when they are assessing a community. They ask about amenities, such as shopping and recreational areas. They ask about access to interstates and rail and air service. They ask about the quality of health care and public schools as well as the effectiveness of other government services, such as law enforcement. But all of those and other such queries are subordinate to their No. 1 concern – that is, the availability and quality of the labor force who is going to make their business successful.

If prospective industry can't be sold on that point, they ain’t coming – period.

I write all this only to say that MCC is already accomplishing a lot in terms of providing for our current and future workforce. Don't let anyone tell you differently. Moreover, we stand ready, willing and able to rapidly respond to any training needs in Lauderdale County, and if we don't possess the resources to do it on our own, we have only to call upon the three other community colleges who serve the East Central Mississippi region to partner with us to get the job done.

That's Workforce 101, MCC style, from my perspective.
When the “Catfish King of Mississippi,” the president and founder of Fishbelt Feeds came to the MCC Foundation President’s Roundtable luncheon, he applauded business leaders in attendance for their contributions to the College.

Joe Oglesby of Indianola, who is also the chairman of the Catfish Farmers of Mississippi and the Catfish Institute, said helping others receive an education is vital. “You need a citizenship that can participate and give back to the community. You can’t do that without education.”

Oglesby was named the 2009 Catfish Farmer of the Year, and representing Mississippi, he took top honors at the Catfish Farmers of America Annual Convention.

Guests at the luncheon were treated to a delicious lunch featuring Mississippi-raised catfish prepared and served by Valley Foods. The luncheon was a way for the Foundation to show its appreciation to local officials and business leaders for their contributions to Meridian Community College over the past year. It was also a way to update them with College activities.

“This is just a way to say thank you. All these people give a lot to Meridian,” said Donnie Smith, speaking for the MCC Foundation Board of Directors. “This is a time out to say thank you. Not asking for anything, just saying thank you. Sometimes people forget to do that. And that’s what we are doing here today.”

Top left: Joe Oglesby addresses the guests at the President’s Roundtable luncheon. Top right: Ann and Jimmy Alexander with Tracy Bell. Below: The largest crowd ever in attendance for the luncheon at the Tommy E. Dulaney Center.
MCC inducts six alums into Eagle Hall of Fame

Six alumni of MCC who went on to distinguish themselves in their professions and community service endeavors have been inducted into MCC’s “Highest Flying Eagles” Hall of Fame for 2015.

Inductees were Dr. Shawn Anderson, Dan Hollingsworth, Fannie Johnson, Dr. Lana Jackson, Dr. Lavon Fluker-Reed and Dr. Ben Rush.

“This event is one of the highlights of each school year,” said Dr. Scott Elliott, MCC president. “It is gratifying to recognize such highly successful people who have been associated with the college. If you look at the wall full of Hall of Fame inductees’ photographs in the Dulaney Room, it’s virtually a who’s who of servant-leaders. It really makes you proud to feel like MCC played some part in their success.”

The Hall of Fame, located in the Dulaney Room in Webb Hall, was initiated by the college in 2002. The inaugural inductees were Dr. Bill Scaggs, MCC president emeritus; Tommy Dulaney, owner of Structural Steel Services; and Lou Weddington Hart, prolific state amateur golf champion and nationally renowned junior college coach. Since that time, some 50 additional honorees have been inducted.

Anderson attended MCC in 1980 and went on to earn degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi, the University of Texas and finally his medical doctorate from the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences. Anderson earned his license as a registered nurse before choosing to pursue a career as a physician, and has specialized in the field of family medicine. He and his wife, Mary, have been strong advocates of MCC’s nursing and allied health programs through their foundation, the Anderson Support and Development Foundation, Inc.

Hollingsworth is a 1954 graduate of MJC and went on to enjoy a stellar career in two different fields – radio broadcasting and politics. He began his career in the media with Meridian’s WTOK and worked in several markets before realizing his dream of owning his own radio station in 1968, KRUS in Ruston, La. Hollingsworth ultimately purchased two other stations before turning his attention to public office, being elected mayor of Ruston in 1998 and re-elected for three successive terms before retiring. He has been the recipient of numerous media-related and community service awards.

A native of Macon, Johnson graduated with honors from MCC and amassed an impressive career in food services and community service. Since July of 2008, she has served as executive director of Love’s Kitchen, which serves approximately 80,000 meals each year to the hungry and homeless. She is a U.S. Army veteran and has been recognized with numerous community service awards in her career.

Jackson graduated from West Lauderdale High School before earning her A.A. degree from MCC in 1993 with highest honors. She first became a licensed pharmacist and later a medical doctor, earning both of her degrees from the University of Mississippi. Since 2013, she has served as an associate professor at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, specializing in otolaryngology. She is also a veteran of the Air National Guard.

Fluker-Reed graduated from MJC in 1972 and went on to become a career educator, topping her career as superintendent of the Aberdeen Public School System. After MJC, Fluker-Reed earned degrees at three different universities – her bachelor’s from Southern Miss, her masters and specialist from Mississippi State, and her doctorate from the University of Alabama. She won numerous awards in her career as an educator before retiring in 2007.

Rush attended MCC in 1994-95 and went on to earn a bachelor’s degree from Emory University and a medical doctorate from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. He has won several academic and professional honors and is currently associated with Rush Foundation Hospital as a cardiovascular, thoracic, aortic and endovascular surgeon.
The MCC Foundation Celebrates Jerry Greene
1 - Marilyn Greene, Mason and Grace Greene
2 - Buster and Cheryl Thomas
3 - Carey Smith and Dr. Judi Miller
4 - Jerry Greene and grandson, Stephen Jackson
5 - Bill Wolf, M. L. Waters with Jerry Greene
6 - Beth Barham, Judy and Johnny Dement
7 - Merrick Jackson and Cornelia Laird
8 - Dr. Earl Laird and Leonard Cobb
9 - Laura Holladay and Eddie Holladay
10 - Dr. Angie Carraway, MCC Vice President
     Barbara Jones and Rev. Lynne Anderson, Holladay Teaching Chair Recipients
11 - Dr. Tommy McDonald and Howard Beeland
12 - Bennie Jean Fortenberry and Donnie Massey
13 - Mina Beth Tonini and Bob Malone
14 - Jacqueline and Tim Hogan
15 - Jerry Greene and granddaughter,
     Mary Griffin
16 - Scotty and Alana Elliott
17 - Amy and Dr. Todd Brand
18 - Jerry Greene receives plaque from
     Dr. Scott Elliott and Kathy Brookshire
19 - Mark McPhail and Tommy Dulaney
Meridian Community College has been awarded one of the largest grants the school has received: one million dollars from the Phil Hardin Foundation.

“This is a huge enhancement for MCC,” said MCC President Dr. Scott Elliott at the announcement of the grant.

“The Hardin Foundation through the years has always been an enthusiastic supporter of MCC programs. This award will most certainly incentivize MCC to continue to grow the honors curriculum and strive for academic excellence among our students.”

Also on hand for the occasion was Hardin Foundation President Robert Ward, who explained this is one of many ways the Foundation supports student achievement.

“It’s an honor to see the community college recognized for its academic excellence.”

Elliott took a moment to eliminate the myth that community colleges were solely focused on under-prepared students.

“Yes, that’s part of our mission. But the truth is that a community college serves lots and lots of high academic achievers as well. We re-instituted the Honors College – under the direction of Vice President Barbara Jones and Director of Institutional Research Cathy Parker – three years ago with 12 students. This year, we enrolled over 50, some having ACT scores as high as 32. That caliber of student can enroll just about anywhere he or she so desires across the country. The Honors College has proven to be a magnet for high-achievers, and our expectation is that it will continue to flourish,” Elliott explained.

The grant will be delivered in equal increments over a 20-year period. And with the college matching the amount, it will bring the total to two million dollars.

In addition to the check presentation, college officials also unveiled the Honors College Suite, located on the second floor of Montgomery Hall.

Homeschooler tapped for Love scholarship

A homeschooled student, Kaycee Grice, has been selected to receive the Theresa Bragg Love Memorial Scholarship. This is a full-tuition, one-time award and is funded through the MCC Foundation.

Love, a native of Murfreesboro, Tenn., married Bert Love and they moved to Meridian to start their family. She was very active in her church and was the happiest when she was with her family in the kitchen or working in her yard. The Love Family has been a supporter of the Tuition Guarantee Program and the MCC Foundation.

Grice is in the University Transfer Program at MCC and plans to pursue a major in elementary education from Mississippi State University. She is a Dean’s List scholar, a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the international academic honor society for two year college students, and works part time for Watchdog Security System.

Foundation friends, family members remembered via scholarships

Two separate memorial scholarships have been established and will be awarded to deserving students for the 2015 fall semester, said Kathy Brookshire, associate vice president for development and executive director of the MCC Foundation.

They will be given by the MCC Foundation in memory of two faithful friends of the Foundation and the College, Gift Johnson and Allan Stewart.

Another scholarship, the Mavis Williams Memorial Scholarship, has been established by Pam Minyard, Bobby Lucroy, Susan Alikakos and Denny Richie as a way to pay tribute to their grandmother, Mavis Williams. Brookshire noted the children wanted to honor their mother, Angie Richie, by establishing this scholarship in their grandmother’s name.

The first Mavis Williams Memorial Scholarship will be awarded for the 2015-2016 academic year.
What began as an idea at an economic development summit on the campus of Alabama Southern Community College in June 2007 came to fruition in Meridian in October.

At the 2007 summit, then-Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour and Alabama Gov. Bob Riley spoke about the need for more workforce education and welders, specifically, to educators and administrators from seven West Alabama and East Mississippi community colleges. MCC, East Central Community College, East Mississippi Community College, Jones County Junior College, Bevill State Community College, Shelton State Community College and Wallace State Community College (Selma) were in attendance.

Fast forward four months and seven years later, Mississippi Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves spoke at the dedication of MCC’s Structural Steel Services Welding Technology Center.

The facility will enable MCC to more than triple its capacity to train welding students, school officials said.

“When we talk about education, we shouldn’t just talk about K through 12,” Reeves told the crowd of about 250 at the ribbon cutting. “Education also means to train our workforce, and we can do that through facilities like this. This facility is a shining example of what Meridian and East Mississippi can do when people put their minds together.”

B.B. Archer was the architect for the 11,500-square foot welding facility, which will have 30 working welding booths, classrooms, office and a 3-ton overhead crane.

“The crane enables us to teach rigging,” welding and cutting technology instructor and program coordinator Shane Simmons said. “Some programs have to skip that part because there’s no way to teach it, but the crane will enable us to teach more students how to operate it hands on.”

Tony Dean with Structural Steel helped design the facility to give it a real-world factory feel. Classes in the building are already underway.

The $1.5 million building was donated by 31-year college trustee Tommy Dulaney. Lauderdale County paid for the building’s equipment, erection and addition.

“This was really a community project,” Elliott said. “A lot of different people and agencies came together to make this happen. I think that (Reeves) is right - if we could replicate that model on a lot of things in our community, we’d keep moving forward.”

Below: Dr. Scott Elliott presents a basketball to Mississippi Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves. Bottom: Local dignitaries and representatives from MCC and Structural Steel Services were on hand to cut the ribbon for the new welding facility.
**Foundation Travel**

**Taking on the Big Apple**

By Kathy Brookshire

“New York! New York!
It’s a wonderful town…”

and what better time to be there than during the Christmas Holidays! On Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2014, **MCC Foundation Travel** took 18 travelers to see the sights of the **Big Apple** in all its holiday glory. Our first stop after settling in at our **Times Square** hotel was the **Carnegie Deli**. What a treat! The waiters served us their famous, mile-high sandwiches and desserts.

Our second day was spent touring in our private stretch limos. We hit all the hot spots and ate lunch at historic **Grand Central Station**. We saw beautiful, extraordinarily decorated sights such as **Central Park**, the **Plaza Hotel**, **Sax Fifth Avenue**, **Rockefeller Center** and more! People were snapping our picture as we got out of the limos; everyone thought we were celebrities. Of course we were by representing MCC!

Dinner was at **Del Frisco’s**, then on to the lighting of the Christmas tree in **Rockefeller Plaza**.

Thursday morning we had time to eat a leisurely breakfast or brunch and wander around **Fifth Avenue** shops, taking in all the elaborate holiday window decorations. The Christmas show at **Radio City Music Hall** was on the schedule for the afternoon. The performance was spectacular! Afterwards, travelers were free to dine at their favorite restaurant. Some of us chose **Little Owl’s** in **Greenwich Village**; it was delicious. After dinner, a group of us made the traditional stop at New York’s famous **Macy’s**.

Our day Friday began at the **9/11 Museum**. It was truly a heartfelt experience; every American needs to see and experience the museum. I get choked up just thinking about it.

Saturday Morning, we all headed to the recently re-opened **Tavern on the Green** for brunch in Central Park. It was absolutely wonderful. A must do if you are in New York! We shopped at **Bloomingdales**, **FAO Schwartz**, and visited various museums. We saw **Broadway** plays while there. Some favorites were: **Phantom of the Opera**, **Jersey Boys**, **Wicked**, and **Motown**.

We shopped at **Century 21**, experienced **Chinatown**, visited **Battery Park**, waved at **Lady Liberty**, and toured the **Financial District**. For lunch, we found a small, quaint pizza shop in the Financial District. It was great hanging out with the locals. Our subway ride back to Times Square made us feel like we were “learning the ropes” of living in New York City.
Celebrating Good Times
BEEP program notes anniversary with party

Ericka McCain, waits for the celebration to begin with four-year-old Eyonia.

When officials with BEEP (Best Early Education Practices) decided to mark its anniversary, the celebration turned into a birthday party.

Funded by the Stranahan and Phil Hardin Foundations and implemented through Meridian Community College, BEEP is an early childhood education project that supports children, parents and early childhood educators to best prepare children for kindergarten success and advancements. It is headed by Win Maxey-Shumate, instructor and coordinator for the College’s Early Childhood Education Technology Program.

Shumate explained the best early education practices provide age and developmentally appropriate expectations and activities that promote the development of the whole child. “These activities include all curricula areas and encourage the social, emotional, physical, language, math, pre-reading and independence skills that children need before entering a kindergarten classroom,” she said.

Throughout the year, during informational sessions held at various locations within the city of Meridian, parents were given the opportunity to register their children, who can range in age from six weeks to four years, for this free program.

“I’ve participated in BEEP,” said mom Ericka McCain at the celebration which was held in the College’s Workforce Development Center. “I love BEEP. It has been helpful to me and I’ve learned more,” she said. She noted that she’s seen developmental skills grow in her six-month-old daughter Gabreynia.

More than 100 parents and children took part in the event.

BEEP provides activities, educational materials, resources and guidance through Best Education Practice sessions for children and adults.

“Each one-hour session targets age and developmentally appropriate pre-reading, math and music/movement activities,” Shumate said, adding, “The project staff members incorporate the early learning guidelines for each age group and make learning and skill building fun and exciting for both adults and children.”

These sessions, she said, include books, educational toys and a snack.

To learn more about BEEP, contact Win Maxey-Shumate at 601-581-3527.

The travelers enjoy brunch at the Waldorf Astoria.

The last day was our grand finale. We had brunch at the Waldorf Astoria. It was over the top! This brunch had lobster, shrimp, raw oysters, various salads, breads, omelets made to order, prime rib carving station, ham, and so many different kinds of vegetables I can’t begin to name them all. There was a buffet of gorgeous fresh fruits. A chef was making individual baked Alaska, and there were so many other desserts my head was in a spin. Can you tell, desserts are my favorites? I sampled New Orleans style bread pudding, baked Alaska, homemade macaroons, chocolate mousse, cheesecake, and more!

Oh, last but not least, one group of the ladies visited the Good Morning America show. They were interviewed outside. When Robin Roberts saw that they were from Mississippi, she invited them back into the studio to meet her! It was so exciting.

Needless to say, this trip was a huge success. Please let us know if you are ever interested in traveling with MCC Foundation Travel. We ALWAYS have a great time.

May Graduation