#### **Mortuary Science Graduates to Continue Family Businesses**

Lowman said the most valuable

thing he learned was how different

people cope with death and how, by

present himself in an appropriate

manner to assist the family.

process is a little easier."

body language and voice tone, he could

"The instructors are fantastic and

very knowledgeable," Lowman said.

"They convey information by involving

a little bit of humor so that the learning

Adair was also pleased by the

Tom Taggart and Donna Backhaus.

you focused," said Adair, 32, who

initially went into resort management

business to work with his sister and

people during a hard time and try to

make their experience a positive one.

could improve by incorporating more

"The industry has fallen behind

and the only one to go into the family

business. He originally graduated from

Arizona State University with a degree

in applied biological sciences, started

technologically and I would like to be part

Bunker, 28, is the youngest of six kids

technology into the business.

of changing that," Adair said.

in California, but returned to the family

father. He likes having the ability to help

Adair has noticed that the industry



Local family-owned funeral homes have undergone many dramatic changes in the last decade. In response to economic conditions and changing preferences in the industry, a handful of large conglomerates have stepped in and purchased many smaller funeral homes that may not have family members who want to continue the business. While large corporations offer certain advantages to funeral home operators, some funeral operators prefer to keep the business in the family, if possible.

This semester, Mesa Community College's Mortuary Science Program has three graduates who will be taking over local family businesses. Graduates Bill Lowman, of Lowman's Arizona Funeral Home, Taylor Adair, of Adair Funeral Home, and Bryce Bunker, of Bunker Family Funeral Home, all say it's an honor to be carrying on the family tradition and MCC's program helped them obtain the necessary credentials.

For Lowman, 43, it was his father's illness that spurred a career change. After working in the electronics industry for several years, he quit his job and went to fill in for his father in the family funeral home.

"It was just amazing, the fulfillment I got out of helping families," Lowman said. "I decided to go to school and get my funeral director license so I can eventually run the family funeral home."

his own business, but returned to the family business when his father told him he didn't want to sell his business to the conglomerates.

For him, the most valuable part of MCC's program has been building relationships with others in the industry and having exposure to different ways of doing things. He feels honored when he helps a family decide how best to celebrate the life of their loved one.

accomplish, it's to let people know that it's ok to celebrate in a different way sometimes, whether extremely formal, or a more casual celebration." he said. "It's ok to celebrate an individual's life in a unique and individual way and to strip some of the stereotypes away... we want our business to reflect more of a message of hope and light and that we will help vou celebrate and heal."

All of the graduates say they decided to attend MCC's Mortuary Science Program based on others' recommendations and the fact that it's the only accredited program in Arizona and one of few in the surrounding states.

The program is a member of the National Association of Colleges of Mortuary Science and offers an Associate in Applied Science degree in Mortuary Science. The curriculum combines coursework in mortuary science with a general education component.

The AAS degree from MCC is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education. Completion of the program prepares the student to sit for the National Board examination and begin state internship requirements.

For more information on the program,

"If there's anything I'd like to

instruction he received from instructors "They know things from personal experience and that information keeps

visit: www.mesacc.edu/programs/mortuary-

#### How Much Money was Gifted to MCC in 2013?

Check out the 2013 Annual Report to Donors at www.mesacc.edu/giving/forms-guidelines-reports Donor generosity not only promises hope, but it delivers opportunity for a brighter future. Thank you for your support!



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

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#### **Students Teach and Learn How to Inspire Compassion**

Kyrene de la Colina Elementary School partnered with MCC's chapter of the Psi Beta Psychology National Honor Society to present components of the Heroic Imagination Project (HIP), a national program designed to inspire compassion.



More than 50 fifth-grade students, members of Colina's Aerospace Club, received an orientation of the Bystander Effect, one element of the HIP, which reinforces the

engagement process and helps develop a mindset that encourages willingness to act on behalf of others or in the defense of fairness and equality. Students were exposed to situations where people were in trouble or injured and no one came to help.

"Club members not only learn about aerospace but search and rescue and first aid. I thought the HIP would be perfect for them as they have the skills, they just need to know what may prevent them from taking action," explained Mr. Arlen Sykes, a teacher at Kyrene de la Colina Elementary School and MCC Alumnus. "The program effectively demonstrated to students how one 'right' choice by

one person can dramatically change a situation, someone's life and our society as a whole – developing what the HIP calls a civic virtue of heroic action."

"Social psychology tells us that, due to diffusion of responsibility, pluralistic ignorance, and fear of looking foolish, the more people there are around when someone needs help, the less likely it is that anyone will respond," said Ann Ewing, MCC residential psychology

MCC Psi Beta chapter members, led by student leader Heather Smyth, presented on the Bystander Effect to hundreds on campus to MCC clubs and classes, and in the community to elementary and high school students.

"Our goal was and is to encourage and inspire people to compassionately reach out to their fellow man " said Heather Smyth, leader of MCC's 2013-14 Psi Beta chapter.

As a college for its community, MCC students regularly conduct research and present findings both on campus and to community members Valley-wide.



# Alumni & Friends

**Summer 2014** 

A Publication for the Mesa Community College Alumni Association

MCC Prof hikes length of Grand Canyon, twice **Safeway President** Karl Schroeder **MCC Grants** Women's Basketball National Champions Alumni in the News Student and Faculty Recognitions **Mortuary Science Graduates Inspiring Compassion** 



MCC Prof is 3rd to Hike Length of Grand Canyon, Twice

#### ■ MORE IN THIS ISSUE



Women's Basketball National Champions



Alumni in the News

When Mesa Community College (MCC) biology professor Andrew Holycross emerged from Pearce Ferry Wash in the Grand Canyon on Nov. 25, 2013, he became the third person to have hiked the length of the Grand Canyon on both sides of the Colorado River. The 65-day journey, in extremely rugged canyon country began on Sept. 22, when he set out to accomplish his sabbatical goal of exploring the modern relationship between man and wilderness.

Holycross, joined in stretches by friends and fellow Grand Canyon enthusiasts, completed the entire 500-plus-mile hike of the north side in a single trip, making him the ninth person to complete a through-hike. He previously completed sections of the south side.

This achievement enables Holycross to bring firsthand knowledge to MCC biology students in the fall, adding to his dynamic style of teaching. He hopes to deepen public appreciation of wild places

and illustrate how these places preserve a context within which individuals can grow and challenge themselves in nature. Students at the college are excited to learn details of discoveries made in remote areas of the canyon. "Every day had highlights, like finding rock art in the middle of nowhere that was drawn by people before the birth of Christ," Holycross recalled. "Some of the images are just ghostly. There's absolutely some spiritual significance to them."

"Andrew is one of the most observant people I have ever met," said Andy Baldwin, Chair of MCC's Life Sciences Department. "The story of this journey alone will inspire former, current and future MCC students and staff for years to come."

In addition to sharing what he learned about himself and the geology and biology of the Grand Canyon, Holycross plans to convey to students the importance of setting a life goal. "It doesn't have to be this kind of adventure, but I'd like

cont'd. on page 2



students to know how important it is to take time for these kinds of events in their lives and to do it early if they can," said

This personal and professional journey is also tied to a grieving process and quest for meaning in life. Holycross's late wife, Ioana Elise Hociota, slipped and fell from a cliff on a backpacking trip in a remote area of the Grand Canyon years earlier. The weather was perfect and the exact circumstances of her fall, unwitnessed by her hiking partner, may never be known. Andrew writes, "Some wonder why people engage in adventurous activities considering that some level of risk is inherent in adventure. I've spent a lot of 'canyon time' trying to think about this from Ioana's perspective. I know her as well as one person can know another. I believe what she told us through her example, is that what matters most is not how long you live, but how well you live. And 'living well' means throwing your heart and shoulder into both the work and play of life."

Watch the final leg of Andy's journey here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlGBdqS8q7w.

and moral responsibility.

## Safeway President Encourages Others to Take First Step



When Karl Schroeder's post-high school plans to enter the Air Force in the late '70s didn't work out, he found himself at Mesa Community College, wondering what his next step would be.

To cover expenses, he got a job at a Safeway grocery store and rode his bike seven miles to get to classes. Over the next few years, he earned an associate's degree in business management at MCC (1987), a certificate in food industry management at University of Southern California, and a bachelor's degree from University of San Francisco, all while working and raising a

TWO MAJOR GRANTS FUND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Arizona Advanced Manufacturing Institute (AZ-AMI) of Mesa Community College, received a \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of

The Community College National Center for Community Engagement (CCNCCE), housed at Mesa Community College, received a \$270,000 award

from the Teagle Foundation to support the development of a three-year project to coordinate service-learning projects at seven of America's civically

engaged community colleges. The project is designed to improve and promote model courses and curricular programming that foster personal, civic

Labor's Employment and Training Administration to provide trade-impacted workers and others with the knowledge, skills and abilities required to

provide long-term support to aerospace and advanced manufacturing industries in the region.

Schroeder credits MCC with putting him on track to earn a bachelor's degree and rise through the ranks in the food industry.

Today, as President of Safeway's Northern California Division, he manages nearly 270 stores in California, Nevada and Hawaii. Schroeder serves on the Western Association of Food Chains (WAFC), whose mission is to raise funds for educational opportunities for Safeway employees. As a speaker, he regularly shares his story as an example to others hoping to succeed in the industry. Schroeder points out the benefits of education and encourages employee

"I had doors open for me in advance because of just the little education I had, which was an associate's degree and a certificate,"

Schroeder said. "Plus, I picked up important skills I needed for the job. So, I tell them, yes you can be successful in the grocery industry without a degree, but why not get it and move maybe even faster than I moved?"

The most helpful aspect of his education at MCC was conquering math. His instructor assured him and others who admitted that they didn't like math that he would change that mindset.

"I realized that there were basic

formulas that I didn't know and that I needed to build on." Schroder said. "People that know me today say that I'm an unbelievably analytical person. I learned at MCC that math was not only not a weakness for me, but a strength. That probably changed the trajectory of my career. Getting the basics under my belt took the clouds away and let the sun shine through."

Schroeder also found that the management concepts he learned at MCC helped him tremendously in his work life and still hold true today.

"Once I found myself in high level leadership roles, it absolutely rang true," Schroeder said. "I reached back on those experiences a lot. It's almost like doing the activity without realizing I needed the theory. I may have done some of that backwards!"

At Safeway, he works one-on-one with employees to help them meet their goals. He enjoys giving back, imparting knowledge he has learned over the years and encouraging others to take that first step by just taking one college class.

"I would have not gotten into USC if I had not stepped back and received the benefits of the building blocks at MCC."

Schroeder said. "That education not only helped my career, but I learned a lot as well. It's not just that I had the piece of paper, I learned so much that has helped me."

For more information on WAFC, visit www.wafc.com.



#### Congratulations to MCC's National **Championship Women's Basketball Team!**

The Thunderbirds captured the NJCAA Division II national championship with an 82-72 win in overtime over second-seeded Highland (Kan.).

The victory capped a fantastic career for the MCC sophomores who posted a 55-12 record over their two years, won two Region I titles, took second place nationally in 2013 and capped it all with a national title in 2014. And the coaching staff, head coach Kori Stephenson and assistants Sam Stevens and Ben Nelson, reached the pinnacle after taking teams to fifth, second and first place in the nation over the past three seasons.

For the school itself it was the 17th national crown in now eight different sports, but the first since 1980. Women's basketball is the eighth to join the

Coach Kori Stephenson was named the NJCAA Division II Coach of the Year, MCC Coach of the Year, and MCC Woman of Distinction. She was inducted into the South Dakota School of Mines Hall of Fame in June 2013.



Many Thunderbird teams and athletes enjoyed stellar seasons this year. The Annual Awards Banquet honored the top athletic achievements. Among the honorees:

Top Male GPA: Top Female GPA: Top Academic Team: Top Community Service Team: Men's Most Outstanding Athlete: Women's Most Outstanding Athlete:

Alexa Lorentzen - Women's Soccer - 4.00 Women's Basketball - 3.24 Blake Kemp - Football Peace Amukamara, Mariah Willadsen, Women's Basketball

Matthew Garcia, Track and Field - 4.00

MCC Coach of the Year: Kori Stephenson

For a full summary of winners, visit athletics.mesacc.edu/all-sports/annual-awards-banquethonors-top-mesa-athletic-achievements. Interested in staying up to date on MCC Athletics? Visit athletics.mesacc.edu.

## **Alumni In** the News

**East Valley Partnership Chief Roc Arnett** Describes His Eden MCC is part of this

article on East Valley Partnership President Roc Arnett's game plan for the Southeast Valley for 2014. Arnett was MCC's first student body president.

The Arizona Republic (see page 2 under Education), January 7, 2014

Turley excited to be back home in the White Mountains MCC alum Tony Turley started as the city's new Administrative Services director Jan. 6. Turley attended MCC in 1984 and credits his accounting class at MCC as providing the start to his career. White Mountain Independent, January 20, 2014

Mesa resident works through lupus to help others Alumna Maj. Antoinette Grimes enrolled at MCC after retiring from the military due to lupus. She now works as a lupus support group facilitator, advocate for female veterans and a personal trainer for people with disabilities. East Valley Tribune, March 11, 2014

Meet Marla Denham: Denham calls 'em as she sees 'em Marla Denham attended MCC in 1981, playing volleyball and basketball. She is now the coordinator of basketball and volleyball officials for the Big Sky Conference. She was inducted into MCC's Sports Hall of Fame in 2008. Missoulian, March 16, 2014

Clinton Global Initiative MCC alumnae Kathleen Stefanik and Mirelle Wright participated in the Clinton Global Initiative University. CGI U convenes students from around the world to work at developing solutions to human right abuses, women's social and economic empowerment, and HIV/AIDS in the U.S.

Q&A with Chelsea Clinton at CGI U, ASU News, March 22, 2014

Brett Nachman and Mirelle Wright invited to represent Barrett SWAT Team at Clinton Global Initiative University, ASU Barrett: The Honors College, February 18.2014

Clinton Global Initiative University, PBS Arizona Horizon, March 20, 2014

At MCC, we never tire of hearing about the pursuits and successes of our alumni. Below is a compilation of alumni who have been in the news over the past few months. If you or a fellow alum is featured in the news, we'd like to know. Send the information to marcy.snitzer@mesacc.edu. Visit www.mesacc.edu/alumni/newsletters/summer-2014 to read the full story f each item listed below.

Tempe director, Mesa actor go "Around the World in 80 Days" Mesa actor and MCC

alum, Jon Gentry, is going global, playing Passeportout, manservant to intrepid adventurer Phileas Fogg, in the Arizona Theatre Company production of Jules Verne's classic "Around the World in 80 Days."

The Arizona Republic, April 7, 2014

2014 All USA Community College spotlight: Michelle L. Kemeny Diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following time in the Air Force, Kemeny is thankful for Mesa, where she has re-focused her life. USA Today, April 7, 2014

Southeast Valley Zoning Attorney has seen controversy, success After 35 years as a zoning attorney, 60-year-old Ralph Pew, an MCC alum, has represented some of the most contentious cases in Mesa, Gilbert and Chandler. The Arizona Republic, April 12, 2014

Lila Palmer Shoemaker AZ Mother of the

Year, 2014 Class of 2001 alumna honored as AZ Mother of the Year. American Mothers, Inc., April 24-28, 2014

Mesa residents honored for blood donations

David Clarkson of Mesa has given blood 182 times since his first donation as a student at Mesa Community College, according to a press release. He is motivated to donate by his son's diagnosis with and recovery from leukemia, according to the release. Arizona Newszap, May 1, 2014

Social work grad shares story of survival as advocate for victims of sex trafficking Savannah Sanders earned her GED in 2010 and applied a full scholarship toward her studies at Mesa Community College.

ASU news, May 2, 2014

### Student and Faculty Recognitions









MCC Student Named Coca-Cola Scholar Smyth, a student at Mesa

Community College, has been named a 2014 Coca-Cola Community College Academic Team Gold Scholar. Phi Theta Kappa, March 18, 2014

Twenty-five named Phi Theta Kappa Distinguished **College Administrators** 

s Mabry is one of twenty-five college administrators honwith the 2014 Distinguished College Administrator Awards, presented by Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. Phi Theta Kappa, March 25, 2014

at Avnet Tech Games The ninth annual Avnet Tech Games tested the technological prowess and problem-solving skills of some of the state's hrightest and most tech-savvy

3 Students test their skills

young people. MCC Teams won for

MCC student earns national award for sound design skills

Mesa Community College student Jessica training in the arts focused almost entirely on the visuals. That, however, didn't prevent her from winning a national competition for her skills at

adding an audio element to a fall MCC

Mesa Chamber of Commerce presents awards tli of Mesa Community College was presented with the professor of the year award by the Mesa Chamber of Commerce. The Arizona Republic, May 6, 2014

Visit www.mesacc.edu/alumni/ newsletters/summer-2014 for full story.



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